WHEN MUSIC IS SHARED:

EXPLORING A NOTION OF 'AUDIENCING' IN COMMUNITY MUSIC THERAPY PERFORMANCE AND OTHER MUSICAL-SOCIAL EVENTS

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Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

PhD in Music Therapy
Nordoff Robbins/Goldsmiths, University of London
United Kingdom
2025

Declaration

I certify that the work presented in the thesis is my own. All material which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged as such. No material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study of the actions and experiences that constitute audience engagement – which I call 'audiencing' – in therapeutically-oriented choir performances. Rooted in discourses associated with Community Music Therapy and Community Music, this project addresses the ways musical performance may open up new social resources for performers and examines specifically the activity and experience of the audience in that pursuit.

Existing research on musical performance in therapeutic and community contexts highlights several important social benefits of performance for performers, and many studies make specific reference to the presence of a supportive audience as a key ingredient in a performance's success. However, the literature does not systematically investigate audience involvement nor does it trace how audience engagement impacts performers. This research project seeks to explore the details and mechanisms of audience engagement to more comprehensively understand the links between performance, health, and social justice.

This thesis includes a preliminary ethnographic study that explored performer and audience experiences in one choir concert, and a secondary study that was ethnographically informed and interview-based. Graphic data generation tools were employed to empirically link participants' self-reports of experience to actions taken within the performances. Participants consisted of an international sample of directors of therapeutically-oriented choirs and associated audience members.

The findings of this project challenge previous notions of audiences as relatively passive receivers of musical messages and providers of support. Findings revealed the specific actions that both choirs and audience members took to make sense of the performance as

a shared social encounter. Interaction ritual theory is used to show how both choir and audience explored their positioning in relation to one another.

I propose that a notion of hospitality provides a missing link between choir and audience experience and clarifies concerns of belonging and inclusion that such performances often aim to address.

Acknowledgements

I wish to first thank my supervisor, Dr. Gary Ansdell, for the combination of encouragement and challenge he has extended to me over many years. I have benefitted tremendously from his generosity of time, attention, and spirit, and I am deeply grateful. I also wish to thank co-supervisor Dr. Tia DeNora for her enthusiastic support and generous guidance. Her wisdom and care for this project have been immeasurable. Thank you both for lighting the path and creating such an incredible, *hospitable* learning community at Nordoff-Robbins.

I am grateful to Dr. Mercédès Pavlicevic, who guided the project through its initial stage before she died. She brought 'disruption' in the most valuable and delightful way possible. I wish to thank Dr. Simon Procter for regularly providing insight and support throughout the various stages of the project. Thank you to Dr. Neta Spiro, Dr. Joseph Fidelibus, and Dr. Cochavit Elefant who also provided helpful feedback and a listening ear at critical times.

Many, many thanks go to the Nordoff-Robbins PhD family – Dr. Giorgos Tsiris, Dr. Claire Flower, Dr. Kjetil Hjørnevik, Dr. Maren Metell, Dr. Sergio Sorcia Reyes, Jo Parsons, Wendy McMahon, Mario Eugster, and Stella Hadjineophytou – for being lively and engaging colleagues but also for being such dear, dear people. Special thanks to the Loft Crew for adventure, camaraderie, and boundless hospitality (including during the first days of a global pandemic!).

I have had the privilege to sing under several choir directors throughout my life who skillfully joined musical dedication with a deep sense of social purpose – I thank them for modelling musical care in choral settings. I am grateful to my colleagues at Arts in Action and the Calvin Prison Initiative, who have supported me and afforded me the freedom and resources to follow with music where people have led. Thank you to the members of the

choirs I work with: you keep showing me new depths and dimensions of how wonderful it is to sing together. May I never stop learning from you.

Finally, thank you to my parents, Rick and Marg Epp, for love and support that came – and has always come – in so many forms. Thank you to the friends and neighbours who let me practice my interview technique on/with them. You entrusted me with deeply personal musical experiences and prepared me for this work in ways you likely didn't realize. Todd, Sophia, and Mariel, thank you for your patient love throughout this long process. There will finally be a trip to London for all of us – it's been waiting for you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the Project

This thesis is about audiences. More specifically, it is about 'audiencing', a term I will define later in this chapter. But this thesis is also about singing. It is primarily my personal and professional experiences with singing – choral singing in particular – that inspired my interest in audiences, and consequently, the topic of my research. In my more than twenty years as a music therapist I have found myself working with several choirs that perform, and the question of the audience (who they are, why they come, what they do and take away) has become more pressing for me with each passing year. I have come to realize that if I am to understand how performances given by these choirs promote health and wellbeing – and how I might conceptualize them as a practice of Community Music Therapy – I need to understand the experiences of the other people brought into these events: the audience.

Singing in the choir

In some ways my professional trajectory and research agenda were not deliberate choices but the product of a lifetime singing with people and reflecting on what it does between them. Choral singing has been part of my life since the beginning, something my community valued and somewhat expected of its members. In the tradition within which I grew up, choral participation, for most people, was not necessarily rooted in any particular love for choral repertoire or technique, but, rather, it was rooted in particular ideas about what it meant to be a community. Community, in this context, was a way of life founded on an understanding of the essential interdependence of all human beings, and its lived practice the means through which people tended to brokenness as it showed up in the

world. Community was a means of care and repair. Singing together was a way to enact these things.

Subsequently, choir was not only for the 'singers' – in my high school even the hockey players sang in the choir (voluntarily) – it was a way of being together, something that could uniquely gather people, people who gathered for other things anyway. Communal choral singing was both participatory and presentational[1]. It was both traditional and deeply inclusive. The choirs I was part of performed in a variety of settings, for audiences large and small, formal and informal. We performed in schools, in churches, in symphony orchestra halls, in the outdoors. We performed in worship services, in formal concerts, at informal gatherings of people for various reasons. Some performances were for the audience; some performances, it was said, were more for the singers. Performances took different shapes and I noticed that the space between choir and audience could feel different, could seem to shift within and between performance events. This was a dynamic I was attuned to but did not fully understand.

I began music therapy training not as a musician interested in choral singing, but as a person who had been shaped by singing with others. It was never my intention to direct choirs professionally or make choral singing part of my music therapy practice. But I have found my personal and professional identities converge in the activity of choral singing. At present, I direct two choirs: a choir for disabled adults (15 years) and a choir in a men's prison (7 years), and at the time of this writing I am preparing to start a choir for people with aphasia. Though one might regard my working with choirs as inevitable, in many ways, it is a surprise. I never would have described choir as a 'passion'. Rather, it is daily bread: something everyday, something necessary, something sustaining.

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[1] These terms are borrowed from Turino (2008) and will be explored in later chapters.

From the stage to the clinic to the stage

I have always thought that the act of sharing music is integral to music therapy's powers. This notion – that music can become transformative in the way it is given, offered, and shared – is, for me, linked to music's role in social life and is likely what led me to embrace the various forms of practice and theorizing that have come to be known as Community Music Therapy (CoMT).

Early in my career, I saw music therapy as primarily a practice of justice: music was a medium through which people, marginalized by disability or isolated by illness, could express themselves, tell their stories, and in doing so, increase feelings of self-worth, confidence, and empowerment. Whether working in the typical individual or small group formats of traditional music therapy practice, I saw the primary aims of my work to be self-expression and empowerment. The sharing of music in a closed, protected environment provided an opportunity for clients to find their voices and make themselves heard. Though public performances did happen from time to time, I often assumed them to be extraneous to the real work of music therapy. This assumption was validated by most music therapy theory at the time, which viewed aims such as self-expression and confidence as best addressed in a private, clinical setting.

My professional activities led me next to graduate school where I trained in the Nordoff-Robbins approach and was introduced to CoMT in some its earliest conceptual forms. During my clinical training, it struck me that a client's musical partners (whether peers or music therapists) were not simply facilitators of or witnesses to a self-expressive voice or were there simply to receive another asserting herself musically; they were active co-creators of a musical voice. This challenged the idea that the music therapy process was a matter of finding an inner voice and letting it out – and unsettled older assumptions about self-expression, assumptions which I explored in my master's dissertation and a subsequent essay (Epp, 2005, 2007). Through this work I was introduced to a range of

theories which supported these clinical experiences. Ideas about the social nature of musical development (Elliott, 1995), the social construction of musical meaning (Small, 1998) and the social dialogue at the heart of making music (Benson, 2003) refocused my attention toward the people clients were making music with and around. Music therapy theories which placed music at the center of the therapeutic process (Aigen, 2005) and which connected music practices in music therapy to sociocultural contexts (Stige, 2002), as well as the growing attention to public performance as a mode of social engagement in music therapy (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004) provided a frame for what I saw happening over and over again in clinical situations: clients wanted to share their music, perform for others, and be heard outside the clinic walls – their music wanted 'out.'

Returning to earlier experiences with music, performance, and community, and thinking that what music offered was to be found in the 'space between' (Ansdell, 1995) and not simply on a message 'expressed', I turned my attention to the space between the client and their larger community. Finding support in the concept of the "ripple effect" of music therapy, where "...the impact of music therapy can work 'outwards' for an isolated person towards community..." (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004, p.16), I asked myself several questions. First, if clients wanted to extend their music beyond the clinic walls, how could I best facilitate this as a music therapist? Second, how did the 'goals-and-objectives' language of conventional music therapy frameworks account for the benefits observed in such socially-focussed music practices? Third, how were clients' larger communities impacted and what was the effect on the clients?

Within four years of graduate school I found myself directing a performance choir for disabled adults where each of these questions loomed largely and regularly. How might I think of the choir as a practice of community? How might I think of it as a practice of music therapy? How might I construe the therapeutic value of their performances in terms of their impact on the public?

Voices: Singing for empowerment and social integration

Since 2009 I have directed *Voices*, a choir for disabled adults situated in a mid-size, Midwestern city in the United States. The questions and dilemmas I have experienced in my role with this choir are illustrative of the concerns that inspired this research project.

Voices is a program of *Arts in Action,* a small organization that provides instruction in several different art forms and modalities for children and adults with disabilities. In the words of their mission statement, "*Arts in Action* empowers individuals with disabilities to learn, grow, and celebrate through the arts."[2] The organization's focus is primarily one of accessibility and empowerment. Though arts activities are offered in educational formats, there is a very strong emphasis on personal growth and development defined in quasi-therapeutic terms such as "reaching potential." According to their website, the arts are regarded as tools for individual growth, empowerment, and social integration.

The choir, like the other programs of *Arts in Action*, exists within an educational framework, yet one that is specifically oriented toward accessibility and empowerment. The educational frame provides access to resources for musical development and also emphasizes participants' strengths and abilities, couched in broadly humanistic terms: choir is an activity in which people with disabilities can pursue self-defined interests and passions, develop their musical capacities, and reach their individual potential, all leading to a more empowered existence. However, the links between "access to music," "empowerment," and "becoming contributing members of our community" (all part of the mission statement on their website) are not clearly spelled out, leading one to wonder about the nature of interaction between the choir members and the community to which they are contributing. One could conclude that it is simply the act of performing itself –

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[2] To preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used for individuals and organizations throughout this thesis. The website quoted here may not be cited as it would reveal the identity of the organization.

simply being seen and heard making music – that integrates an individual into her community.

As a music therapist, I have found that a CoMT framework is useful in conceptualizing the social processes within the choir and between the choir and their audiences. Performances give the choir the opportunity to interact with both the public and each other in ways that accept difference, include varying abilities and modes of participation, and "build(s) space for diversity" (Stige & Aarø, p. 215). In this space, potential exists for performers to be heard, understood, and influence the larger communities of which they are part. Yet, questions remain about how exactly this might happen.

The 'empowerment'[3] question

In both the educational and CoMT frames, *empowerment* – defined broadly as autonomy and self-determination – is emphasized as a central benefit of choir participation. On one hand, this is not difficult to see. From an educational/accessibility perspective, it would seem the development of musical skills and capacities is empowering in that choir members are able to develop a self-concept based on strengths and abilities and exercise a sense of aesthetic agency. 'Musician' becomes a positive part of singers' identities. From a CoMT perspective, it would seem that participatory choral experiences are empowering in that singers are able to expand their sense of self and range of expressive abilities, explore modes of relating to others, and participate in larger social structures in ways and at levels that may be inaccessible in other settings. Yet, using empowerment as a rationale or justification for choir performances has become problematic for me over the course of many performances with the choir. First, the term itself suggests a kind of social 'moving around', a repositioning of a social order, a disrupting of hierarchy. The audience is

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[3] 'Empowerment' is used here as an example of an aim that implicates the audience. It is a specific aim articulated in relation to this specific choir and it is illustrative of broader concerns. This thesis is not concerned with empowerment exclusively as an aim in CoMT.

therefore implicated in this movement, but this is never confirmed with them – it is as though they are assumed to facilitate empowerment for the choir through their mere presence. Second, there seems to be an implicit direct relationship between self-expression and empowerment in the language used by many people associated with the choir. That is, there seems to be an assumption that empowerment is something an individual singer acquires through the act of public self-expression: making oneself heard over other voices directly leads to an increase in empowerment. Lastly, it is not clear that empowerment as an outcome necessarily matches the experience of either the choir or the audience.

My encounters with the audience

In my first few years as director of the choir, I thought of the choir's performances in terms of therapeutic benefits: singing for an audience would increase confidence, encourage self-expression, and provide a sense of accomplishment. In that sense, concerts could be 'empowering' for the individuals up on the stage. Yet as I was promoting performances as occasions for self-expression and empowerment, the fact that they were also potential occasions for misunderstanding and misinterpretation became apparent with each concert. I realized that no one in the choir (including myself) could control how the choir was perceived, and I wondered: who had the right to make claims of empowerment? The range of participation styles and musical abilities in the choir meant that, in a public performance, there might be those in the audience who saw the choir as a 'spectacle', who left with prejudices intact, who had implicit hierarchies based on ability validated and reinforced. Comments by some well-meaning audience members following performances revealed how little I – or the choir – understood about what the audience was experiencing and taking away.

Over the years I have heard much talk – from organization staff and audiences alike – about concerts being transformative for those in the audience, though too often such talk is quite

vague and seems to represent sentimental and patronizing notions of helping those who are less fortunate ("It's so nice of you to do that for them!"), or a kind of condescending gratitude ("They are such an inspiration! Thank you so much!"). However, I have also noticed a very different category of response indicating that some in the audience underwent a very different experience. There were also those who came to me following concerts with serious and intense facial expressions, flowing tears, and simple but sincere *thank you*'s. These were people who apparently experienced complex and conflicting things, who left in a different state than in which they came, who had received something from the performance that changed them. The language of empowerment did not seem to adequately capture the exchange that had unfolded, nor did it account for the participation – and, in some cases, the transformation – of the audience.

Consequently, I became increasingly curious about the role of the audience and my own assumptions about their contribution. Had I assumed that their role was merely to witness, to observe? Recent research in CoMT has examined relationships between clients and their communities as enacted in musical practices (Stige et al, 2010) and explored the impact of music on networks of people that extend beyond the client (Pavlicevic et al., 2015; Wood, 2016), providing an empirical challenge to the idea that an audience consists of passive consumers. Recent inquiry into audience experience in Western art music traditions indicates audiences are in fact active and dynamic, influencing the performance on many levels and at many stages of production (Burland & Windsor, 2014; Dearn & Price, 2016; Dobson & Sloboda, 2014; Pitts, 2016, 2005; Pitts et al., 2013; Radbourne et al., 2009) – all providing support for a characterization of the audience as valuing and perhaps seeking social connection in their listening experiences. This would also seem to be confirmed by research on performance in Community Music Therapy which emphasizes such connections (Baker, 2013; Elefant, 2010; O'Grady & McFerran, 2012). It must be asked, then, if the audience is actively engaged and socially focused, how might their active participation affect the participation and experience of the choir? In the case of *Voices*, if empowerment is something that does occur, would it not be something that happens in the

mutual constructing of the performance, and not something solely found within the musical presentation-as-product?

Community Music Therapy & Performance

My own experience with *Voices* has developed alongside the development of CoMT as a framework for a variety of socially-focussed music practices, including performance. For more than twenty years, music therapists have been documenting their work with performance groups within this framework, often following their clients onto stages and into theoretical territory previously unexplored in the profession.

Musical performance can be understood as a medium of interaction where social roles are explored and new categories of thought, feeling, action and experience are generated. Put another way, when performers and audiences encounter each other in a performance event, social attitudes and behaviours can change: people may perceive unexpected qualities in others, may find that they share common experiences, or may be moved to seek out interaction with one another after the music is finished. Within a CoMT framework, performance is often seen as a practice where new identities and relationships can be imagined, created, and experienced – transforming a social fabric – and can be especially important for people who face social exclusion due to illness, disability, or other life circumstances. As music therapist Even Ruud writes, "Performing music in a public context has consequences for the person in terms of becoming a recognized and thus a possible member of a community" (Ruud, 2008, p.58). While the therapeutic significance of performance for performers has been documented in music therapy research (Ansdell, 2014; Stige et al., 2010), very little attention has been given to the engagement and impact of the other participants in this interaction: the audience. Very often, performance in this literature is characterized as more of a 'presentation' than an occasion for dialogue and mutual response, with several assumptions about the nature of audience involvement

unexamined yet part of the story of performance's therapeutic benefits. If it is true that performance opens social possibilities for performers via their engagement with a public audience, the mechanisms of this process – specifically the details of audience engagement – are not clearly understood in the current professional literature and discourse.

As a music therapist, I have felt in need of tools to think through the nature of audience engagement in order to understand the psychological and social processes in play, but I have not found complex thinking around these questions present in the CoMT literature. As music therapy theory has undergone a 'social turn' in the last two decades, recognizing the social determinants of health and embracing musical practices which provide opportunities for engagement with clients' larger communities, public performance has increasingly been considered a natural part of the music therapy process (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004; Stige et al., 2010; Stige & Aarø, 2012). Though performance has very often occupied a central role in CoMT practice and research, the focus has typically been on the benefit to the client-performer (Jampel, 2011; O'Grady & McFerran, 2012; O'Grady et al., 2015; Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004). Even though the engagement with the audience often seems central to the client's motivations for performing, audience participation in and response to the performance has not been examined. Research on this relationship has been one-sided, and the unarticulated assumption seems to be that the audience receives a product rather than engages in a mutual exchange. Given the emphasis on communication and relationship in CoMT (among other approaches), this has seemed a curious gap. Audience engagement would appear to be a resource for new relational possibilities between performers and their audiences, yet this has not been satisfactorily addressed.

A feature of many CoMT practices is their potential to connect socially vulnerable people with their larger communities in ways that offer opportunities for both agency and inclusion (Stige & Aarø, 2012). This process of connection has been theorized in social capital theory

(Putnam, 2000) as "bonding", where people within a group develop cohesion and friendships, and "bridging", where groups of people who might not normally meet or interact have a chance to encounter each other and develop relationships with one another (Stige et al., 2010). Performance has been documented in the CoMT literature as an activity which affords experiences of bridging (Ansdell, 2010a, 2010b; Curtis & Mercado, 2004; Elefant, 2010; Pavlicevic, 2010). Not only does a performance "bring[s] together people who would otherwise have no reason to do so" (Pavlicevic, 2010, p.237), but it also provides a site for generating, performing, and reconfiguring identity in relation to another group in one's community (Stige et al., 2010). It is through this kind of "identity work" that public performance "may transform social attitudes within and also around the zone of performance with potential to change its musical and social ecology" (Stige et al., 2010, p.290). However, evidence of "transformed social attitudes" in the CoMT literature has not been investigated beyond informal audience self-report. Most of this research focuses on the experiences of performers and reveals that there are several assumptions regarding the role, response, and participation of the audience underlying the construal of the therapeutic benefits of performance. This raises the question of how music therapists understand the presence and activity of the audience – or, how they understand 'audiencing' – in terms of its role in the performance process and how that might be a resource for performing clients.

How is performance currently understood in CoMT?

It has been suggested, not uncontroversially, that performance is a central musical practice in CoMT. Music therapist Even Ruud states:

> The essence of community music therapy lies in the use of music to negotiate the space between private and public, the client and the institution/other staff, or the client and the community. Therefore, I stress the emphasis on performance as an essential part of community music therapy. (Ruud, 2010, p.129)

Though the centrality of performance has been (and will continue to be) contested, it is the case that public performances are common in CoMT work. As CoMT theory matures, it has drawn on various theories to explore the space between "private and public", and, at times, account for the role of the public (Aigen, 2005, 2014; Ansdell, 2002, 2014). The following are some of the theoretical frames that have been used within CoMT and the broader music therapy field to provide a therapeutic rationale for performance:

Music-centered theory

Within the music-centered perspective in music therapy, as first explicated by Aigen (2005), music is viewed as something that uniquely enriches human life. Because music is a good irreducible to nonmusical ends, musical experience itself is viewed as a legitimate clinical focus. Musical practices within music therapy can therefore draw from musical practices in nonclinical contexts, making performance a natural activity for those clients who wish to engage in music this way.

CoMT is "music-centered" (Aigen, 2005) in that it traces a continuous line through human modes of musicking, rejecting any effort to silo 'therapeutic' musical forms and practices apart from those that are emergent in everyday life. In Aigen's conception of the music-centered approach, "*the mechanisms of music therapy process are located in the forces, experiences, processes, and structures of music*" (p.51, emphasis in original). This linking of clinical and nonclinical music provides justification for performance as a legitimate musical activity in CoMT, which often draws on participants' preferred ways of musicking: "The impulse to music in human beings can demand public performance to reach its consummation. This is accepted as natural in nonclinical settings" (p.116).

Resource-oriented theory

Closely linked to the music-centered perspective is the resource-oriented perspective in music therapy. Contrasting with approaches that treat diagnosis-specific symptoms, a resource-oriented perspective seeks to develop the unique strengths and potentials of an individual (Rolvsjord, 2010). Music is viewed as a health 'resource' – and music therapy an arena where this resource can be developed, mobilized, and worked into different spheres of the client's life. Thus, the music of one's life and experiences – not just the music made with a therapist – is regarded as potentially contributing to health. A performance, seen through the resource-oriented lens, may "reflect[s] a focus on (collaborative) mobilization of personal strengths and social, cultural, and material resources" (Stige & Aarø, 2012, p.21).

The aim of the therapeutic process is then less diagnosis-specific, less about symptom reduction, and more about empowerment. Empowerment "means developing strategies to strengthen those who seek help through emphasizing experiences of mastery and competence. In practice, this involves a resource-oriented approach, i.e., to focus on what is possible and what gives meaning for the client" (Ruud, 2010, p.96). Performance can fulfill aims of empowerment for some clients, in a way that is more meaningful and effective than other forms of music-making.

Social capital theory

Social capital theory has been used to explain the nature and impact of transformed relationships that can occur in CoMT. Music therapist Simon Procter (2011) was the first in the field to appropriate this theory for music therapy, and while performance was not the primary musical practice discussed in his work, the theory has relevance for performance in many ways. Social capital theory in Procter's discussion (drawing from Putnam, 1995), holds that strong social networks expand opportunities for civic participation. Music, through its cultural forms and practices, offers social experiences of risk and reciprocation,

experiences essential for the thickening of social ties. Thus, the unique forms of interaction that music affords contributes to the development of complex relationship-building.

CoMT theory has focused on the processes of bonding and bridging (described above) that are important components of social capital theory. A CoMT perspective recognizes the limitations of a bonding-only approach, where intra-group relationships alone are nurtured, sometimes to the exclusion of others. Bridging, in contrast, provides resources for the integration of social differences and is a concept invoked by many of the CoMT examples in Stige et al. (2010), often in relation to performances: "...our claim is that usually Community Music Therapy projects carefully cultivate the interplay of bonding and bridging" (Stige et al., 2010, p.286). This interplay has been shown, for example, by Ansdell (2014), who used a meso-level of analysis (which looks at the processes within a small group), to explore the construction and maintenance of relationships within a CoMT project called *Musical Minds*. This level of analysis "describes how this group's musicking makes and sustains links at several levels – firstly, at ground level between the singers themselves, and then between the singers and their local support structure" (p.226). Social capital theory, through the concepts of bonding and bridging, provides a useful frame to investigate how people musically negotiate relationships at multiple levels.

Ritual and performance theories

Performance studies is a field of scholarship that takes performance – defined broadly – as its object of study. Performance studies emerged from the performing arts and is concerned with the actions and processes that produce performance. Broad in scope, it links to ritual studies in its focus on art as an exploration of human relatedness, and draws on anthropological and sociological (among other) sources.

In the attempt to understand the social dynamics at work in musical performance, CoMT has looked to performance studies' work on ritual. Rooted in anthropology, sociology, and religion, studies of ritual ask the question: *what is it that is performed in ritual acts and practices?* Music therapy discussions of ritual (Aigen, 2002; Ansdell, 2014; Ruud, 1997) frequently draw on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner (1969, 1982, 1987). Turner theorized that what is performed in a ritual act is an exploration of social relationships. In a ritual event, actors respond to the social structures of which they are a part and which give rise to the ritual. A ritual act is thus more an exploration rather than the simple enactment of a social script:

> ...the relationship is not unidirectional and "positive" – in the sense that the performative genre merely "reflects" or "expresses" the social system or the cultural configuration, or at any rate their key relationships – but that it is reciprocal and reflexive – in the sense that the performance is often a critique, direct or veiled, of the social life it grows out of, an evaluation (with lively possibilities of rejection) of the way society handles history. (Turner, 1987, p.22)

Within a ritual, actors are given the opportunity to use cultural materials to move outside their social roles, to live into different social identities than the ones they inhabit in everyday life. When a ritual reaches a place where actors feel a sense of mutuality, or the leveling of social roles and an equality of participation, this is termed *communitas*. Communitas is an experiential state that affords different social possibilities than are available in everyday life. There is a chance to identify oneself differently.

Ritual and performance studies have given music therapy and CoMT a vocabulary for articulating social aims and recognizing the social re-positioning that often seems to happen in our work. We 'perform' not just notes, but our identities and relationships, and musical performance can become a site for affirming, challenging, and/or celebrating those relationships (Small, 1998).

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Music-centered, resource-oriented, social capital, and ritual and performance theories together help us to understand the links between the social processes of music and the social processes of health and wellbeing. If CoMT facilitates the cultivation of musical capacities, and those musical capacities are regarded as resources that can be developed to open possibilities for new social experiences, and we see musical actions and events as an exploration of one's social world and reality, we have come to a certain perspective on what performance is. Put another way, when people are involved in music with each other, they are involved in complex social processes. But this means we need to articulate a conception of music that helps us make that link.

An Ecological Perspective on Performance

Thinking ecologically about music

This study takes an ecological perspective on music and performance. Though 'ecological' is a term more often associated with the natural world – it describes the various features of our physical world as interconnected and interdependent – it also helps us understand the social and cultural world, of which music is also a part. To view music ecologically is to regard it as defined by the relationships that constitute it. Ansdell (2014) outlined an ecological perspective on music as it relates to scenes of music's help in a variety of contexts. Ansdell explains that a musical event is the convergence of musical sounds, people, and situations or contexts, and that meaning is made in the relationships between these things. A performance, for example, is constituted by the particular people involved (the performers, audience, others), the music (repertoire, traditions, styles), and the situation (an end-of-season performance in a concert hall for the public, an informal,

spontaneous performance on a street-corner, a concert in a school gym for family and friends, a performance in a civic ceremony, for example).

Though he did not use the word 'ecological' specifically, this perspective is akin to what Christopher Small proposed in his influential book, *Musicking* (1998). According to Small, if we want to know what music means, how it has impact, and how it is part of a variety of social processes, we must turn our attention to the relationships of which music is part. Music, in this view, is not identified as an object primarily but as a process. Small's work can be seen as a definitive contribution to the 'performance turn' in musicology (Cook, 1998, 2003), where musical objects find their meanings in their contexts of 'use'. Musical meaning cannot be separated from the lived performance of music, which is necessarily tied to the people and situations involved. Viewing music in this way, we can begin to analyse how meaning is made from musical experiences – what features of musical sound are drawn out and foregrounded by participants in a musical event, for example, and how they connect to other objects, processes, and concerns (DeNora, 2000, 2013a).

An ecological perspective addresses questions of the generation of musical meaning by people, but it differs in important ways from the phenomenological perspective, often employed in music therapy research, which is also concerned with meaning-making in musical situations. The phenomenological perspective seeks to understand inner experience, but without explicit attention to the sociocultural factors that an ecological view prioritises. Much music therapy research has focused on the interiority of musical experience through phenomenological methods such as self-report (Ghetti, 2015; McFerran & Grocke, 2007; Thompson et al., 2017). These narrative accounts, while shedding light on the experience of musicking, do not help us make the necessary links between 'inner' experience and 'outer' forms and actions. Because of this, they are of limited use when it comes to understanding how the sociocultural comes to bear on the individual and personal, and vice versa.

An ecological perspective can help us understand how musickers act in relation to their environments and resources. It shows us how actors make use of the cultural resources available to them. It shows us how people engage with cultural forms and is therefore helpful in understanding the links between musical and social processes. In other words, an ecological perspective on music shows us 'how people do other things with music' (DeNora, 2000). However, in adopting this perspective, we acknowledge that to engage in music is to engage in a meaning-making process, and therefore a theoretical framework is needed to explicate what meaning-making processes entail, or how meaning is 'accomplished.'

Enactivism

A key framework linked to the ecological perspective is enactivism: a position, developed across a diverse range of fields, that proposes that cognition is produced by human interaction with the environment. In contrast to cognitivism, a theory that states we perceive the world by holding abstract representations about it in our minds, enactivism turns our attention to the *action* of perception – we understand the world by being part of it, through our actions within and with it. Meaning does not come to us from the outside world prepackaged for us to decode and absorb, nor is it a mess of unformed stimuli processed in our minds; meaning is an accomplishment of our everyday presence in a world that is socially and culturally configured. We encounter this world through our physical, sensorimotor engagements and our communicative interactions, and as we do this, we affect that which we encounter. Perception, then, happens in the space *between* our selves and the sociocultural world: "In everyday life, we respond to each other's actions and expressions in terms of what we take them to mean. Meaning in this sense is not prefixed in the expressions themselves – as messages to be decoded – but grasped in a practical, situated way" (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 2012, p.175). The process by which we come understand the world by being part of it is known as 'participatory sensemaking' (DeJaeger & DiPaolo, 2007). Meaning is generated between people in social interaction.

There is no social cognition, no understanding of a social situation without social (inter)action (DeJaeger et al., 2010). The enactivist stance thus "entails at the same time an ontological and an epistemological claim: to live is to know and to know is to live" (ibid., p.173).

Enactivism has been applied to a range of studies in music (Clarke, 2005, Krueger, 2009). Music psychologist Eric Clarke (2005), for example, has offered an ecological perspective on music perception that describes and analyses the actions listeners undertake to make sense of what they hear. Perception, according to Clarke, is a process of "self-tuning" in relation to one's aural environment. Perception is not a matter of receiving aural information and creating a mental representation of that information; perception occurs through dynamic contact with the aural environment. As we encounter sounds, our attention is focused toward certain directions which leads us to act in certain ways, which in turn leads us to perceive certain qualities. This is the perception-action cycle: a constant flux of attention, self-adjustment, and influence on the environment. In other words, it is a search for *resonance*:

> Perception is...the constant orienting of the organism to its environment, the constant search to optimize and explore the source of stimulation. Actions lead to, enhance, and direct perception, and are in turn the result of, and response to, perception. Resonance is not passive: it is a perceiving organism's active, exploratory engagement with its environment. (Clarke, 2005, p.19)

Clarke's work shows us that perceiving music is always embedded and enacted; that is, perception and meaning-making are necessarily tied to action[4].

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[4] Clarke notes that in "high" art forms in the West, where active responses from the audience are discouraged except at certain culturally-approved times, the perception-action cycle is interrupted. Limited opportunity for action would therefore impact perception.

The enactivist perspective, in demonstrating how individuals make meaning through interaction with their environment, is useful in conceptualizing not only how people perceive and understand music, but also what they *do* with it. Interaction takes place within cultural frameworks and with cultural materials that shape our actions and the range of choices we have. Enactivism therefore opens questions of agency, or how individual actors are able to make choices using the tools of their particular environment (DeJaeger & Froese, 2009; Torrance & Froese, 2011). Enactivism "…asks how human agents acquire expressive or stylistic freedom by becoming masters of their own culture" (Baerveldt & Verheggen, 2012, p.187). The link between the enactivist perspective and agency has recently been explored in music therapy (Høffding et al., 2024). Applying the perspective to improvisation with people with serious mental health challenges, the authors consider how an enactivist analysis of musical improvisation can provide an understanding of how a person might 'resource' music – which is a way of 'mastering culture'. In their analysis of a free improvisation, the authors demonstrate how its process is one of "balancing between distanciation from and integration with its environment" (p.220). The therapeutic effect of musical improvisation "can be partly explained as a strengthening, flexing, or recalibrating of the agential capacity" (ibid.). Musical improvisation can therefore be seen as a resource for socially-focussed therapeutic work, in that it can be a way of maintaining one's identity while at the same time being influenced by (and influencing) others.

It can be drawn from the enactivist perspective that in a musical performance, all actors engage in sensemaking processes through their actions. This would suggest that audience action is integral to their experience – an essential ingredient of their meaning-making processes. To audience is to take active part in a musical-social event, to act and make choices in a sociocultural environment that provides resources and limitations for social (inter)action. As Clarke (2005) and Høffding et al. (2024) state above, the experience of music is one of 'tuning in' to an environment, of the active search for resonance. I adopt an enactivist perspective in this project in order to: 1) position the performance ecologically, defined by the relationships that constitute it, 2) articulate a framework for sensemaking,

and 3) develop methods that follow the actions of the audience toward meaning making in a musical-social event, or toward the search for 'resonance' as it may be. To understand audiencing involves understanding the kind of 'thing' a performance is, and to understand the kind of thing it is, we must understand how we might come to know it. It is within this enactivist framework that I investigate audiencing.

About This Thesis

Stages, aims, research questions, and procedure

This study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the engagement and experience of the audience in therapeutically-oriented choral performances. In exploring the phenomenon I term 'audiencing' I aim to generate knowledge about its role in the performance process and how that might be a resource for performing clients.

The study was carried out in two stages. In the preliminary stage, I conducted an ethnographic pilot project wherein I investigated both performer and audience experiences of a single choral performance. The site for this study was a choir for disabled adults which I have directed since 2009, and the methods included participant observation and interviewing both choir and audience members. I aimed to pose a set of exploratory questions regarding the choir's relationship to their audience (as examined through one concert), explore the suitability of an ethnographic methodology (and associated methods) for studying the topic, and, based on preliminary findings, generate further questions and methodological considerations which would provide the ground for a more detailed and thorough investigation of the topic. In line with these aims, I formulated the following research questions:

1. What is the experience of preparing and giving a concert for the members of *Voices*?
2. What is the experience and impact of attending a *Voices* concert for members of the audience?
3. What is the relationship between choir experience, audience experience, and the aims of empowerment and social integration in a *Voices* concert?

Semi-structured interviews with audience members were the main source of data. These interviews revealed stories of audience members' (who were mainly family members of choir participants) relationships to their loved ones in the choir and focused on their experiences of surprise, participation, and belonging. These experiences were linked to moments in the concert when audience members felt 'invited' or 'led' by the choir (whether by actively singing or playing along or being surprised at a singer's passionate delivery, for example). The preliminary phase made two things apparent: 1) audience experience was characterized by action, not merely reception, and 2) the methodology and methods I had employed needed to be adjusted and refined in order to trace the links between the action, thought, and feeling which produced experience.

In the second stage of the study, I followed up on the questions surrounding the audience's active engagement in the performance. For example, when an experience such as "belonging" was reported, what were the specific actions that were taken to generate that experience, and how and where was it carried out of the performance (if at all)? These methods and forms of analysis did not allow me to empirically link the participant self-reports of activity and experience (what was said, heard, seen, done, noticed) during the performance (in its different stages) to the consequences of the performance. Through ethnographically-informed interviewing, I aimed to trace action and experience from the "before" (what participants draw into the event) to the "during" (what all participants do in the event) to the "after" (how the performance shows up in memory, talk, and action) (DeNora, 2003). This required a methodological shift: rather than digging into broad, self-reported experiences such as feeling states, I traced the links between actions and

consequences in order to understand what happens in and what is drawn out of the performance event. It also required research questions that were more narrowly focused on the audience and their actions at different stages of the performance process. The research questions for the second phase of the study became:

Primary*:*

What constitutes 'audiencing' within performances in Community Music Therapy projects and other musical-social events?

Supporting:

1. How do audiences describe their experiences of these performances? What are their reasons for attending and what, if anything, do they describe as being important about these events?
2. What do audiences *do* at different stages of the performance process (before, during, and after)? How do they prepare to attend a performance, what do they do during the performance, and what do they take away from a performance?
3. How do audience members speak about what choirs 'need' or expect from audiences? How does this compare to how choir directors speak about the needs and expectations of the choirs with respect to their audiences?

In the second stage of the study, I used aspects of ethnographic thinking to interview an international sample of audience members and choir directors connected with 'therapeutically-oriented' choirs. These choirs included those specifically identified as CoMT projects, choirs not identified as CoMT but led by music therapists, and choirs led by music educators or community musicians that were made up of socially vulnerable people and had an explicit musical-social agenda. Exploring diverse perspectives on performance as well as diverse performance settings and contexts provided the opportunity to study the phenomenon of 'audiencing' in a multi-dimensional, ecological manner.

Focusing terms

Throughout this document I use some key terms that may be generally and broadly understood, yet need to be specified in order to clarify their use for this thesis:

Socially vulnerable people. Social vulnerability is a broad descriptor referring to people living under conditions that affect their capacity to deal with social or environmental stressors (Mah et al., 2023). Conditions that create social vulnerability include, for example, disability, poverty, institutionalization, medical or health status, citizenship status, literacy/education level, and/or oppression on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or age. While it has been pointed out that "socially vulnerable" is at times a problematic term, emphasizing weakness and/or reduced agency (Munari et al., 2021), it also locates responsibility for reduced agency at the level of social structures: "Social vulnerability encompasses all social practices, structures, or positions within the sets of relations and hierarchies that render individuals, groups, or societies unable to respond or adapt to harms" (Li et al., 2023). The choir members in this study, though extremely diverse, all have in common an experience of social marginalization. Therefore, the broad scope of the term makes it a useful descriptor in this context, which, I believe, outweighs some of its problematic connotations.

Therapeutically-oriented choirs. The choirs in this study defined themselves in various ways. Some were specifically identified as CoMT projects, some did not identify as CoMT but were led by music therapists, and some were led by music educators or community musicians. Choirs around the world are led by people of diverse (and often overlapping) professional distinctions. My aim was not to focus on a singular professional framework for directing choirs, but to look broadly and inclusively at choirs that are made up of socially vulnerable people and have an explicit musical-social agenda.

Musical-social agenda. A 'musical-social agenda' is defined here as the intentional linking of musical activity with goals of health and wellbeing. Examples include: "to empower people with disabilities through music" or "creating a community of caring with incarcerated individuals through choral singing."

Audiencing. Though the aim of the project is to flesh out a comprehensive definition of this term, I use it in the spirit of Christopher Small's (1998) *musicking*, a word that draws attention to the activity, rather than the object, of music. Turning a noun into a verb encourages a focus on the actions taken to generate the phenomenon; it directs us to think of "audience member" as location of situated activity rather than a static role. 'Audiencing' presents audience experience as a practice. Though the term has been used sporadically in academic contexts (e.g., Browning, 2020; Ginters, 2010), it is not typically used outside academia.

My position as practitioner and researcher

As stated above, I am a music therapist, trained in the Nordoff-Robbins approach and working within a CoMT framework. However, my professional activities have led me into territories outside the boundaries of music therapy as strictly defined. Though "music therapist" has been my primary professional identity, I have worked as a music educator, as a music facilitator, and in many environments that called for many different kinds of musical expertise. For this reason, I do not assume that music's 'help' is limited to that which can be accomplished through therapeutic models of care. For me, concerns of social justice are woven through the work of music and health and wellbeing, and this thesis therefore takes a broad and inclusive disciplinary perspective. The findings from this project are directed to the field of music therapy, to be sure, but I anticipate their resonance with and usefulness for community music and music education, particularly within their social justice-oriented dimensions.

Outline of chapters

Chapter one has outlined my personal and professional backgrounds, the topic, rationale, and aims for the study, and the research approach. In chapter two I review the literature on choral performance and audiences, and I situate the study within discourses on music, music therapy, community music, and audience studies. Chapter three is a presentation of the methodology and methods used in both stages of the project. The shift in methods is discussed, as are the data analysis methods I employed.

In chapters four, five, and six I present the findings of the project. In chapter four, I draw on data from choir directors to show how materials and processes were resourced to frame performances and elicit modes of participation from the audience. In chapter five I draw on audience participant data to present the 'strategies of audiencing' these participants engaged in. In chapter six I triangulate data from choir directors and audience members to show how performances came to be co-created.

Chapter seven presents a discussion of my findings. I propose that a notion of hospitality provides a missing link between choir and audience experience and clarifies concerns of belonging and inclusion that such performances often aim to address. I end with a critical evaluation of the project and suggest directions for future research on the topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Choirs, in some shape or form, have existed as long as humans have lifted their voices together to sing. However, it is only recently that some choirs have existed 'for themselves'; that is, existed because of the range of benefits they provide their members and not primarily for other reasons such as entertainment or use in worship. In this chapter, I review literature on the links between choral singing, health and wellbeing, and social justice. I begin by reviewing literature on choral singing and health in nonclinical settings. From there I review the music therapy literature on choral singing in light of the development of theorizing on performance within the field. In particular, I focus on how music therapy and CoMT practices have 'dealt with' the audience – how audiences are portrayed, but often, most tellingly, how they are left out of professional discourse. Literature from other fields and disciplines, such as Community Music, is shown to helpfully link therapeutic aims to issues of justice. Finally, I review literature from audience and reception studies and the methods that have been used to study audiences in non-health-related contexts.

Choral Singing, Health, and Wellbeing

Since the 1970s, amateur choral singing has increased in Western societies (Bithell, 2014), with a resultant surge in research exploring the ways choral participation is related to dimensions of health and well-being. The health benefits of group and choral singing[5] are well-documented outside clinical music therapy contexts (Clift et al., 2008; Clift & Hancox, 2010; Livesey et al., 2012). For instance, group singing has been shown to positively affect physiological features such as respiratory functioning (Gick & Nicol, 2016), psychological

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[5] The groups in the literature reviewed were referred to using terms such as "choir", "chorus", and "singing group." In general, there were no definitions of these terms given nor did there appear to be any specific set of criteria differentiating them; for example, some "choirs" do not hold public performances, while some "singing groups" do. The use of "choir", "chorus", or "singing group" seems to be the preference of the individual ensemble and for this reason the terms are used interchangeably in this section.

features such as stress reduction (Fancourt et al., 2016; Keeler et al. 2015; Linneman et al., 2017), and a range of psychosocial features often grouped under an umbrella referred to as 'quality of life' (Einarsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2016; Judd & Pooley, 2005; Van der Sandt & Nardi, 2024). While an increase in quality of life has been documented among well adults, choral participation has also been shown to improve quality of life in a variety of specific groups such as older adults (Johnson et al., 2017; Joseph & Southcott, 2015; Pérez-Aldeguer & Leganés, 2014; Lee et al., 2016; Teater & Baldwin, 2014), women with eating disorders (Pavlakou, 2009), and mental health service users (Clift & Morrison, 2011).

Choral participation has long been regarded as a unique means of creating social life and community (Ahlquist, 2006; Bithell, 2014), and research across a range of disciplines has tended to focus on the social dimensions of choral singing, including the specific social needs that singing can fulfill. In her study of the 'hidden musicians' in an English community of around 100,000, Ruth Finnegan documented about 100 choirs (Finnegan, 1989 in Ahlquist, 2006), each serving the community in distinct ways. Research has emphasized the positive relational aspects of group singing (Mellor, 2013), and choral participation has been shown to increase social connections (Lamont et al., 2018), facilitate social inclusion (Welch et al., 2014), and contribute to the building of singers' social capital (Langston, 2011). Stewart & Lonsdale (2016) found that psychological wellbeing was rated higher among choral singers than solo singers, suggesting that the range of psychological benefits attributed to singing are directly tied to the social experience, and not the individual pursuit of singing itself. Numerous studies have addressed the ways choral activity provides experiences of social participation and connectedness, among the general population (Bonshor, 2016; Kennedy, 2009; Langston, 2011) as well as in subcultures and special environments such as prisons (Cohen, 2009; Menning, 2010; Roma, 2010).

In particular, choral singing has been shown to foster a positive sense of identity and agency for socially vulnerable populations. In their research focusing on a choir for

homeless men, Bailey & Davidson (2001, 2002, 2003) found that, in addition to several emotional and cognitive benefits, choral participation contributed to the development of a sense of self defined by strength and ability rather than helplessness and dependence. Choir participation "appear[ed] to have stimulated a process of identity reconstruction for the homeless singers. The choristers no longer consider[ed] themselves to be homeless vagabonds, but rather successful performers and social missionaries" (Bailey & Davidson, 2003, p. 29). The feeling of agency cultivated in choir members also led to the development of social interaction and communication skills and provided a sense of belonging and an opportunity to build social networks.

Several studies indicate that the increased social connections resulting from choir participation are of primary significance for choral singers (Clift & Morrison, 2011; Joseph & Southcott, 2015; Einarsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2016; Lee, Davidson, & Krause, 2016), and this focus has suggested – often implicitly – a changed significance of the audience. In a later study comparing socially marginalized choirs with a middle-class choir, Bailey & Davidson (2005) found that social processes, particularly the relationship with the audience, was of high importance to singers in the marginalized choirs. Dingle et al (2013), in a qualitative study of choral singers with chronic mental illness, found through interview data that social connections between choir members and between choir members and the audience were highly valued by the singers. Both studies (Bailey & Davidson, 2005 & Dingle et al., 2013) indicate that choral participation can contribute to a sense of empowerment for socially vulnerable people – as the title of the latter study suggests, "the choir was an opportunity to make themselves heard" (p. 414). In these studies, empowerment is linked to the expression of strengths and display of ability in front of a listening audience – though the experience of the audience is not investigated.

Other research has examined the ways in which identity is formed and negotiated in choral participation when participants represent different identity groups. Often, identity groups are divided along performer-audience lines, such as those of ethnicity (Chadwick, 2011;

Jacobson, 2006; Metzelaar, 2006), sexuality (Bird, 2017; Hilder, 2022; Strachan, 2006;) and ability (Hassan, 2017). Hassan, in an ethnographic study of a choir with learning disabilities, examined the ways in which choral participation afforded opportunities for singers to exercise agency, which led to the development of personal and collective identities formed upon musical skill and ability, which in turn led to experiences of confidence and empowerment. The identities formed in the rehearsal process allowed for a self-presentation to a nondisabled audience which was experienced as "natural" and not reduced to an ability label.

The choir as an inclusive space has been studied in contexts where there is a diversity of identity markers such as ability and age (Carpenter, 2015), roles and hierarchies (Balsnes & Jansson, 2015), and culture and ethnicity (Yerichuk, 2015). However, the idea that choirs are sites of inclusivity, belonging, and integrated diversity simply because of their intentions to be so is seen as problematic. As Yerichuk (2015) states in her study of the concept of inclusion in a choral context, "ideas of cultural diversity and inclusion are configured and enacted through constructions of community…[these constructions] structure in certain cultural practices while structuring out others" (p. 228). For this reason, continual reflection on the goals of inclusivity, ideals of community, and the ways musical participation is structured is seen as necessary to achieve an inclusive space. For example, though not concerned with choirs exclusively, community musician and theorist Lee Higgins (2009, 2012) identifies 'hospitality' as the central feature of community music. For Higgins, the concept of hospitality provides a framework to define an ideal community and structure musical participation toward the goal of inclusion. Following this, Balsnes (2016) examined hospitality as experienced by refugee members of a Norwegian community choir, and the ways in which an "unconditional welcome" was defined, offered, and challenged in a diverse and inclusive group.

Choral singing has been shown to afford an array of social benefits; however, it has also been shown that inclusion and integration as strategic aims are not guaranteed outcomes

of getting together to sing. Rather, it is more the case that when musical and social processes are together given careful and critical attention, aims of inclusion and social integration can be reached (Boeskov, 2017; Rickwood, 2014). While there is strong evidence to support the notion that choral singing can be a socially transformative experience, researchers in choral music and health have not systematically investigated the experiences of all participants – namely, the audience – in these events.

Choral Singing and Performance in Music Therapy

In light of the many identified social benefits of group and choral singing, it would seem fitting for the field of music therapy to be concerned with both the practice and research of choral performance in the pursuit of linking musical practices with health. This has not been the case until recently; the reasons for why this might be so shall be explored in the following section.

Choral and group singing in music therapy

Choral singing as a specific music therapy intervention has been examined from within conventional medical and psychotherapeutic paradigms and practices (Anshel & Kipper, 1988; Humphrey, 1980; Olderog Millard & Smith, 1989; Solé et al, 2010; Stegemöller et al., 2017; Yinger & LaPointe, 2012). As such, the focus of this research tilts heavily toward the measurement of individualized goals. Performance, while at times mentioned in this literature, is not typically the focus of study. While individual psychological and physiological goals are prioritized in the studies listed above, it is interesting to note that, in several, the value of social relationships made possible by the choirs is prioritized by the participants.

Within music therapy research, the benefits of group and choral singing have been studied across several different clinical populations (Clark & Harding, 2012). As a music therapy intervention its use has been documented with patients in cancer treatment (Young, 2009) and the elderly (Summers, 1999). Qualitative research methods have yielded results showing that choral singing provides opportunities for increased self-esteem, self-expression, stress management, and group membership in people with chronic mental illness (Eyre, 2011), provides experiences of friendship/companionship, happiness, relaxation, and fun in older adults (Clements-Cortes, 2013), and increases confidence, peer support, mood, motivation, and communication in stroke survivors (Tamplin et al., 2013). Other studies have traced improvements in quality-of-life domains for autistic adults (Young, 2020), people with neurological conditions (Thompson et al., 2022), and homeless people (Rio, 2005). Recent research comparing participation before the Covid19 pandemic and virtual participation during the pandemic has suggested that participants valued the social connection and support they received from their choirs even when activities were virtual, for people with dementia (Thompson et al., 2023) and aphasia (Fekete & Eckhardt, 2022).

Finally, other research in music therapy has explored the potentials of choral singing to create possibilities for cross-cultural interaction and understanding, where differences are found in age/generation (Bowers, 1998; Darrow et el., 1994), ethnicity (Kimura & Nishimoto, 2016), and ability (Eilat & Raichel, 2016). With the exception of Darrow et al., the research focus in these studies was located in the psychological processes of and relationships between the choir participants; as such, performance and the role of the audience received little attention. Still other studies have looked at the choir as a medium for community-building (Gosine & Travasso, 2018; Stige, 2010b). While these publications do not collect data on audience experience, they both frame public performances as opportunities to raise awareness about specific social issues related to the identities of performers (parents of children in hospice care and older adults, respectively). The

audiences are therefore implicated in the processes of community-building, but their participation is not investigated and their experiences not confirmed.

Music therapy research on choral singing has historically focused on the *processes* of choral participation. This has led to a focus on rehearsals: procedures and intra-chorus relationships rather than performances and choir-audience relationships. In the next section, I examine how notions of performance in music therapy through the development of the profession led to the current situation, where the social possibilities of choral performance have received relatively little attention in the literature.

A brief history of performance in music therapy

Music therapist Gary Ansdell was the first in the field to trace the status of performance (as a music therapy practice) through the development of the profession and has been a central figure in the development of music therapy theorizing on performance. In an article discussing the role and value of performance in emerging CoMT practices, Ansdell (2005) summarizes the history of performance in music therapy – and paints a portrait of a complicated and sometimes ambivalent relationship. Ansdell views this history in three stages. In the first, "pre-professional" stage, performances were given by musicians to patients and were the sole mode of 'music therapy' delivery. The second, "early professional" stage saw performance as one of several activities across a private – public continuum that might take place under the music therapy banner. In stage three, called the "institutional consensus", music therapy's theoretical movement toward the medical model left no room for activities outside traditional client-therapist relationships and traditional clinical spaces. Performance, then, was pushed to the periphery of music therapy practice or precluded altogether. The elimination of performance from music therapy was viewed by many as an important step toward professional recognition in healthcare and education contexts.

Privacy became a central defining characteristic of an institutionalized music therapy, and many music therapists eager to subsume their practices under dominant models of healthcare treatment embraced working in formats which aligned with this understanding of therapy as essentially a private and individual process. Other music therapists continued to incorporate performances into their work, though this was likely a 'behind the scenes' kind of activity. Ansdell (2002) notes that there is a conspicuous lack of reference to performance in the publications of music therapy pioneers who were known to include performances in their work, indicating a gap or possibly a tension between their practices and developing theories. This quote, from Nordoff and Robbins (1971/1983), is one of very few references to performance and highlights this kind of tension:

> The development and performance of a play with handicapped children can be a dynamically stimulating event in the social life of a school or institution; its effects reach through the children, the staff, parents, and interested groups [...] When the play has been written and produced for them, and depends upon their involvement for its realization, the performance transmits the children's capacities for care, perceptiveness, and cooperativeness; the audience experiences their commitment and sense of fulfillment. Pathology takes second place as the children's individualities are actively expressed. (p.149)

The authors point to the effects on the institution – indeed, the whole ecology involved – in their summation of the benefits of performance. Children were presented and identified differently, as complex individuals rather than patients. Nordoff and Robbins come very close to a description of changed identity and social re-positioning through musical performance; however, even if such theoretical language was available to them at the time, it would have likely been difficult to integrate into conventional models of treatment.

Performance was largely absent from music therapy research and theory in the first several decades of professionalized music therapy. By the end of the twentieth century, however,

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discourse around healthcare in some milieux shifted from mechanistic toward more holistic definitions of health and wellbeing. At this time, theorists such as Even Ruud (1998) and David Aldridge (1996) explored ideas of the 'performative' aspects of health and the potentials of music improvisation to function as a health-promoting 'performance' of identity and social relationships. Their treatment of the concept of performance remained within the context of individual and small group music therapy and did not explicitly address the possibilities of public performance.

Community Music Therapy and the recasting of performance

Though performance has arguably always had a role in music therapy practice – however peripheral – theorizing about performance in music therapy did not occur with any measure of regularity or rigour until the advent of CoMT as a legitimate area of professional music therapy practice (Ansdell, 2002, 2005). As CoMT, in its emphasis on the social and cultural determinants of health and affordances of music, redefined some of the roles, relationships, sites, boundaries, and aims of music therapy, it became possible to recast certain musical activities in more central roles. Rather than relegating musical activities beyond the clinic walls to the margins of practice, performance was reconsidered as a potential deliverer of social participation and community transformation.

Though there has been debate surrounding the centrality of performance to CoMT (Ruud, 2004; Stige & Aarø, 2012), it is common for CoMT processes to include performances of some kind, whether for a designated audience or the general public. In much of the early research on CoMT, performance was reflected on as a natural culmination of the music therapy process. For example, Turry (2005) explored performance as the outgrowth of his work with a cancer survivor. Though their work began in the traditional dyadic form – client and therapist improvising songs in a closed music therapy clinical space – the client determined that the natural next step in her therapeutic process was to perform her songs for others, first for a small group of friends, and eventually in public venues. In following

research, several authors working across the spectrum of individual through large group music therapy concluded that there is not always a clear division between the musical process and product; a commitment to musical activity very often seems to find fulfillment in the sharing of one's musical efforts (Maratos, 2004; Wood, Verney, & Atkinson, 2004; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). Performances, in the early research, came about in response to clients' desire to share the work of their music therapy processes (to expand their audiences, so to speak), and not as interventions imposed by the music therapist.

Perhaps because of its controversial status, one can detect in this early research an immediate need to connect the outcomes of performance with traditional therapeutic aims. In most, if not all studies, the benefits of performance are couched in the language an individual's areas of need or deficit: the power of performance to integrate the individual into society is conceived of in terms of strengthening individual skills and abilities. For example, in a chapter in which he interviews three different music therapists whose work includes public performance with clients, Aigen (2004) draws out traditional aims of personal growth. Themes of performance as providing an opportunity for self-expression are prominent in each narrative. In another chapter, Powell (2004) conceptualizes performance in her work as a means of giving voice to her elderly clients' stories. She finds a rationale in the words of Turry: "Public sharing can be a way of validating changes the client has made internally" (Turry, 2001 in Powell, 2004, p. 179). These studies may suggest that the change that may occur as a result of the performance is a distinct kind of change than that which happens internally within a conventional music therapy session. While it seems these authors may have aimed to begin a conversation about the ways relationships change among clients and the larger communities of which they are part, it also seems important for them to justify the therapeutic value of performance in a more traditional sense – as perhaps secondary to individual work.

Performance and the 'ripple effect'

Continued research on performance in CoMT has further focussed the benefits of performance in individual-experiential language, but not without sensitivity to the "ripple effect" (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004) such performances may have on the larger community. However, while the "ripple effect" has at times been assumed, it has not always been explored. In a study on the public performances of songs created in music therapy sessions by women trauma survivors (Day, Baker, & Darlington, 2009), the authors frame the benefits of the performance in terms of an increase in pride and a sense of accomplishment. While the authors emphasize the emotional expression and processing that accompany the performance, they add, "They may feel they are helping others in the community who may have been abused as children by contributing to the alleviation of their sense of powerlessness" (p.25). O'Grady and McFerran (2012), in a survey of the ways in which Australian music therapists incorporate performances into their work, note that some survey respondents "*assumed benefits*...relating to the music therapy group, the audience, the wider community and to the music therapy profession" (p. 30, emphasis added). There is an expressed hope in these studies that the audience will be affected by the performances, but there is no attempt to systematically explore their responses.

As performance has continued to develop in both practice and thinking, music therapists have considered more carefully the opportunities for social connection, participation, and integration in addition to more individualistic aims – but have appeared to find it difficult to accommodate this range of aims within traditional therapeutic paradigms. For example, though his language is largely couched in the terms of individualized diagnosis-specific therapeutic goals, Jampel (2011) discusses the performer-audience connection as one of the most significant experiences associated with performance. Brandalise (2015) explores community performance for people with autism spectrum disorder as a means of creating possibilities for social interaction and integration, stating, "A main objective...is to integrate clients, families, professionals, and regular audience" (para. 29). At the same time, he

appears to assume that such integration will occur through construing the performance as an 'intervention' focused on self-expression. Oddy (2005) describes a large-scale community performance in terms of communal bonding and celebration, and the process of developing intended outcomes for the event. Highlighting the difficulty in fitting performance into traditional therapeutic frameworks, Oddy formulated goals for the performers but not for the audience. Other research has touched on the performer-audience relationship in terms of performer self-expression and communication (O'Brien, 2006; O'Grady, 2009; O'Grady, Rolvsjord, & McFerran, 2015), and the importance of the performer 'being seen' or 'being heard' by the audience in order to develop confidence and a positive self-image (Curreri, 2017; MacDonald & Viega, 2012; Soshensky, 2011).

Noticing the audience

As research in CoMT matures, an emerging concern is how to construe the participation of the client's larger community (Pavlicevic et al., 2015; Stige et al., 2010), and how to account for the impact of music on networks of people that extend beyond the client (Wood, 2016). Audience response to performances has been the subject of researcher reflections (Soshensky, 2011) but rarely the topic of research inquiry. Gosine, Hawksley, & LeMesurrier Quinn (2017), in a review of a series of CoMT workshops and performances with adults with disabilities and musicians from the community, noted a "transformation" in the audience that appeared to be a result of the audience celebrating the performers' achievements.

Curtis & Mercado (2004) were among the first to directly elicit feedback from an audience. After a performance by adults with disabilities as part of a community engagement initiative, a short questionnaire was distributed to audience members consisting of six questions about their experience of the concert, covering topics such as enjoyment, expectations, surprise, and changed perceptions of people with disabilities. While

audience response was not the focus of the study, the questionnaire was an important tool in gauging the social impact of the music therapy initiative.

In a more direct fashion, Fairchild, Thompson, & McFerran (2017) investigated the connection between performers and audience members in a study of a performance by children who were homeless and/or victims of domestic violence. Through interviews of both performers and the audience, they found that the performance provided a means of engagement and connection between the children and their families, and that the audience played an active role in the performance. This active role was defined as *support*; parents provided differing levels of support and encouragement which affected the performances and children's experiences of their performances.

As performance is increasingly construed as a therapeutic activity for vulnerable individuals because of the opportunities for social participation, the question of the audience's role becomes more urgent. Music therapists have been content to broadly assume an audience 'ripple effect' and even a participatory role at times, but the nature of their participation and response is usually left unexamined.

There are several assumptions regarding the roles, responses, and participation of both the performers and audience underlying this construal of the therapeutic benefits of performance in the above literature.

First, there is typically a traditional separation of performers and audience, with the performers on a stage, sometimes referred to as a literal or figurative "platform." Implied is that this is a space where the 'action' happens, where the performers have control, and this (perhaps inadvertently) emphasizes the relative inactivity of the audience. Those on stage are described as the focus, which may imply that the audience is an interchangeable feature: it does not matter who they are, as long as they are there. The direction of action and communication is mainly unidirectional, from the performers to the audience.

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Second, the performance is very often described as the transmission and reception of a 'message'. Often, this message is the music's lyrical content (Baker, 2013; MacDonald & Viega, 2012), implying the music is a vehicle for the transmission of the client's story, feelings, or other narrative. Even when the performers are not the authors or composers of the song, the "authentic voice" (Baker, 2013) of the client/performer is what is transmitted – the musical product is symbolic of the person. As a message transmitted, the meaning of the performance is often thought to be contained within the music-object itself, and the response of the audience is largely a cognitive process: the audience *understands* the experiences of the client through the reception of a musical product (Day et al., 2009; Baker, 2013). The object is created outside the interaction, its 'meaning' immutable, and is then communicated to the audience. This bears close resemblance to the 'transmission theory' of communication, in which the sending of a message is a one-way, linear process.[6]

Third, the audience's role in and contribution to the performance has not often been explicated beyond notions of "support." Research has indicated that a supportive audience is necessary for a successful performance experience (Turry, 2001; Fairchild et al., 2017), though what constitutes the giving of support (and its effects) has not been investigated in this literature. From a supportive posture, the audience is thought to perceive previously unnoticed skills and abilities in the performers (Turry, 2001; Jampel, 2011; Ramsey, 2002; Soshensky, 2011; O'Grady & McFerran, 2012; O'Grady et al., 2015), find common ground, and recognize common experiences with the performers (O'Grady et al., 2015). However, these conclusions have not been the result of detailed examination of audience action and experience, but through general observations, audience comments on the 'meaning' of the performance, and, at times, speculation. Research that makes reference to the relationship of the audience to the performers (Fairchild et al., 2017; Gosine et al., 2017;

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[6] For a comprehensive discussion of transmission theory in music, including critiques and alternatives, see *Musical Communication* (Miell, McDonald, & Hargreaves, 2005).

O'Grady, 2011; Rickson, 2014; Seabrook, 2017) does so without attention to the details of audience engagement.

The question of audience 'support' and validation of the performers is brought up in a critical ethnographic study by Rickson (2014). Rickson followed the collaborative rehearsal process and performance by a group of teens with learning disabilities and a professional orchestra. A common concern for the volunteers and facilitators in the project was how the disabled performers would be received. Would the performance offer an opportunity to feel a sense of inclusion and belonging, or would it result in feelings of embarrassment, even shame? Rickson questions the way disability is presented in musical performance and notes the consequences of both minimizing and foregrounding performers' disabled identities. She states that while there seemed to be a perception (among volunteers and audience members) that performers were vulnerable and that a narrative of 'overcoming' persisted, this was held concurrently with a belief in the artistic value of the performance. Though the aim of her study is not to comprehensively investigate audience experience, she does raise questions around audience perceptions, concerns, and expectations, and suggests that the performers may not share these same questions. While vulnerability, support, and validation were primary concerns of the volunteers and audience, these were not necessarily shared by the performers. She concludes by suggesting that perhaps the tension between performer and audience expectations and perceptions is where the potential lies for "disrupt[ting] the traditional ways that people conceive of an orchestra, challeng[ing] stereotypical portrayals of disability and chang[ing] attitudes" (p.109).

Rickson's study provokes important questions around music therapy's conception of the audience. In particular, the potentially harmful consequences of the lack of attention to the audience are exposed. As Rickson makes clear, if audiences assume their primary (or only) role is to support the performers – in the way they think the performers need to be supported – then this may have the effect of limiting the possibilities for challenging stereotypes and changing attitudes.

Reconsidering the Audience in Community Music Therapy

Many scholars, across the fields of music therapy, community music, and music education, have examined the social dimensions of musical interaction, often with a view to the ways in which one's musical utterances are received and understood by another. These theories describe musicking – and often specifically performance – as a site of social negotiation, a place where a kind of give-and-take occurs. For example, the engagement between musicking participants has been conceived as "hospitality" (Ansdell, 2014; Higgins, 2008) or "gift exchange" (Higgins, 2008). In these theories, musicking is a way of giving or making room for another, a way of caring for another or creating space for another to flourish. Others have discussed musicking in terms of "empowerment" (Procter, 2001; Rolvsjord, 2010) and "resistance" (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). In these theories, musicking is a way of creating and exerting agency, of claiming musical and social space in order to expand one's range of choices and potential actions. Still others write of musicking in terms of "reconciliation" (Robertson, 2010) or as "ritual" (Ansdell, 2014; Ruud 1998; Stige, 2010a). In these theories, musical engagement is viewed as a way of creating experiences of belonging and mutuality, of exploring and often celebrating relationships. In each of these theories, social negotiation in musicking relationships is a mutual process which involves finding a 'fit' between oneself and one's social environment.

In music therapy discourse musical interaction has been described in terms suggesting a process of social exchange. Ansdell (1995) discusses music as a 'meeting place' between two people, a place of mutual influence and response. Garred (2001), drawing from philosopher-theologian Martin Buber, emphasizes the qualities of mutual openness and receptiveness in his discussion of musical interaction as dialogue: "In the encounter the relation between *I* and *You* is mutual, a mutuality of one recognizing, accepting and affirming the other as an interactive partner. It is reciprocal, a relation of mutual influence." (Garred, 2001, 'A Philosophy of Dialogue' section, para. 2). For both Ansdell and Garred, the

social exchange in a musicking event is not transactional but relational: each participant gives and takes, each influences and is influenced by the others.

Communicative and relational exchange as a mutual process in the musical encounter is a concept familiar to music therapists in conventional therapeutic settings (that is, within private therapeutic encounters in mainly improvisational approaches), but this discourse seems to change when it comes to performance in music therapy. Perhaps this is because, as I argued in the previous section, in much of the early CoMT research, the rationale for performance typically centred on the benefit to the individual client. But at this point in the theoretical development of CoMT, it seems odd that the audience has not been enfolded into the web of relationships of musical meaning-making when it comes to research on performance.

How could, and how *should* the audience be construed in CoMT – as well as in other approaches in music therapy? Music therapist Even Ruud (2010) suggests that "the essence of community music therapy lies in the use of music to negotiate the space between private and public, the client and the institution/other staff, or the client and the community" (p.129). Although incorporating audience experience into research on performance in CoMT has been rare thus far, the audience has often been cast in a central role in discussions of performance. Music therapy scholar Kenneth Aigen (2014) states:

> The presence of an audience is a crucial factor in understanding the role of performance in therapy. Of primary importance is how the audience serves to intensify the musical experience in a way that has intrapersonal and social consequences. It can lead to a new, more potent level of engagement with music from which the client develops an enhanced sense of self. Moreover, the contact with the audience can represent the enhancement of the client's social connectedness. (p.166)

Aigen is clear that the audience is not extraneous to the client's performance – it is "crucial" – but in what capacity, and through what actions? These are not specified in the literature he reviews. Similarly, O'Grady et al. (2015), in a study on women's performances in prison, state that:

> Relational and community levels of change as a result of public performance in music therapy have much to do with the audience's encounter with the performer. Audience members can witness the strengths of performers in a new light whereby increased understanding of the plight of the performers can lead to social change or at least stronger community spirit and social connection. (p.126)

These authors identify the "encounter" – the interaction between performer and audience in real time and space – as a key ingredient in change, affecting not just the performers but the broader community or society. Again, the audience is construed as playing a central yet unspecified role.

Two studies in CoMT shine a light on the impact of an audience with regard to performer experience. Mitchell (2019) writes of performance leading to new experiences of control, vulnerability, and mutuality for an adolescent client in mental health treatment. Of central importance was the client's experience of being open with and influenced by her audience (mutuality), though the precise nature of audience influence was not investigated. The experience of mutuality was therefore not linked to specific actions of the audience, what assumptions they brought in, or any future actions taken by the client or the audience. Future relational possibilities between performer and audience were therefore suggested but not explored. Elefant (2010), in her discussion of two performances by a choir of disabled adults, explores a complex relationship between the choir and their audience. While one of their performances was received very enthusiastically by the audience, this alone did not make for a 'successful' performance by the choir's standards. When the choir had a voice in structuring the next performance and was therefore able to present

themselves on their own terms, they created ground on which to build the kind of relational experience in which they felt heard and recognized. This led to experiences of mutual celebration and feelings of empowerment for the choir. This study offers an example of musical performance opening possibilities for relational experiences such as mutuality and empowerment. However, even though it refers to the significance of powerful and transformative experiences in the audience, it, like Mitchell's (2019) study, does not include a detailed examination of the audience's actual engagement, nor does it link these powerful experiences in the performance to subsequent attitudes, perceptions, actions, or experiences for the audience. If, as Even Ruud (2008) writes, "performing music in a public context has consequences for the person in terms of becoming recognized and thus a possible member of a community" (p.58), more attention to the actions and experiences of that community is needed to fully understand what all participants are contributing and what the performance actually affords, socially speaking.

Ansdell & DeNora (2016) suggest that the audience may respond to a performance in a way that delivers what the performers need at that moment. In this way, they have the opportunity to act as a therapist does, "...being sensitive and attentive to just how a person is, to how they are doing something, and then 'matching' or 'mirroring' this to establish an intersubjective contact, to support and demonstrate empathy and understanding" (p.98). This is a "*collective* understanding and response" (ibid., emphasis in original) and is not the same kind of supportive response that Rickson describes. In Ansdell and DeNora's description of performer and audience participation in musical events, they are able to trace micro-actions and micro-responses that flesh out a picture of a 'supportive audience'. Support is found in the moment-to-moment actions, reactions, and interactions between different actors in the event – and taking place within specific *musical* actions. This is not a broad and general supportive response, disconnected from actual musical content and action, that may be problematic in the way Rickson described.

What could audience 'support', in this sense, offer to performers beyond the simple notions identified above? In an earlier publication, Ansdell (2014) draws a connection between the change in an individual (happening through an audience) and the change in the audience (happening through the individual). He reflects on the performances given by Tony, an individual client with whom he worked in music therapy:

> His public performances give him a platform to accomplish or complete something that is witnessed, supported, and appreciated by others. As a result of this, he becomes more visible and more appreciated within the social fabric as a whole – both to others and, through their recognition, to himself. Tony becomes more himself through others. (p.132)

Ansdell suggests that Tony becomes more himself, but perhaps the audience becomes more 'themselves' too. Though he does not explore this, the implication is that the social fabric undergoes a shift as well – Tony becoming "more himself" would ripple out into the community that witnesses his performance.

Construing the encounter between performers and audiences as a source of growth and transformation presents an opportunity to link therapeutic aims to discourses of empowerment and social change. 'Empowerment' as a focus and aim of practice has been an important theme in the development of CoMT as it addresses the potential of music to afford agency and social participation for vulnerable people. While Daveson (2001) proposed a broad empowerment framework for music therapy practice in general, Procter (2001, 2004) has explored empowerment in terms of social capital and Rolvsjord (2010) has considered empowerment central in a resource-oriented practice framework. Some music therapists have explicitly linked music therapy to social justice frameworks such as anti-oppressive practise (Baines, 2013; Scrine & McFerran, 2018), and inclusion/equality-focused practises (Curtis, 2012; Vaillancourt, 2012), motivated by concerns of empowerment and equal voice. In each case, music therapy (and very often performance)

is argued for as a medium of empowerment through the ways access to music can be facilitated by a music therapist. Empowerment is linked to clients' access to and appropriation of musical materials, and not on professionally directed interventions. This is in line with the critique of music therapy's historical focus on the "normalization" of disability through music by some scholars of disability studies (Lubet, 2011, Straus, 2011). However, when it comes to performance, it is not clear if and how these same discourses of empowerment might fit. As I stated in Chapter 1, performances are frequently described as 'empowering' for performers (such as those in *Voices*), but to draw a direct line from public performance to experiences of empowerment is problematic. An 'empowering performance' implicates the audience, yet audience experiences and perspectives have not been investigated in the literature, and it is not clear that empowerment as an outcome necessarily matches the experience of either the performers or the audience.

A view from Community Music

There has been increasing interest among music scholars in music's relationship to justice (Benedict et al., 2015), and the ways in which conflict and power imbalances can be addressed by music. Research in music education and community music has considered the ways music may provide a space for inclusion (Bradley, 2015; Marsh, 2015; Matthews, 2015) and contribute to social transformation (Ballantyne & Mills, 2015; Beckles-Willson, 2009; Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Sloboda, 2015; Woodward, 2015). Music as a resource for conflict transformation has been studied (Brooks 2010; Skyllstad, 2000; Urbain, 2007; Weaver, 2001), though as Bergh & Sloboda, in their review of the literature note, "...there are no attempts at trying to open the "black box" of the artistic episodes that is often illustrated through anecdotes, the aesthetic experiences are often seen as self-explanatory as to why any conflict transformation takes place" (p.8). Even in situations where there is an urgent need to reconfigure relationships damaged by conflict or an imbalance of power, the musical 'exchange' between participants has not been examined closely. Those that have

given musical detail more attention (Gottesman, 2017; Robertson, 2010) have not specifically explored audience or listener response.

Music educator Edward Messerschmidt (2017), in a doctoral dissertation examining attitudes toward prisoners after experiences with a prison choir, used a mixed methods approach involving a written questionnaire (using the Attitude Toward Prisoners scale and open-ended write-in questions). Findings indicated a substantial increase in positive attitudes toward prisoners. However, the study relied solely on self-assessment and self-report by audience participants and did not systemically link participant response to specific musical content or action. Though the findings support the notion that concerts with a specific social or therapeutic aim can have a measurable impact on audience members, the methodology and methods used in the study do not allow for any conclusions to be drawn regarding the nature of audience engagement in the performance or the interactional space between performers and audiences.

The literature on music's relationship to issues of justice comes from a variety of disciplines – music education, music sociology, music psychology, conflict transformation studies – each representing different traditions of music-making and drawing on different musical practices in their linking of music (and often, performance) to social change. Music, in this survey of diverse literature, is said to change not only the people making the music but also the people listening to it, potentially creating a ground on which more 'just' relationships can develop. But perhaps it is community music, as a practice, discipline, and field of study, that has provided the most intentional linking of music-making to concerns of justice. Community music scholars and practitioners Higgins and Willingham (2017) remind their readers that "[m]usic has been used by justice causes as a way to engage and maintain participation from a broad base of the population" (p.91). Through music's ability to raise awareness, create shared emotional experiences, and inspire action, music can "create community for the purpose of mobilizing change" (p.93). In their discussion of community music's relationship to activism and justice, Higgins and

Willingham emphasize choirs, referring to two specific choirs and one choral festival for church and community choirs. Each choir and event involve diversity (culture, faith, incarceration status) and a desire to build bridges between those separated by social differences. The authors are clear that "[m]erely enabling activism through music does not ensure that desired results are produced" (p.104), but rather, justice-oriented outcomes result from careful planning, specific facilitation techniques, and intentional, rigourous reflection on the connection between convictions and actions. However, the authors' focus is intra-choir relationships, and there is no discussion of specific audiences, or the specific ways in which changed relationships within choirs may build bridges between choirs and their audiences.

The word 'justice' is often used broadly and suggests a kind of ideal model of relationships. Willingham collects stories of music and justice in his edited volume, *Community Music at the Boundaries* (2021). The aim of this book is to "...deepen the reader's understanding of how participatory music making is carried out to the benefit of the musician and wider community, with a specific emphasis on those populations that have been deemed marginalized, vulnerable, or in many cases underserviced" (p.1). Several of the book's chapters address the uneven social space between groups of people in community music projects. For example, Mitchell (2021), writing from within an Australian context, shows how community music performances where the audience represented the underserviced population led to an increase in social capital:

> Participants were eager to share stories of how community music improved their health and well-being, how participation in community orchestras facilitated social inclusion of musicians and of audiences, and how these musical activities provided opportunities for lifelong learning and access to culture. These benefits were also apparent for the audiences: increased cultural access and social networking is particularly valuable for people in rural communities and for isolated and vulnerable groups such as the elderly. (p.171)

Audience experience was described in general terms, not linked to specific musical action. In another chapter, Laurila (2021) writes of indigenous-settler relationships in Canada, using the concept of "bridging" to focus the aims of a collaborative project between an indigenous women's and girls' drum circle and a men's police chorus. She describes the interactional space between the two groups as an ethical space, "one in which unspoken intentions confront each other and the entities decide how to engage with each other" (p.265)." The chapter is full of powerful stories of increased positive engagement and understanding between the two groups, though again, no specific musical action is explored, no audience response is investigated. Community music is often on the forefront of musical bridge-building between disparate groups, and often concerned with the performer-audience relationship, broadly conceived, yet, to my knowledge, there has not been systemic investigation into audience experience in the literature and discourse.

Researching Audiences

Apart from therapeutic and educational, and community contexts, how have audiences been studied? In this section I review some of the affordances and limitations of audience research.

Audience and reception studies, which grew out of forms of market research, have traditionally relied on surveys, questionnaires, and interviews to gauge audience experience and impact, whether the medium is music, dance, theatre, visual art, or recorded media such as television. For example, Newman et al. (2003), in a study of the social impact of community-based art projects, used interviews, surveys, questionnaires, telephone interviews, and discussion groups, monitored newspapers, and participated in some direct observations. As audience research has both developed a more critical perspective and sought to articulate the complexities of audience members' interior

experiences, varied theoretical frames and methodologies have been employed (Bennett & Ginsborg, 2018; Ginters, 2010; Reason & Reynolds, 2010). Researchers such as Breel (2015), Grant (2010), and Sauter (2010) have found dissatisfaction in many of the disciplinary and theoretical frames traditionally and currently used to study audiences (i.e., psychological, semiotic, deconstructionist, market research) as they are not able to (in these authors' views) account for the depth of the audience's immersive experience in the art. Concerns such as this has led many researchers toward a phenomenological approach and the used of in-depth interviews as a main method. For example, Breel (2015) explored the nature of the aesthetic experience of audience agency in a participatory theatre performance. Using a phenomenological approach, she collected observational data during the performance, but largely relied on participant accounts through the use of questionnaires, "creative responses" such as "repeating an activity from the show" and in-depth interviews immediately following the performance as well as at one, three, and six months post-performance.

Lilley (2010), also writing on theatrical performance, also notes the relevance of a phenomenological approach to understanding audience experience but construes the act of meaning-making as a collective activity. She acknowledges the interactional space between performer and audience, stating "it is in fact this very "gap between performer and spectator" that is key to the creation of a sense of community in the theatre as this is what engages the audience in active interpretation" (p.37). Lilley argues that the performance 'text' is made meaningful through interpretive communities – people with a shared recognition of cultural symbols. Meaning-making is never a purely individual action, and it is never precisely the same, as interpretive communities are always "temporary, pluralistic, and shifting" (p.40). Spectators are drawn into the action through being temporarily united into an interpretive community, and this may contribute to experiencing the event as shared, even festive and celebratory.

Research such as Lilley's signals a shift from a phenomenological concern with interpretation to a more sociological concern with the *action* of perception in audience research. Reason (2010) also construes the perception of performance as action, and as an 'experience' that does not end at the conclusion of the performance itself. Rather, 'experience' is something that continues in talk, action, and memory – something that can show up in different forms after the performance. Citing Caputo (1997), who draws on Derrida's idea of the "countersignature", Reason states that the performance may provoke other 'texts', defined as responses that may be literary or embodied in nature. Just as audiences may engage in different forms of perception during the performance (immersion, reflection), they may also engage with it in different forms after the performance is over. He states:

> I would suggest that it is a mistake to consider the post-performance experience as purely one that is reflective, rational and mental; just as it would equally be a mistake to consider the original experience as one that is purely immediate, instinctive and embodied. (p.32)

In drawing attention to the action of perception, Reason (2010) highlights the difference between studying audience processes and audience results. Recent inquiry into audience experience in musical settings has focused not only on the listener's internal experience but on audience action and social experience. Such research indicates audiences are in fact active and dynamic, influencing the performance on many levels and at many stages of production. Pitts found that musical enjoyment is connected to social enjoyment (2005); concert-goers who have fulfilling social experiences are more likely to report positive musical experiences. In another study, she found that a strong sense of social belonging will positively impact an audience member's musical experience (2016). Other research has found that listening experiences are influenced by the social interaction surrounding concerts (Dearn & Price, 2016), that there is mutual influence between performers and audience members in a performance (Burland & Windsor, 2014), that the concert

experience is enhanced when the audience extends it through social activity post-concert (Dobson & Sloboda, 2014), and that repeat concert attendance is positively affected by active forms of audience engagement (Radbourne et al., 2009).

Burland & Pitts, in an edited volume titled, *Coughing and Clapping: Investigating Audience Experience* (2014), explore the ways audiences contribute to live performances and how concerts cultivate connections and communities that become part of listeners' identities. In their conclusion, they draw a model of the cyclical process of being an audience member. This process includes: various personal and social experiences of live performance (such as identity and belonging), the nature of "being there" (including agency and "flow"), the activity of preserving and sharing the experience (such as recording, discussing, and mapping), and revisiting the experience (by attending other performances or engaging with concert artifacts). Burland & Pitts map out the ways in which concerts might be folded into audience members' lives. They do not, however, examine how that in turn influences the performers. Questions remain regarding the continuity (or discontinuity) between performer and audience experiences.

Audience research has made clear the active role of the audience, yet there has been no effort made in the literature reviewed to link audience experience and action to the specific actions of the performance. The methods used, while increasingly participant action-oriented and relying less on narrative accounts, do not trace the ways audiences act in response to the performers, nor do they directly engage the gap between performers and audience, and any changed social attitudes, perspectives, or behaviours. The literature does not take a sufficiently ecological view of performance without methods that trace these links.

Summary

Choral singing has been shown to provide a range of psychosocial benefits for choir members, whether situated in an educational, community-based, or therapeutic context, and many of these beneficial effects are associated with performances. Music therapy, seizing on these benefits, has tended to locate them in an individualized manner, while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of the audience. While discussions of the audience in the music therapy literature have mainly come in the form of broad gestures toward them, the direction research on performance has gone, especially in CoMT, increasingly suggests that all actors in the performance are part of its therapeutic significance, and the research gap (which leaves out the audience) has only become more glaring. In addition, literature from community music and audience studies shows us that performances do impact communities, and that listeners are far from passive in their listening. Linking these discourses (CoMT) to justice discourses (CM) and evolving models of audience research provides a theoretical ground on which to investigate the impact of performance on the audience, and how that in turn might affect those performing.

"Listening is itself a performance" Simon Frith wrote (1996, p.203), but the ways in which it is are not thoroughly understood, nor are the ways in which the listener's performance may impact those on stage. Music therapy, in its attention to interpersonal processes, seems well-positioned to offer a thoroughly relational perspective on the performance event – a perspective that begins with a view of performance not as a one-way transmission of musical material to a passive audience, but as a mutually constructed activity involving and influencing many people extending beyond the performers themselves.

Chapter 3: Methodology & Methods

In this chapter I will outline the reasons for choosing a qualitative approach and describe the methodology and methods I employed for this project, focusing in particular on the two contrasting interviewing approaches I undertook. I begin by defining the role of ethnography in this project, after which I describe the methods used in the preliminary stage and the findings those methods yielded. I then critique those methods, trace the transition to a different approach in the second stage, and describe how this approach generated data that more thoroughly addressed the aims and questions of the overall project. Following a discussion of recruitment procedures and a detailed description of the study's participants, I present the analytic strategies I employed to generate findings. Underpinning the methodology and methods is the enactivist emphasis on the action of perception, an emphasis I trace through discussions of audience talk, memory, and time.

Part I: The Preliminary Phase

> *"...I can't put it into words. It's beautiful. However off-tune...it's still beautiful.*
> *I can't put it into words. Sorry!"*
>
> - quote from an audience member in the preliminary project

As stated in Chapter 1, my interest in audience experience sprang from my work with *Voices*, a choir for disabled adults I have directed since 2009. Given the many interactions I had with *Voices'* audiences over the years, this seemed an ideal group to study; I could examine both choir and audience experiences and the relationship between them. Informal conversations with audience members over the years signalled that there was much to be learned from individual accounts of audience experience. Therefore, I identified

a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1989; Silverman, 2017) as the most appropriate way to proceed. Interviews, thick description, and interpretive analytic techniques would allow me to examine the varieties and nuances of both choir and audience experiences, as well as the relationship between them. For the preliminary phase of my research, I formulated the following research questions:

1) What is the experience of preparing and giving a concert for the members of *Voices*?
2) What is the experience and impact of attending a *Voices* concert for members of the audience?
3) What is the relationship between choir experience, audience experience, and the aims of empowerment and social integration in a *Voices* concert?

As I was concerned with the meanings of performance and the ways in which relationships were constructed, maintained, and transformed in these events, I searched for a methodology that could accommodate these interests and orientations and was led by two main considerations. First, the methodology needed to "save the phenomenon" (Ansdell & Pavlicevic, 2010), meaning, it needed to 1) preserve the voices and experiences of the people involved in the performance event, and 2) recognize that relationships between them were complex and multi-layered, and were therefore best examined through descriptive methods. Second, as the study involved investigating my own work as a director of a choir for disabled adults, my research methodology and design needed to recognize, accommodate, and support my own very active presence in the phenomenon I was investigating. This resulted in a search for a methodology that could both animate and contain the lively interplay of my practitioner-researcher roles.

I identified an ethnographic methodology (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1989) as a fitting choice. Ethnography accommodated multiple actors, roles, and relationships converging around a single event, valued multiple perspectives, viewed phenomena ecologically, and preserved complexity. Ethnography's focus on multiple perspectives and thick description was well-

suited to musical environments that involved simultaneous and polyphonic sounds, movements, and actions (Stige & Aarø, 2012). A choral concert – where many different people gathered from different places for different reasons – exemplified the type of 'unruly experience' (Atkinson, 1990) for which ethnography was well suited. Over the last two decades there has been increased use of ethnographic approaches in music therapy research (Ansdell & DeNora, 2016; Hjornevik, 2022; Metell, 2022; Procter, 2013; Stige et al., 2010; Tsiris, 2018), especially in settings that are open (as opposed to closed music therapy sessions) and/or involve large numbers of people.

The period of data collection for the initial project spanned approximately four months, from March – June 2017, and included *Voices*' annual spring concert. Because the concert was viewed ecologically in this study – as connected to the processes of its preparation – it was important to collect data from choir rehearsals as well. My aim was not to evaluate features of the performance but to document a process, and therefore rehearsals were seen as sources of information on choir relationships, procedures, activities, and cultures very much linked to the performance. Rehearsals were also occasions for me as researcher to examine my own role in the choir's activities and understand how that role impacted the performance I intended to study. I chose to collect data from the final four rehearsals of the season. These rehearsals and the performance were videorecorded.

Interviews were conducted after the concert (with the exception of two group interviews with the choir held during two of the rehearsals). Audience response was generated through questionnaires (which also served as a recruiting tool for interviews) and 1:1 interviews. Because I wanted to document participants' reactions to the concert event while memories were still fresh in their minds, I scheduled the interviews as quickly as possible after the concert. The following table indicates the number of interview participants (both choir and audience) and the audience participants' relationships to choir members:

Participants in the Preliminary Study			
Choir members interviewed	18		
Audience members interviewed	17	*Audience participant relationship to choir member(s)*	
		Family members	6
		Friends	2
		Educators	3
		Arts in Action staff	6
Total number of participants	35		

Table 1: Participants in the preliminary study

Interviews were then analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, et al., 2009), an analysis method commonly used by researchers in music therapy (Flower, 2019; Pothoulaki et al., 2012; Lee & McFerran, 2015). This analytic approach is "committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (p.1). IPA is an idiographic approach – focused on investigating the specific, individual details of a person's life and experiences – and provides a way of analysing how experiences come to have meaning in the unique context of a person's life. IPA is phenomenological in its attention to experience and interpretative in that it examines participants' ways of making sense of their experience. I had hoped that in-depth interviews of this kind would help me dig into the ways that audience members made sense of their concert experiences and would create a clear picture of the impact of performances. Below is an excerpt of an interview transcript, where I coded for initial themes in the left margin and recorded initial comments in the right margin:

Emerging Themes	Transcript Text	Comments & Reflections
Joy Normal activity Relief from caregiver role "Normal" relationships and roles	V: ...But that joy, um, for me...it's that merging of the worlds, that I talked about a few moments ago. Um, they are doing something very normal, and we don't necessarily – you know, who defines normal? But we don't necessarily do, I guess, typical things all the time. You're always accommodating, you're always, um, making excuses, you're always doing whatever no matter what age they are, whether they're little or they're real big, and, um, there no one has any expectations other than, "they're at a concert." And that concert is going to be enjoyable, and relaxing, and just kind of fun. And for me, I feel like everything just 'lowers' [gestures downward movement with hands]. All of the stuff where you gotta hurdle, hurdle, hurdle. E: You don't have to do anything. V: I don't have to do anything at all. E: This is for you. V: Yes. Exactly. And he clearly is doing it for himself, but that reflects on us. You know, we're so grateful he is able to do that and be a part of that. And it's not anything fancy, and it's not anything special, and it's not anything that we all had to plan ahead of time. Um. It's just, it comes out so naturally. It's just a natural thing, and you don't get many natural things when you have a special needs adult. So that's why I like it.	"Merging of the worlds" – an encounter where she meets her son as an equal...integrating different ability levels "Normal", natural mode of relating to her son; she is released from the pressure to care for, accommodate, adjust. Chance to be a "normal" parent...enjoy her son as he is...the audience member role changes her sense of who she is

Table 2: Analysis of an interview transcript using IPA in the preliminary study

At the end of the analysis process, three general themes emerged from the audience participants. These three themes were invoked most frequently and with the most passion, or emotional investment from participants:

I. *Surprise.* Most audience members began their interview with expressions of surprise: the greatest impact of the concert was found in that which was unexpected. This was described as a state of suspension where, in not knowing how a song would unfold, members of the audience found themselves listening and watching with a different kind of

attention than they would in other concerts. Surprise was connected to seeing performers' abilities emerge and the ways in which singers could conform to a musical tradition. A second category of surprise centred performers' individual divergences within the music and the way singers made the songs their own.

II. *Participation*. Audience members described their mode of participation as "giving support and encouragement" early in the concert. As the concert progressed many identified moments of intensified response – moments when they heard something unexpected, to which they would respond with more active participation of their own: clapping, moving, singing along. Several audience members spoke of feeling "led" by the choir. Participation became more active as the concert went on, with audience members reporting a sense of personal investment and mutuality rather than simply 'support.'

III. *Belonging*. Many audience members shared the impact of witnessing their loved one on stage receiving affirmation and praise from the public. Acceptance was described not as something 'earned' by the choir as a result of their musical skill or their abilities nor something that was gained through pity. Audience members who were parents reported feeling that, in performance, their children were accepted by others as whole and complex people. Many also shared a feeling of freedom associated with not having to conceal their children's disability or vulnerability, leading to a sense of personal acceptance for themselves as well.

The preliminary investigation provided a view into the ways in which audience members talk about their listening experiences; it revealed common topics and framings of the audience experience. What it did not provide, however, was a link between the experiences conveyed in narrative accounts and the actions involved in the event. Interviews provided information on how audience members interpreted their experiences, but not in a way that was grounded in their actions. Because of this gap, I felt I was not able to draw meaningful, empirically grounded conclusions about the nature of audience experience or the

relationship between audience and choir experiences. I concluded, broadly, that the performance could be regarded more helpfully as an 'encounter' rather than a 'presentation', the latter term being used or implied in much of the literature on performance in music therapy. It was clear that the audience data indicated that their experiences where shaped by their own active engagement and interaction with the choir. But to trace the mutual action of all involved in the performance, including the connections between actions and their reported experiences, I would need to proceed with tools and methods that could help me examine the *action* of the performance, not simply the participants' interpretations of the action. This realization prompted a search for new methods for a follow-up study.

Interlude: Getting Underneath the Script

The audience members I interviewed in the preliminary study, in the end, did not represent a cross-section of the audience in a public concert; they were in large part the family members, friends, teachers, and loved ones of the singers in the choir. Because of their familiarity with the choir, most were very comfortable speaking frankly with me and nearly all became emotional at some point in their interviews. In fact, I found that most interviews followed a similar contour. Participants began by talking about the concert itself, sharing exciting moments or highlights, and at times comparing the concert to previous performances. They continued on to moments of surprise at something in the concert, which turned into a reflection on moments of surprise at something in themselves. Nearly every interview ended with some kind of expression of a very broad, expansive joy or hope. It seemed to me that each interview was part concert review and part confessional, and even though I had not directly asked for either, participants offered it to me, seemingly out of some combination of opportunity and compulsion.

How did these accounts function in the interview and what relevance did they have in terms of the aims of the project? Atkinson (2015) writes that the interview itself is a "cultural phenomenon" and, as such, follows a kind of cultural script: "there are culturally shared kinds of stories and rhetorics of emotion that are expected of certain kinds of interviews" (p.94). Following Atkinson's warning that an over-reliance on interview data in ethnographies risks "equating the ends of research with the investigation of social actors' personal, private lives" (ibid.), I wondered how these 'confessional' interviews might fit into the larger picture of action and interaction. I recalled that it was interactions with audience members – mostly parents – that had stimulated my earliest questions underpinning the project. After each performance I was approached by family members of singers who had experienced something significant and wanted to tell me about it – even though they could rarely find the words. What they did manage to convey was that they felt they had seen their child differently in the performance, this was unsettling, and they were surprised and grateful. The interviews for this project were an attempt to unpack and understand that very powerful experience and to continue a conversation that the audience themselves had begun. It seemed to me – even before the project began – that following concerts, many in the audience wanted me to help them make sense of an experience they couldn't name and regarded me as someone who could help them connect their strong emotional response to dimensions of their children revealed in music. Something about the concert experience looked for completion in conversation (not unlike for Dobson & Sloboda's (2014) concert-goers).

I then reviewed these participant accounts, looking for common speech acts and narrative conventions and contours.[7] I noticed that there were three main 'cultural scripts' that most participant accounts followed. First, there was the 'growth-progress-development' story, where people focused on seeing change, difference, and located the power of the performance in individual performer abilities: *I couldn't believe what they could*

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[7] This was not a systematic re-analysis of the data but a reflection on the limitations of the methods used in the preliminary stage.

do./They've worked so hard./This kind of thing is so good for them. Second, there was the 'courage-accomplishment-pride' story, which was not unrelated to the first, but focused more on internal qualities of the singers and individual effort: *They are so brave, courageous./I could tell how proud they were. They seemed so confident./It's amazing what they accomplished.* Third, there was the 'joy-hope-inspiration-triumph' story, which focused on their personal response to the entire event, and usually indicated some kind of inner transformation: *It was so amazing!/My heart swelled!/It was so beautiful!/I don't even have words for it!*

It is not my contention that any of these accounts are inauthentic or should be dismissed; rather, I suggest that they offer limited information about how participants' conclusions were actually reached in practice. Moreover, they reveal something of the assumptions the audience brought in with them: *performances are displays of performers' abilities and hard work and my role here is to cheer them on and support them.* What these stories didn't tell me is how their experiences came to be produced, how their assumptions related to their reported experiences, the nature of the actions, the conditions, and the materials that made these experiences possible, whether the actions matched the stories, and if/how these experiences became part of their subsequent actions.

Yet some audience responses indicated an experience that did not fit into the typical cultural scripts. Here is Valerie, the mother of one of the choir members:

> **Valerie:** …when you started, he [her son] wasn't with you at first. And then he couldn't help it, it's an unconscious thing, the music kind of took him over, and I think that's what happens when I'm sitting in the audience. I want more than anything to *join in and sing with them*. I want to be a part of. And I'm in there going, you know, la-la-la, singing and everything, and I have to sometimes stop myself. Because I want to experience, you know, hearing it, but I just want to become a part of it. So you go from not knowing what to expect, to kind of like…it's a tiny bit ragged

right now...but the music just really takes him over, but as a result it starts to take

me over too, and then, you just let that guard down, and you want to just participate.

Valerie is departing from the main scripts here – she is trying to get at an experience of feeling activated, feeling drawn in, feeling part of the music. This feeling is very much embodied and tied to action (her son's, the choir's, and her own). Valerie also describes a dynamic process: first I noticed this, then I thought this, then he did this, then I felt this, and so forth. Here we have a memory of thought, feeling, and action, but the analysis method that I had used in the preliminary study could not trace nor account for the linkages between these dimensions of audiencing.

Reflecting on the methodological limitations of the pilot and realizing that participants had much richer accounts if only evoked differently in an interview, I set out to develop the ethnographic potential in my interview methods for a further stage of the project. To recap, the interview data I collected in the pilot was limited to (mainly) broad feeling states and the analysis methods I employed relied heavily on participants' own interpretation of their experiences. At the same time, audience response strongly suggested that their experiences were shaped by their own active engagement: in other words, audience members offered clues as to how aspects of their perceptions of the music and the performers, their own prior experiences, their actions during the performance, and the physical environment came together to produce their experiences, but these linkages were not probed in the interview or data analysis methods, and could therefore not sufficiently address the research questions. To fully develop an ecological perspective on music and musicking, I decided to change my strategy in the second phase of the research to focus not only on subjective thoughts and feelings but also actions and consequences.

Part II: The Secondary Phase

The next stage of research involved an expansion and refinement of method. Audience research has traditionally been concerned with the individual experience of reception and has therefore relied on participant's self-reports in the form of questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups (Bennett & Ginsbourg, 2018; Dearn, 2017; Pitts, 2016; Breel, 2015; Pitts et al., 2016; Grant, 2010; Reynolds & Reason, 2010; Newman et al., 2003). Other forms of audience research seek to understand the neural mechanisms of music reception (Hou et al., 2020). However, neither narrative accounts nor quantitative measures fully explore the "'black box' of musical engagement" (DeNora & Ansdell, 2017, p.232). These methods often employ proxy data and do not pursue the question of audience experience in action and in real time. This raises the question of "ecological validity" (ibid.), or, in other words: how can we be sure research findings are grounded in lived experience in a way where they would be recognizable to the participants? For research to be ecologically valid, emphasis must be put on drawing the linkages between the detailed actions of musical engagement and the meanings or outcomes that are derived. To do this, one needs tools to study "what music does in real time" (ibid).

The strength of the preliminary study methods lay in my close relationships with both performer and audience participants, which gave me access to their intimate thoughts and feelings about the performance. This was important in understanding broad aspects of audience experience but did not fully answer questions regarding the specific impact of the concert for audience members, including how (or if) the concert was linked to changes in perception, action and/or interaction between performers and audience members. In the secondary stage of the project, I therefore adjusted my ethnographic approach to focus on the ways in which participant talk was linked to participant action. This required research methods that would provide the tools to follow such linkages and pathways. My initial proposal for the secondary stage described an ethnographic project where I planned to follow two choirs through their rehearsal and performance processes, and interview choir

members, choir staff, and audience members in order to develop a comprehensive picture of both choir and audience experiences and engagement as well as the relationship between them. Participant observation (including the videorecording of rehearsals and performances) and interviewing were to be the main methods employed in the study, organized according to different stages of the performance process, according to the Music Event Scheme (DeNora, 2003):

BEFORE	DURING	AFTER	LATER
• Rehearsal observation • Group interview of performers & staff • 1:1 interview with staff	• Participant observation: physical setting, audience behaviour • Informal interviewing pre- and post-performance	• Audience focus groups	• 1:1 Interviews with audience • Written questionnaires from performers • 1:1/group interview with performers
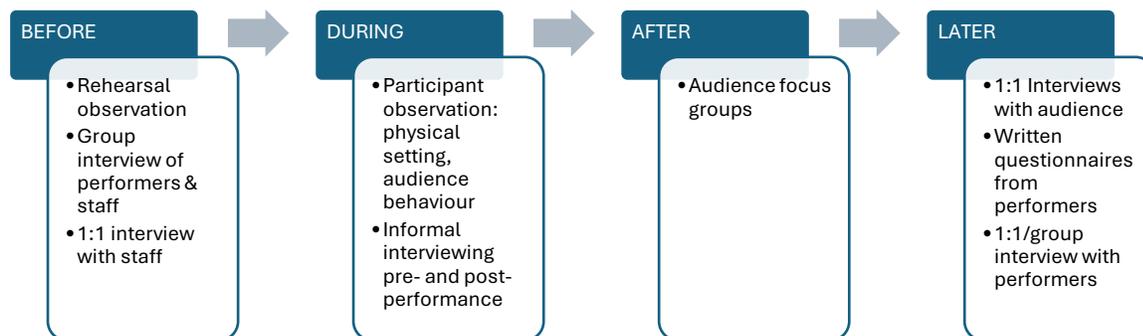
Figure 1: Time periods associated with the performance according to the Music Event Scheme

I developed the following research questions for the secondary stage of the project:

1. How do audience members engage in the performance process?
   - *What do audience members bring to the performance (motivations, expectations, experiences)?*
   - *What do audience members do during the performance? What actions constitute 'audiencing'?*
   - *Do performers and audience members engage with each other? If so, how?*
2. What aspects of the performance are remembered in talk and action by performers and audience members post-performance?
3. Does the performance offer possibilities for new perceptions, attitudes, experiences, and/or actions for performers and audience members? If so, what are these and how are they generated?

4. What are the implications of these findings for CoMT and other musical-social practices (such as music education and community music)?

This project was set to begin in March of 2020, but restrictions related to Covid-19 meant that the project would be impossible to carry out. Yet these same restrictions offered a new possibility: the chance to interview a much larger, diverse pool of participants through a videoconferencing platform. I reconfigured the project to be interview-based and able to be carried out on Zoom. Rather than attempting to collect the perspectives of both choir members and audience members, I focused the project on the experiences of audiences. This was logical, given that I had identified audience experience as the gap in the literature. Interviewing a range of choir members was also not feasible in a study conducted remotely, but choir directors could be interviewed and provide insight into choir procedures and identities. I designed an international, ethnographically-informed, interview-based study wherein I would gather a wide range of perspectives and experiences of audiences and the directors of the choirs that had given the performances they had attended.

I formulated the following research questions for this study:

- **Primary***:*
  What constitutes 'audiencing' within performances in Community Music Therapy projects and other musical-social events?

- **Supporting:**
 1. How do audiences describe their experiences of these performances? What are their reasons for attending and what, if anything, do they describe as being important about these events?
 2. What do audiences *do* at different stages of the performance process (before, during, and after)? How do they prepare to attend a performance, what do they do during the performance, and what do they take away from a performance?

3. How do audience members speak about what choirs 'need' or expect from audiences? How does this compare to how choir directors speak about the needs and expectations of the choirs with respect to their audiences?

In the following section I describe the methods used to generate data, and how they differed from the methods in the preliminary stage of the project.

Ethnographically-informed interviewing

As live performances were suspended during the early months of Covid-19, it was not possible to design an ethnographic inquiry of audience experience. However, it was possible to use aspects of ethnographic thinking to inform my interview strategy. Ethnographically-informed interviewing was the main method in this project. The interview is an essential ethnographic method (Hockey & Forney, 2012; Spradley, 1979), though in contrast to some approaches which focus on participants' attempts to make sense of their own experience (such as IPA (Smith et al., 2009)), the ethnographic interview specifically focuses on the *action* that is linked to participants' accounts of meaning and experience. Therefore, interviews focused on what was *done* at different stages of the performance process: what audience members brought into the performance (how they prepared for it, what they expected from it, prior experiences with the performers/style of music), what they did during the performance (what they noticed, what they were drawn to, what they thought was important, what movements, gestures and utterances they remember responding with), and what they drew out of the performance (what thoughts/feelings they had, what actions they took, who they spoke to following the performance). Through this interview strategy, I aimed to build a comprehensive and multi-layered picture of 'audiencing', where detailed questioning about the memories of thought, feeling, action, and interaction would result in the kind of multi-dimensional, thick description that could be used to understand audience engagement. While classification systems of music listeners have been created before to describe listener types or listening strategies, most

notably by Adorno (Lilliestam, 2013), they have often relied on a production-consumption model of music that sharply divides the roles of performers and audiences and treats the music as a text created by a composer (McCormick, 2012). Such typologies tend to be abstract and lack grounding in empirical data (Lilliestam, 2013). Within the ecological framework I proposed, I aimed to investigate the varieties of audience engagement grounded in empirical data that drew relationships between a multiplicity of variables and features of 'audiencing' in order to contribute to conceptual thinking about performer-audience relations.

While the ethnographic interview is typically employed alongside participant observation in ethnography (Spradley, 1979), there are situations where participant observation is not possible or appropriate. The interview can then be treated as a method to 'get into action' through the specific kinds of questions asked. Ethnographically-informed interviewing has been employed as a method in studies in music sociology (DeNora, 2000), sometimes in combination with memory elicitation tools such as video (Dempsey, 2010), and in sociological work more broadly (Tusting, 2019).

Concert (memory) maps

Participants were asked to self-elicit memorable moments from past performances. Again, the aim was to investigate the details of thought and action of those moments, in order to link attitudes/states of being audiences bring into the performance space with what happens and is perceived as happening during the performance, with what is drawn out after the performance and becomes part of memory, talk, and action. This interview strategy targeted explicit, conscious memory, but also tacit, embodied memories in its focus on the details of action in a social and physical environment. To facilitate the locating of memories and experience in social space, a visual 'mapping' technique was used during interviews. This involved asking the participant to sketch out the performance 'scene' – drawing herself in the experience in relation to features of the physical and social

environment (Bagnoli, 2009). Concert maps helped to identify details that may not have been considered significant by the participant yet endured in memory. In music studies, Cohen (2012a, 2012b, 2014) developed the use of 'memory maps' to prompt musicians' memories and stories about music, then adapted it for her research with audiences. In Cohen's work, the participant is asked to sketch a 'map' representing their experiences and actions, which may take the form of a conventional map, picture, diagram, or flowchart. Memory maps can be used to explore the ways in which the audience member engaged in a performance and how that experience was remembered, though "[t]he emphasis is less on what maps represent and more on what they do, who produces them and why" (Cohen, 2014, p.131). In addition, this technique focuses memory on action and interaction, and locates experience in outside places and spaces.

Concert maps were generated in most of the interviews with audience members. I typically introduced this activity when the participant identified a particular memorable moment in the performance. I would prepare the participant by saying that I wanted to "slow down and dig into this moment" and then proceed to give instructions for creating a concert map. While each participant was free to create the map as she wished, I gave broad directions such as, "Sketch out what you remember about the space...where the choir was, where the entrance to the room was...any other objects...where you were sitting and who you were with...indicate where you remember looking..." This activity helped ground the participants memories in the sensory details of the event. It was an elicitation tool in that it helped to stimulate memories that participants may not have remembered otherwise. Participants would add to their maps as the interview proceeded. Often, I would ask them to add any words or phrases from the interview they felt were significant or captured an important part of their experience. Below are examples of the variety of concert maps:
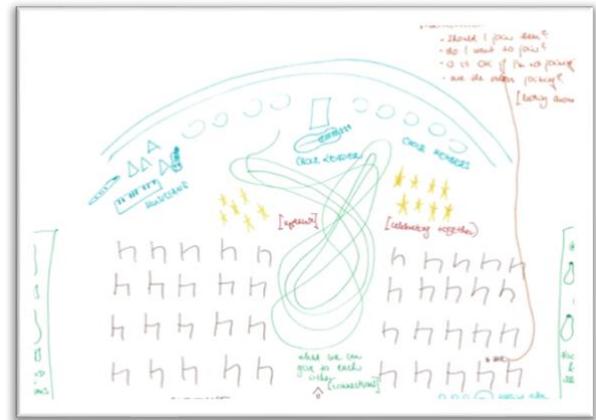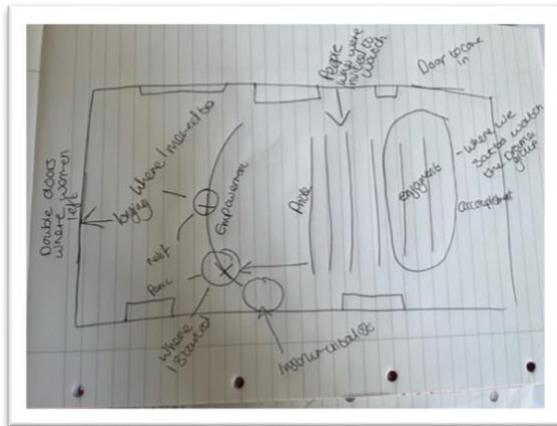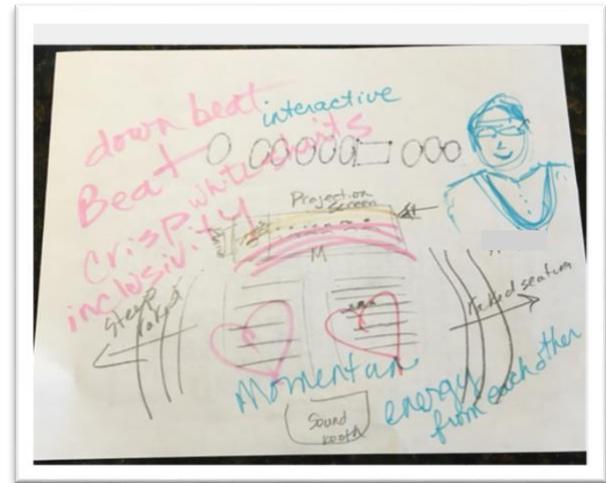
Figure 2: Examples of concert maps

How do people talk about listening?

How can a researcher gain access into a person's music listening experience after the fact, through their narrative account? Jonathan Gross (2013), in an ethnography of "still and silent listening" at the BBC Proms, addresses the methodological issues involved when investigating listeners' accounts of their concert experiences. He asks whether discourse about music is precise and reliable enough to capture the original listening experience, or if talk about music has a distorting effect. But such questions imply that there is such a thing

as 'pure listening' – a form of audiation that happens unaffected by talk and action prior to and following the music. Gross suggests that the listening experience be viewed not as 'pure experience' or 'pure listening', but as existing in the ways it is organized through discourse – through talk prior to and after the experience of the performance event: "Listening is not obfuscated by words but constituted by them…acts of still and silent concert hall attention are themselves oriented to and characterised by acts of speech prior and subsequent to the clock time of the listening" (p.85).

The idea that talk *about* musical experience is part of the constitution *of* musical experience has been explored in music sociology by DeNora (2013). Using a clinical music therapy example, DeNora presents talk about music as a form of action. Talking about music (in this case, by a music therapy client) is not describing an experience – it is extending and constituting that experience. The original musical experience is not merely reflected but organized through discourse:

> Narrative is not an ex post facto description, something independent of experience (including musical experience). Rather, narrative is 'inside' experience, it performs experience; musical narratives are thus not about how something distinct from narrative (the music) has 'helped'. To the contrary, music and narrative are mutually referencing, indeed they are fused. Both offer media that enhance and make possible the other's effects; they are part of the multi-modal array of communicative action that crafts an on-going sense of place— who we are (together) and what we (can) do, and what we can change. Thus, to ask someone 'how did music help you' is to ask them to perform a (possible) self in ways that are musically afforded, again, here and now, in real-time. (p.337)

Though the example used is one of active music-making in a music therapy session, the same principle applies for music listening: talking about listening is an action that provides resources for further action and reflection. In other words, talking about a musical event

draws together different time periods (before-during-after the music) in order to produce a narrative of self and other that can be "tapped later" (p.333). Talking about music is thus shaped differently for different agendas (Ansdell, 1999).

It is therefore important to regard the interview not as a pure description of a past event, but an action that is accomplishing something in the present, with consequences for the future. The ethnographer Paul Atkinson (2015) writes that we structure our narratives to fit a particular frame, as specified by the context we are in. The interview is a particular kind of speech act with particular conventions or ways of organizing experience in order to present it in the particular social context. Added to that, there are "cultures of speech", or particular discourses, surrounding the topics in question – in this case, music, music listening, disability, illness, social vulnerability, and more. The methodological issue here is to regard participants' accounts not simply as 'points of view' or subjective perspectives, but as speech acts which accomplish certain things within a wider social ecology. The goal of the interview is not "the investigation of social actors' personal, private lives" (Atkinson, 2015, p.94). Rather, the way participant accounts are constructed, the cultures of speech used and what participants are doing within those cultures (Gross, 2013, p.89) are the focus of investigation. As Atkinson exhorts, "We need to analyse actors' stories, for what they are: constructions that accomplish things. They are not only structured; they also achieve various moral and practical acts." (Atkinson, 2017, p.64).

Memory and time

How does one remember details of events that took place years – sometimes decades – ago? What gets remembered and how is the past pulled into the present? As stated above, the interview is a speech act that follows certain narrative conventions. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the memories shared in the interview were not so much reflected as produced. Participants were not asked to give an account of the facts of the performance or a list of details about 'what happened', yet their specific memories of

personal experience take place in relation to actual events, and the cultural meaning ascribed to those events. Kaufman Shelemey (2006) explores the interactive nature of memory and history in the ethnographic research process. The interview, through its structure, frames experience and foregrounds certain memories that may not be foregrounded, or even accessed within a different kind of speech act. The interviewer can thus be seen as a co-constructor of memory and narrative. Kaufman Shelemey, following work on practices of memory by historian Jonathan Spence (1983), writes of the interview participant's musical "memory palace", an imagined space which holds "many different sounds that continue to transform each time they are remembered" (p.20). In each act and context of remembering, "the contents of [the] memory palace are... rearranged, like treasured objects that get dusted off and moved to different spots, re-establishing new relationships with each other and with the structure they inhabit" (ibid.). The act of remembering is therefore not a straightforward recounting of the objective facts of an event nor an account of subjective, personal meanings derived from the experience, untethered from both the actual sounds produced and the broader social patterns and discourses that give meaning to the event. In the act of remembering, the participant identifies events both internal and external. The interviewer's task is to elicit memories through a frame which helps the participants ground these memories of feeling, thought, and action in the remembered details of the event. In doing so it is possible to explore the relation and even the tension between cultural discourses (scripts) and the lived experience of events (Radstone, 2000).

In the interviews I aimed to get into the details of moments, or events that stood out for the participants. These were dynamic "moments of happening in a flow of happenings" (Wagner-Pacifici, 2016) where attention shifted and meaning congealed in a way that made the moment memorable and meaningful to participants. Stern (2004) terms such moments "Kairos moments", defined as a "small moment of becoming and opportunity" (p7). These moments were described by participants in terms of heightened awareness and feeling. At these times, my aim was to get underneath the initial narrative accounts and link them to

action. To do that, I focused on how the events narrated were embodied and enacted, or how the "body itself contributes to the process of remembering" (Tota, 2016, p.460). Narvaez (2006) suggests that memory is rooted in embodied experiences and is carried on through embodied experience; that is, memory lives on through action. Recalling events through physical means (i.e., drawing concert maps) was therefore a crucial part of the interview process as it served to ground accounts in the details of the actions within the concert. I could then hold up narrative accounts (what was said) against actions (what was done) to thicken the interview data.

In sum, the interview, centred on memories, was not an attempt to document the facts of performances or uncover "private experiences that inhabit some interior space" (Atkinson, 2017, p.151), but rather a way of exploring the ways that musical experience lives on in talk and action:

> I am not here concerned with memory as recall but with memory understood as the relationship created with the present and future by the presence and narration of the past...[w]e learn...by asking what kinds of relationship with the present and the future are being created through their organisation of experience. (Gross, 2013, p.79)

What is a concert?

Though the focus of the project is audience experience and engagement, it was important for me to resist seeing the project as an investigation into the participant's inner lives. As Atkinson (2017) reminds ethnographic researchers, "...the unit of analysis is not really the social actor, but the situation, the encounter, the event" (p47). I did not begin with the assumption that concerts were products delivered to audiences who would then individually make 'meaning' of them; I regarded the concerts as sites of interaction, events which took shape in relation to all people involved and their participation within them.

Viewing performances through the lens of social interaction, specifically as 'ritual' is now a well-established approach in music and performance studies (Bradby, 2016; Schechner, 2003; Small, 1998) and its relevance has been traced for music therapy (Ansdell & DeNora, 2016; Ansdell, 2014; Stige et al., 2010). For example, Stige (2010a), using Goffman's (1967) work on interaction ritual as a lens through which to study a CoMT group, shows how a participatory music group can be viewed as more than simply an arena for facilitating individual activity. The diversified styles of participation in the group produced interactions that brought out different self-presentations from the participants. To tell the story of a performance is not to tell a story of individual action and change but a story of social negotiation.

Concerts are special events, full of heightened emotions and drama. But they (and their preparations) can also be everyday, routine, and unsurprising. How might a researcher then frame the extraordinariness vs the ordinariness of a concert? Is one studying the special or the everyday? DeNora (2014) rejects this dichotomy, as it "may prevent us from appreciating the admixture of 'special' and routine in all aspects of our lives" (p.ix). Performances, set apart in designated spaces and timeframes, are certainly removed from the "mundane and repetitious" (ibid.) aspects of everyday life, yet they are built from these very actions and relationships. Therefore, it is not fruitful to maintain such a dichotomy, but to look for and examine the interaction of special and mundane – the ways the 'extraordinary' may be produced through materials, settings, actions, and people – rather than define and locate the extraordinary solely in terms of place and time.

For these reasons, it was important to view the performance not as something set apart from everyday life, but an extraordinary event embedded in the structures of everyday life. Doing so helped to draw a line of continuity from a pre-concert social order, through the extraordinariness of the concert, through to the way the concert was remembered and projected into the future. Narvaez (2006), summarizing Durkheim (1965), states that beliefs about social order are brought into 'effervescent rituals' – bodily rituals that are emotionally

charged (such as a musical performance). All the relational frameworks and power dynamics of the social group are brought into the performance through bodily participation, where they can be reinforced, challenged, or transgressed. The way the interaction ritual unfolds is then carried out of the event:

> Collective memory is not only about remembering (the past) or about social order and action (the present), but, critically, it is about how social groups project themselves toward the future. Similarly, embodied collective memory involves a *structure of possibilities*, which helps individuals and groups apprehend not only the past and the present – but also the possible. (Narvaez, 2006, p.66, emphasis in original)

In sum, the concert was understood as a bodily, collective ritual involving the admixture of special and everyday – a creation of and response to the present, offering a structure of possibilities for the future.

What is an audience?

I approached the study with the idea that audiencing is both individual and collective. Rosenthal and Flacks (2011), in their study of music and social movements, emphasize the active work toward musical meaning done on the part of the audience. Audiences are not homogenous, uniform groups that receive a message from the performers: "Audiences are not bound to particular interpretations, but they are directed toward particular meanings through transmission and context factors" (p. 93). Simon Frith (1996, 2014) notes that the bulk of audience research does not take into account the collective nature of audience experience and is concerned more with what individual audience members want (as is the case in market research) than the unexpected experiences that happen in collective musical engagement. Because of this, they do not sufficiently examine the engagement between audience members, or between audience and performers. He states that

research needs to investigate the unexpected and emergent happenings of performance, as these are so often what audience members report valuing about live performance. "It's long been obvious that the audience has to be understood as a collectivity and that one of the key values of the live music experience is its potential for the unexpected" (Frith, 2014, no pagination). Though both performers and audience are pre-socialized in their roles to some extent, it is the unexpected departure, or expansion of those roles that is so often identified when people talk about meaningful experiences with live music. This perspective on audiences led me to develop a method of interviewing which allowed for the grounding of experience in a complex network of individual and collective actions and interactions, sensitized to the emergent and unexpected.

Introduction to the Participants

As stated in Chapter 1, I focused the project on choirs specifically. Choral groups are one of the most common types of performance ensembles one finds in music therapy, CoMT, and community music practices. Limiting the participant sample to choirs (and not expanding it to include groups such as bands, orchestras, or soloists) provided consistency, though not uniformity, when it came to features such as repertoire, performance venues, performers' physical position in relation to each another and the audience, and the musical sound of the human voice. I used a purposive sampling method (Silverman, 2017) to recruit choir directors and a "snowball" sampling method to recruit audience members linked to those choirs. The criteria for purposive sampling are described below.

Recruitment

Choirs and choir directors

I began with the intention of recruiting a range of choir directors of 'therapeutically-oriented' choirs. As I explained in Chapter 1, I defined 'therapeutically-oriented choirs' as choirs that are made up of socially marginalized people and have an explicit musical-social agenda related to the health and wellbeing of their participants. There are many such choirs around the world, led by a variety of practitioners: music therapists, music educators, and community musicians, but also professionals in related educational and healthcare fields: for example, teachers, speech therapists, social workers, and recreation therapists who are also amateur musicians. I set out to limit my participant pool to those choir directors that had specific training in either music therapy, music education, and/or community music. There were two rationales for this. First, it was important that participants held similar levels and types of professional training in music, as I anticipated that this would limit the variables associated with choir aims, structures, and procedures. I could more readily assume that music therapists and educators possessed a shared range of understandings, techniques, and aims related to their choirs because of standards of professional practice to which they were accountable; amateur musicians and other professionals were not accountable to the same standards and may not have had enough in common with music therapists and educators to be usefully compared. Second, as this project is primarily situated within music therapy discourse and practice, but also directly relevant for music educators and community musicians, I wanted the participant pool to represent the academic and professional communities to which the findings are addressed. In my process of purposive sampling, I searched for directors of therapeutically-oriented choirs which were specifically identified as CoMT projects, choirs not identified as CoMT but led by music therapists, and choirs led by music educators or community musicians.

It was my aim to recruit directors of a diverse sample of choirs in order to explore the rich and varied possible formats of audience activity and experience (see Figure 3). In addition to a diversity of professional identities/frameworks, participants were sought who work with different groups of people (i.e., learning disabled, refugees, incarcerated people, people with mental health challenges or dementia). I also looked for a diversity in performance settings and types of audiences the choirs engaged with. This included differences in audience size (small and intimate to large and anonymous), audience make-up (family members of performers, general public, groups institutionally linked such as hospital patients), and performance venue (shopping mall, hockey game, auditorium, hospital). In including a range of performance groups, procedures and settings, I aimed to include the different kinds of audiences these groups generated in order to look for the different variables that are part of the processes and consequences of 'audiencing.'
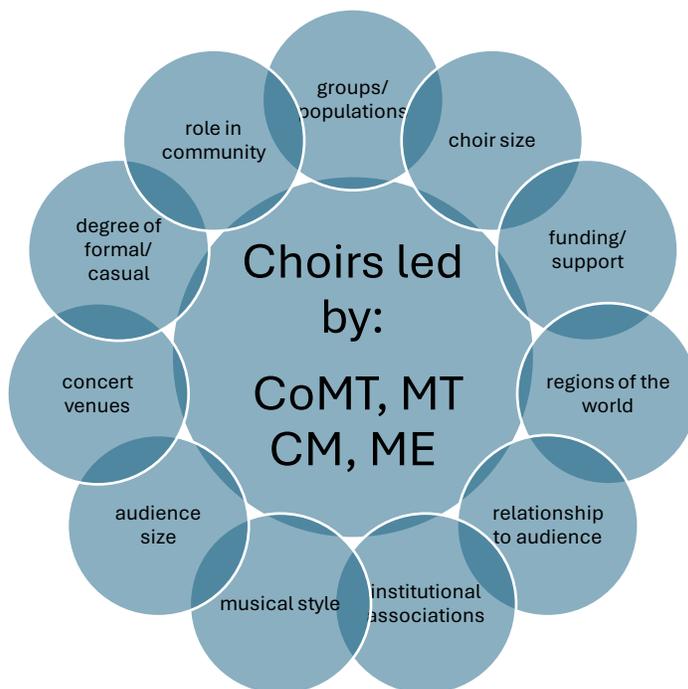
Figure 3: Diverse features of choirs

I sought an international sample in pursuit of the diversity described above. Because the Covid19 pandemic had made Zoom familiar and accessible in many parts of the world, I had the opportunity to expand my participant pool beyond my own geographical setting. Doing so seemed a logical choice; it was nearly as easy to interview someone in Europe or Asia as it was to interview someone in my own city, and I hoped an international sample would complexify the participant pool. I began recruitment by reaching out to music therapists and music educators I knew professionally. Many of them reached out to their professional networks. From there I extended an invitation to participate through Facebook, directing people to a website I had created for the project: www.audiencinginconcert.org

Audiences

I recruited audience members through the choir director participants. Some forwarded 'invitation to participate' letters from me to their email lists of past audience members. Upon receipt of this letter, audience members needed to contact me directly in order to participate. I used this method whenever possible, as it was efficient and placed minimal demands on the choir directors. When it was not possible to reach out to a large group of potential participants in this way, or when the response to the invitation did not yield a response, I asked choir directors to identify specific audience members they thought would be open to participating in an interview. I found that choir directors readily offered to contact people they knew to have attended concerts, and most of the time audience participants contacted me directly after the choir director had contacted them. In a few cases, choir directors forwarded names of potential participants to me.

As I was "seek[ing] out ordinary people with ordinary knowledge" (Spradley, 1979, p.25), I aimed to find a diverse group of audience members in order to build a broad and inclusive picture of 'audiencing.' This meant that criteria for participation was simply: attendance at a performance. I did not seek out a specific type of audience member to begin with, and I

explained to choir directors that I was interested in speaking with a range of audience members, not just those whom they knew to have had special or dramatic experiences at concerts. I understood that choir directors could be likely to direct me toward audience members who would speak favourably about their concert experiences, and for this reason I employed the snowball sampling method (where audience participants suggested or referred other participants who met the same criteria) to find audience participants that were not closely linked with the directors, so that my sample of participants was not skewed toward the 'enthusiastic audience member'. The audience members that participated did represent a variety of audience 'types'. For example, there was a self-described "choir groupie" – a woman who attended all the choir's performances and was passionate about the group and their mission. There were also several friends of choir directors. I was initially concerned that audience members with personal relationships to the directors might paint an overly positive picture of their experience out of loyalty to their friends, but I found, surprisingly, that these audience members were typically the least invested in the choirs and did not appear to have any particular agenda or aim in the interview. Most of these audience participants made it clear that while they were participating because their friend had asked, they did not think they would have anything useful to contribute. Quite often, these participants did not convey any type of special relationship to the choir members, and provided a relatively dispassionate account of their experiences.

As with the choir directors, I aimed to interview a diverse set of audience members. I had hoped to recruit both first-time and long-time attenders (and those in between) and those who had different kinds of relationships with the performers (family, friend, stranger). Figure 4 illustrates the diversity of audience members:
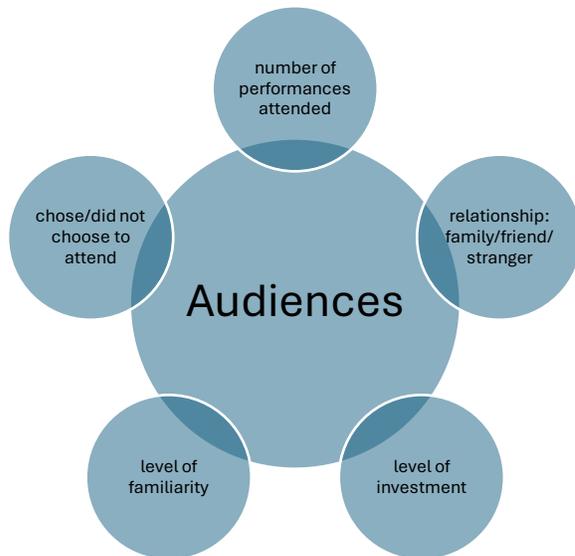
Figure 4: Diverse features of audiences

Timeline

I interviewed the first participant on February 23, 2021, and the final participant on January 6, 2022. I did not interview participants consecutively in their respective choir groups, but rather when schedules allowed.

Where are the voices of the performers?

Performer experience is undoubtedly important to this topic and has been documented in the literature, as I reviewed in Chapter 2. I chose not to interview performers for this project as my core research focus – audience experience and engagement – is a response to the gap in the literature on performance in CoMT. At the same time, it is in line with the aims of this project to explore the 'other side' – i.e., what the performing groups think about audiences and their relationship to them – and I therefore regarded choir directors as choir 'representatives' to this end.

Description of participants

The following is a description of the choirs and associated participants. Choirs are given a pseudonym and organized alphabetically. Each interviewee's pseudonym begins with the letter of their choir group. I refer to the size of the choirs as small, mid-size, or large. For reference, I define a small choir as having up to 20 members, a midsize choir as having 20-50 members, and a large choir as having more than 50 members. Because of the large number of individual participants and choir groups in this study, I have created a participant reference chart so that the reader can place each participant while going through the document. *The reader is encouraged to refer to Appendix 1, where this chart is located, from here on*.

Choir A: ***Allegro***

A choir for disabled adults located in Canada. The choir is large (around 80 members) and attracts large audiences to their performances. In addition to their annual spring concert, they have performed at civic events such as hockey games. The choir is led by ***Andrew***, a music therapist and founder of the choir. Audience participants include ***Anita***, a staff member at the organization that sponsors the choir; ***Audra***, a retired teacher who knows some of the choir members as former students and also knows Andrew; ***Angela***, another retired teacher who does not know Andrew or any of the choir members personally; ***Austin***, a long-time friend of the director who does not live in the same city; and ***Alistair***, a musician who has accompanied the choir a few times.

Choir B: ***Bravo***

A choir that rehearses and performs inside a prison, located in the USA. It consists of incarcerated singers (men only) and community members (men and women). The choir is led by ***Brigid***, a music educator, community musician, and university professor. Audience participants include ***Barbara***, who had previous experience with prisons through

involvement with a visitation program; and **Blair**, who had never before visited a prison, but was a friend of a former (non-incarcerated) choir member.

Choir C: *Cantabile*

This choir is made up of refugees and asylum seekers and is located in the USA. The choir is relatively small and informal – "fledgling" in the words of the director. The choir has performed at community events for various audiences, though most people in attendance tend to be aware of the plight of refugees. The director is **Cecily**, a music therapist who also runs music therapy groups for the organization that sponsors the choir. Audience participants include **Camille**, a volunteer with the same organization; and **Carl** and **Carole**, friends who were interviewed together and knew Cecily through various church and social justice-related projects.

Choir D: *Drumroll*

Drumroll, located in Canada, identifies themselves as a "troupe" rather than a choir. They are a performing group for people with chronic mental illnesses, most of whom also live in conditions of poverty. Their performances include dramatic skits as well as group and solo singing. As group singing is central to their performances, they fit the criteria for this study even though they do not call themselves a "choir." *Drumroll*'s aim is to educate their audiences about mental illness, and they have performed locally as well as in cities across the province, region, and country. They are led by two people, one of whom facilitates the skits, and another who directs the music. The musical director is **Debra**, a music therapist. Audience participants include **Dottie**, a frequent attender who came to know Debra through the performances; and **Dierdre**, who has known Debra for many years.

Choir E: *Ensemble*

A choir for homeless women, located in Israel. The choir is part of an organization (NGO) that provides support and services for homeless men and women in the city. The women in the choir receive other services from the organization and most of them know each other

outside the choir. The choir is relatively small (12 singers) and ethnically diverse. *Ensemble* was the only choir to hold a performance during the period of data collection – this was part of an event held at the NGO that consisted of speeches, music, and visual art. The choir director I interviewed, ***Evelina***, is a music therapy student and assistant to the lead director, whom I did not interview. The audience participant is ***Elora***, a friend of Evelina's who did not have experience with homeless people prior to this concert.

Choir F: *Fantasia*

Fantasia is a singing group for people with dementia in the UK. Caregivers also participate in the choir and performances. This choir has an unusual performance format: the flash mob. Rather than offering formal concerts where the singers are on stage and the audience is separate, this choir sings, unannounced, in public spaces such as department stores. They are led by ***Flora***, a music educator. Because of their unique performance format, there were no audience members that could be identified for an interview.

Choir G: *Grace Note*

A choir for incarcerated women in the UK. The choir is actually several 'temporary' choirs; women in the prison sign up for a 10-week program, at the end of which is a performance, or "sharing," as it is called by the group. Membership in the choir can completely turn over after 10 weeks, but some members do stay on. The choir is led by ***Georgia***, a music educator and community musician. She is not an employee of the prison but a music professor at a local university that partners with the prison to provide arts opportunities for incarcerated women. Other participants in this choir group are three students (current or former) that Georgia invited to provide musical support. ***Gwyneth***, ***Gabrielle***, and ***Grace*** attended two or three of the ten rehearsals (at different times) and participated in the culminating performances.

Choir H: ***Harmonia***

A mid-size choir for people with dementia, located in Australia. *Harmonia* performs in retirement villages, at conferences (for both dementia and music therapy), and collaboratively with other choirs. The choir is led by **Heidi,** a music therapist. The audience member I interviewed is **Harlow**, a friend of Heidi's who had a close family member with dementia. Heidi also facilitates another performance group, a "multicultural ensemble" of musicians who are also asylum seekers. Though not a choir, Heidi did speak about performances and performer-audience interaction in relation to this group in her interview.

Choir I: ***Intermezzo***

Isaac is a choir director and music therapist in Norway. We spent most of the interview talking about his work with a large choir of senior citizens. He also conducts a small choir for immigrants, refugees, and native Norwegians, which had formed just before Covid. We spoke about this choir in the interview as well, though not as extensively as the senior choir. I was unable to recruit any audience participants associated with either choir.

Choir J: ***Jubilate***

Jillian is a music educator and professor of music at a university in Canada. She directs an intergenerational choir for people with dementia, high school students, and university students. The choir was formed shortly before Covid and had not had any performances before their Covid-related hiatus. Jillian had previously conducted research involving a similar choir in another region of the country where she participated in rehearsals and performances.

Choir K: ***Kalimba***

Kalimba is led by **Kendrick**, a music therapist in the UK. This choir, referred to by Kendrick as a "hospice choir", is a large group, open to members of a hospice organization (patients, staff, caregivers, volunteers) and the wider public in the geographical region. Many of its members – but not all – are elderly. The choir is well-known and well-supported in the

community. Audience participants include **Kathleen** and **Kristen**, two community members who joined the choir after attending a performance. I do not know whether Kathleen and Kristen know one another, though I would say this is unlikely, given our conversations. Neither know Kendrick outside his role as their choir director.

Choir L: *Lyra*

The director of *Lyra* is **Leah**, a music therapist in Israel. Earlier in her career, Leah led a choir for physically and cognitively disabled adults in a residential institution, as well as a choir for adults with learning disabilities. Leah spoke about both of these choirs in the interview, as they had collaborated on concerts at times. She also directed a small choir of Holocaust survivors, a relatively recent project, and they featured in her interview responses, though to a lesser extent than the first two. Audience participants included **Lilith**, a speech pathologist who had worked with Leah at the residential centre for disabled adults; and **Lailie**, Leah's niece, a secretary and member of an amateur choir who did not have any experience with disabled people prior to attending a concert featuring the first two choirs.

Choir M: *Melodia*

Melodia is led by **Margot**, a music educator and university professor. This choir, located in a small Canadian city, is large and inclusive of anyone in the community – Margot referred to it as a "multi-generational inclusion community choir". The choir was formed as a partnership between a local service organization for people with disabilities and the university where Margot is employed as a professor of music. The choir does not hold formal performances, but holds participatory music events where the 'audience' is invited to sing with the choir. *Melodia* also sings at community events. I was not able to recruit any audience participants associated with this choir.

Choir N: ***Nocturne***

This is a small choir for people with aphasia, located in Hungary. I interviewed ***Naomi***, the assistant director for *Nocturne*. Naomi is a music therapy student and the choir is led by a music therapist. The choir has performed at both aphasia and music therapy conferences in addition to holding their own performances at a rehabilitation center. The audience participant I interviewed is **Nikolett**, a friend of Naomi's who had not interacted with people with aphasia prior to the concert she attended.

Choir O: ***Octave***

Octave is a mid-size choir for stroke survivors in Australia. They had been directed by ***Odette***, a music therapist who had moved on from this position at the time of the interview. *Octave* performs in large concert venues, has received considerable local media attention, and is one of very few choirs in this study that charges admission to attend their concerts. The audience participants I interviewed did not fit neatly into the 'audience' category for this study. ***Otto***, a retired music teacher, was recruited as a guitarist for one of the choir's performances. He stayed on after that as part of the band that provides accompaniment for concerts and has served as the choir's interim director on two occasions (he was filling this role during Covid, at the time of our interview). I interviewed Otto with his wife, ***Olivia***. Olivia is also a retired music teacher and has attended several performances over the eight years that her husband has been involved with the choir.

Choir P: ***Prelude***

Prelude is a children's choir in South Africa. It is led by ***Patrice***, a music therapist. The choir is part of an after-school music program in a community that has been impacted by poverty, racial tension, and gang-related violence. The choir is multi-racial and multi-ethnic, and their audiences reflect this diversity as well. The audience participant I interviewed is ***Phillip***, a former board member of the music therapy organization that supports the choir.

The following table lists the participants in their choir groups. A name followed by a letter indicates the choir director. A name followed by a letter, decimal and number indicates an audience member and the order in which they were interviewed. A "0" before another digit indicates that the audience member was not recruited through the choir director. For example, in choir group Allegro, Andrew (A) is the choir director. Anita (A.01), Audra (A.02), and Angela (A.03) were not recruited for participation in the study through Andrew, but Austin (A.4) and Alistair (A.5) were. Appendix A contains a condensed version of this chart.

Choirs and Their Associated Participants				
Choir	Description	Participants	Led by	Location
Allegro	A large choir for disabled adults	Andrew (A) Anita (A.01) Audra (A.02) Angela (A.03) Austin (A.4) Alistair (A.5)	Music therapist	Canada
Bravo	A large choir made up of incarcerated and community members	Brigid (B) Barbara (B.01) Blair (B.02)	Music educator/ Community musician	USA
Cantabile	A small choir of refugees and asylum seekers	Cecily (C) Camille (C.1) Carl (C.2) Carole (C.02.1)	Music therapist	USA
Drumroll	A small choir ("troupe") for people living with chronic mental illnesses and poverty	Debra (D) Dottie (D.1) Dierdre (D.2)	Music therapist	Canada
Ensemble	A small choir for homeless women	Evelina (E) Elora (E.1)	Music therapy student (lead director is a music educator)	Israel

Fantasia	A small choir for people with dementia	Flora (F)	Music educator	UK
Grace Note	A small choir for incarcerated women	Georgia (G) Gwyneth (G.1) Gabrielle (G.2) Grace (G.3)	Music educator/ Community musician	UK
Harmonia	A mid-size choir for people with dementia *Secondary group: an instrumental/vocal ensemble for musicians who are also asylum seekers*	Heidi (H) Harlow (H.1)	Music therapist	Australia
Intermezzo	A large choir for senior citizens *Secondary group: a small choir for immigrants, refugees, and native Norwegians*	Isaac (I)	Music therapist	Norway
Jubilate	A mid-size intergenerational choir for people with dementia and teens/young adults	Jillian (J)	Music educator	Canada
Kalimba	A large community choir situated in a hospice organization	Kendrick (K) Kathleen (K.01) Kristen (K.02)	Music therapist	UK
Lyra	1: A small choir for disabled adults 2: A small choir for adults with learning disabilities	Leah (L) Lilith (L.1) Lailie (L.2)	Music therapist	Israel

	Secondary group: a small choir for Holocaust survivors			
Melodia	A large, multi-generational, inter-ability community choir	Margot (M)	Music educator/ Community musician	Canada
Nocturne	A small choir for people with aphasia	Naomi (N) Nikolett (N.1)	Music therapy student	Hungary
Octave	A mid-size choir for stroke survivors	Odette (O) Otto (O.O) Olivia (O.O.1)	Music therapist	Australia
Prelude	A multi-ethnic, multi-racial children's choir in an under-resourced community	Patrice (P) Phillip (P.1)	Music therapist	South Africa

Table 3: A summary of choirs and associated participants
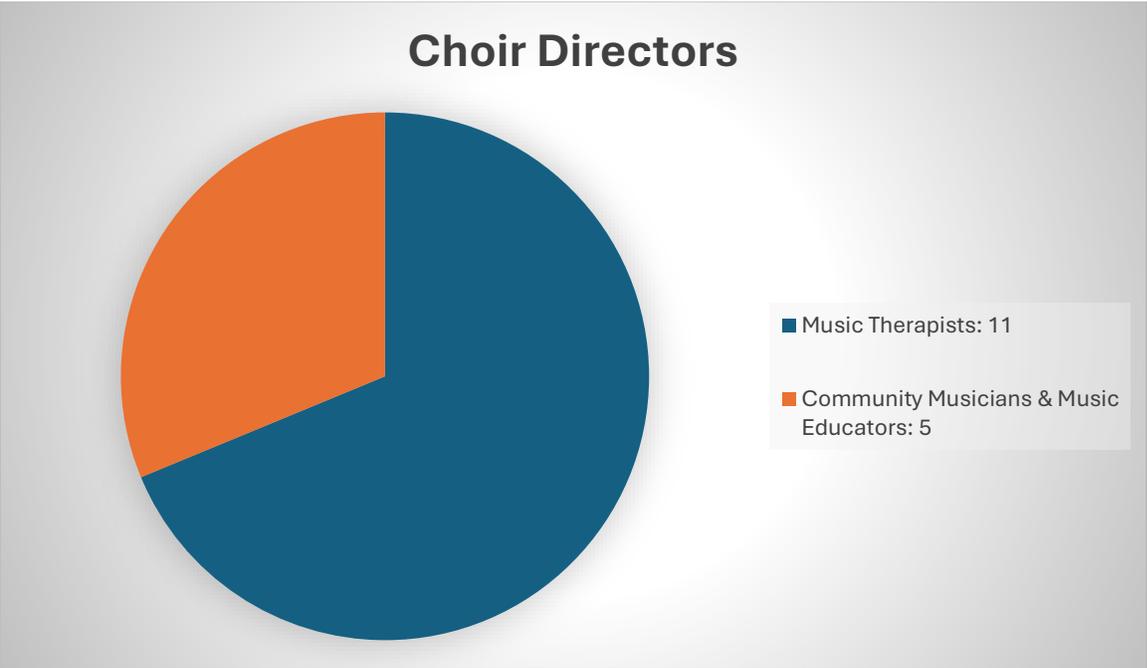
Figure 5: Choir Directors by profession
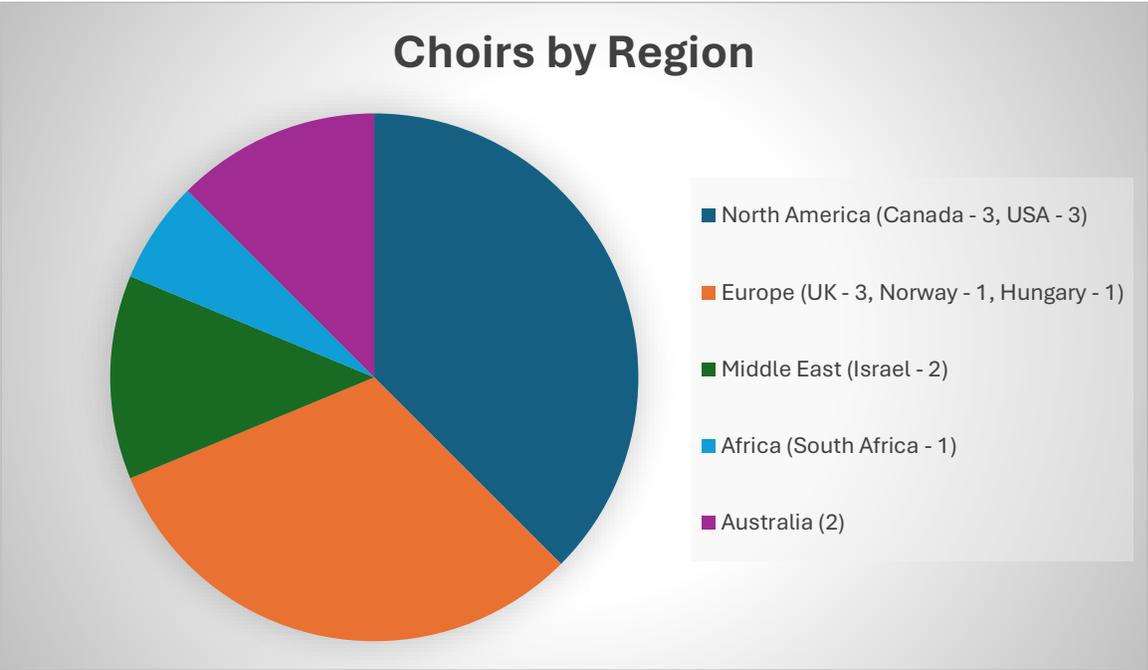
Figure 6: Choirs by geographical region
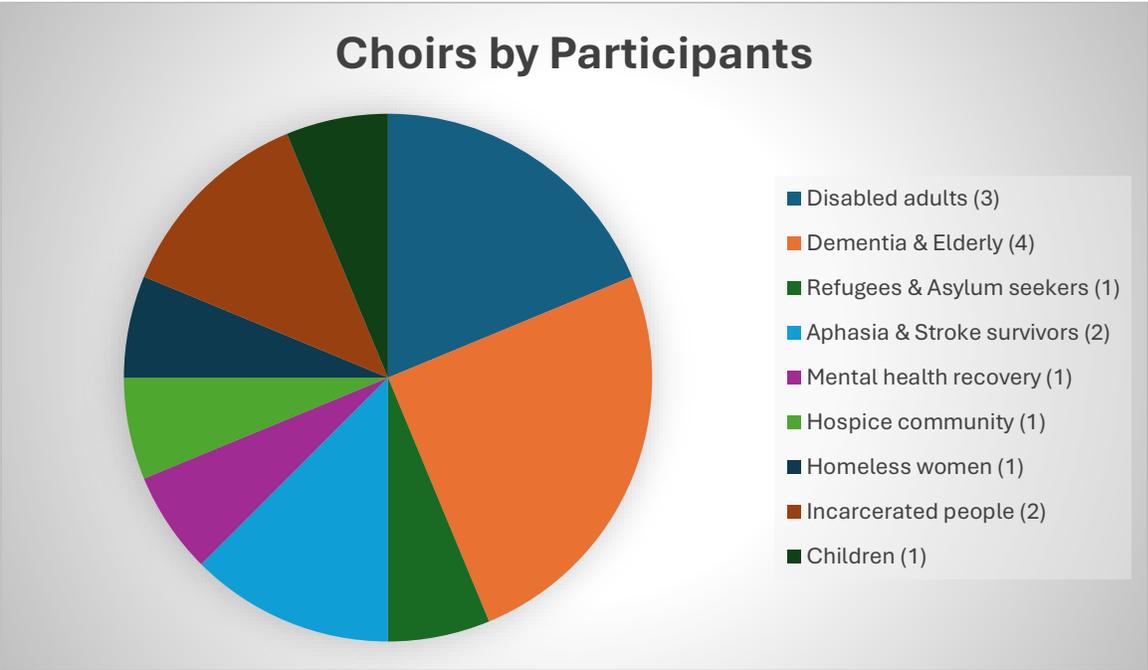
Figure 7: Choirs by participants

Analysis of Data

The analytic strategies I chose arose from and supported the research logic of the project, which was both inductive and abductive[8]. The strategies I employed were adapted from the Music Event Scheme (DeNora, 2003) and Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory offers both an inductive and an abductive research logic, where the point of departure is empirical data from which external theories may be visited and appropriated in order to develop conceptual thinking about the phenomenon (Reichertz, 2010). Grounded theory methods provided a structure to manage large amounts of interview data and flexibility to work with emergent (rather than preformatted) themes and categories. This approach allowed my previous assumptions about audiencing (stemming from my position as a researcher who is also a practitioner in the same area) to be used explicitly as a resource while not dominating the data. Grounded theory has been used frequently in music therapy research and "can help reveal important findings about social processes, actions, interactions, and mechanisms within music therapy" (Daveson, 2016, p.759).

As stated above, the data collected came in the form of interviews and 'concert maps' – graphic representations of the remembered performance experience. All interviews were held over Zoom and recorded. Participants who drew concert maps took pictures of their drawings with their cell phones and emailed them to me. Choir directors who shared excerpts of performances in the interview did so through the screen-sharing function on Zoom, and when possible, sent me a link to the performance on YouTube.

Transcription and coding of interviews took place throughout the approximately 11-month period of data collection. I typically transcribed an interview within a week of conducting it and began the coding process shortly after. Analytic steps included initial coding, focused

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[8] Inductive reasoning involves moving from empirical detail to general conclusions, and abductive reasoning involves the recognition and use of existing theories to provide explanation for surprising findings (Charmaz, 2014).

coding/categorizing, and triangulation, which involved comparing the responses of audience members from the same choir, and audience members with their corresponding choir directors.

The methods used focused on what participants *do* rather than what they theorize or interpret about their experience. The analysis methods, then, focused on drawing connections between actions, thoughts, and feelings at different stages of the performance process. To do this, the Musical Event Scheme (DeNora, 2003), "an indicative scheme for how we might begin to situate music as it is mobilised in action and as it is associated with social effects" (p.49) was used as an analytic strategy to organize and link the different stages of the performance experience. For example, an audience member's expectations and motivations to attend, self-reported actions during the concert, and her actions after the concert were mapped out to identify what was drawn into the performance by the audience member, how it shaped experience, and what was then drawn out. The following example comes from Anita, whose quotations taken from the interview transcript illustrate the different stages of the performance process:

Before	During	After
"I worked in the health department. I'm a registered nurse. I ran the physician's office...I retired after 35 years of working there...we were all excited when Andrew got the idea to start the choir...I've always treated the people I work with like family."	"I would have loved to belt it out...you know it's coming, you know the words and there is a little bit of a crescendo building up to the chorus and then it comes. And then it's like, oh, that was great."	"Back at work, at coffee break, we would talk about, *what did you do on the weekend?* And then those of us who were at the choir performance, you know, *Wow! Wasn't it good? We had a good time!*"

Table 4: Anita's transcript showing data separated into three distinct time periods: before, during, and after the concert

In this example, where Anita's account was mapped out into three distinct time periods, I was able to trace links between Anita's reported memorable moment during the concert ("I would have loved to belt it out") and her previous experiences with the choir members and expectations she arrived with ("I've always treated the people I work with like family"). This round of analysis was an initial step toward understanding how musical 'bits' were framed and foregrounded by participants ("a crescendo building up to the chorus") through their specific processes of preparation. In other words, using the Musical Event Scheme illuminated the 'crafting' of a memorable moment in the concert. This analytical strategy also allowed me to see how memorable moments then contributed to the production of feelings, emotional states, and actions. Here we can see that Anita carried the excitement of the experience into work the following day, which prompted conversation with her coworkers about the choir.

Analytic process

My next analytic step was to code the interview data for themes. Throughout the initial coding process, I focused on linkages between thought, feeling, memory and action. Often, this came through most clearly when the participant shared a memory of a specific song or moment. The following example is from Harlow:

Initial codes	Transcript
- *hearing* choir's emotional presentation - *noticing* that sights and sounds are congruent - *forming* ideas about the choir - *feeling*: emotional contagion - *reflecting*: intersubjective moment	**Erinn:** So what did they sound like when they were singing it? How would you describe their voices? **Harlow:** Happy. You kind of get this sort of, you know, how you can hear someone's expression a bit when they sing...and you can see their expression, you could kind of hear it, maybe internally a bit more, that they're enjoying themselves, they're enjoying what they do. And it was certainly very infectious and it was very like a, "*They're* enjoying this song. *We* love this song. This is fantastic!"

Table 5: Initial coding example

In this excerpt, there is an experience described that can be coded as different actions (hearing, noticing, forming ideas, feeling). Charmaz (2014) writes that the language we use (and the ways we use it) reflects assumptions, views, and standpoints. Participant accounts reveal assumptions, as do researcher's codes. Coding is therefore not simply a summary of the content of participant's accounts but should be a tool for examining the use of language and implicit assumptions – for both participant and researcher: "coding impels us to make our participants' language problematic to render an analysis of it" (p.114). In the above example, my codes were an attempt to analyse the link between musical sounds and an emotional presentation ("happy") and Harlow's own experience of joy. I explored "forming ideas about the choir" and "emotional contagion" as the steps between the choir's (perceived) emotional state and her own.

Grounded theory involves a process of comparing data continuously throughout data collection and analysis and allows the findings of the earliest analytic efforts to inform and refine further data collection. It also, as stated above, offers an abductive research logic whereby data can be held against existing theories which can enrich and complexify the emerging analytic ideas (Charmaz, 2014). After I had completed the initial coding process for all the interviews, I was exploring the process of creating links between thought, feeling, and action in musical performance and came across Sutherland & Jelinek's (2015) work on 'sensemaking' and 'aesthetic knowing.' The concepts and processes presented were useful tools in isolating the components of participants' experiences and therefore tracing more detailed, specific linkages between the things they noticed and the things they thought, felt, and did. I used this work to rethink the way I had been reading the transcripts and constructing codes. I then 'reframed' the codes for each audience participant by categorizing them along different components of their narratives: their musical engagement (sensory triggers, actions/thoughts/embodied responses, emotions), their sensemaking processes (in terms of how they talked specifically about their position in relation to the music and/or the choir, as well as the actions they took after the concert),

and the way their narrative accounts were structured (speech acts, cultural stories). I proceeded with a similar process for the data from choir directors. Initial codes, organized according to a before-during-after scheme, were reframed in terms of the actions taken in the preparation and delivery of a performance. Codes were categorized as follows: actions (structuring – pre-concert; managing – during concert), ideas about (contextualizing – aims for the concert; role of audience – choir director's thoughts on the audience role), and the structure of narrative accounts. (*See Appendix 2 for examples of coding strategies and processes.*)

After codes were categorized this way, I was able to look at codes across and between choir groups. I then proceeded to engage in a version of what Charmaz (2014) calls "focused coding", a secondary process of coding in which initial codes are condensed and sharpened. Codes from audience participants were compared and condensed but remained in the categories listed above. Codes from audience members were also compared within the categories listed.

The next step was to look at the codes within choir groups, which involved a process of triangulation. Triangulating data, or testing some forms of data against others (Creswell & Poth, 2018), was important in ensuring that perspectives from different sides of the phenomenon (choir directors and audiences) as well as multiple perspectives from the same side (i.e., different types of audiences members) were held up against each other and compared. I compared audience and choir director data from the same choir group to examine which aspects were shared and which were different. Very often it could not be determined exactly which concert the audience members attended, and it was therefore difficult to compare experiences within the same concert. Many times, however, audience and choir director participants spoke of the same kind of performance, song, or engagement, and I could make comparisons on a more general level (see Appendix 2).

Together, these analytical strategies facilitated the construction of a comprehensive picture of audiencing. They allowed me to understand participant experiences in terms of their preparation, frames, and consequences, which, in turn, enabled me to consider their experiences' potential impact for the choirs themselves.

Ethics

Both the preliminary and secondary studies required the approval of the Nordoff Robbins Research Ethics Committee (NRREC). In this section I outline the pertinent ethical considerations specific to each study.

Preliminary study

Permission from the umbrella organization *Arts in Action*, individual choristers, and parents/guardians was sought before the preliminary study began. A proposal for the project, including supporting documents such as consent forms and interview schedules was submitted to *Arts in Action* and to the Nordoff Robbins Research Ethics Committee for ethical clearance before data collection commenced (see Appendices).

The key issue in terms of ethical implications was the navigation of dual relationships. Before the study began I was sensitive to the possibility that choir members, as both singers and research participants, might feel compelled to participate in ways they perceived as helpful to me as both choir director and researcher. In this dual role, I also recognized I might feel compelled to 'perform well' and ensure that the choir fulfilled my expectations. Dual relationships were also present when interviewing audience members. As director of the choir, it may have been difficult for some – especially family members with whom I had long associations – to be forthright about thoughts and feelings that were not positive. During the interview process, I found that a bit of self-disclosure about some

of my own conflicts or anxieties in my role as choir director helped interviewees acknowledge their multi-layered experiences as well. It was my hope that offering a space in which to say, "it's not all good" may have subtly encouraged participants to reflect beyond the affirmative. On the other hand, the longstanding relationships with most audience members also allowed for a level of comfort and trust. Most spoke very freely with me.

To address these concerns I kept a reflexive journal in order to monitor these reactions and ensure they did not interfere with the research process. I periodically discussed these concerns with my academic advisors and peers in PhD seminars and peer support groups.

Throughout the research process, pseudonyms were used for individuals and organizations to protect participant anonymity. Paper copies of data (fieldnotes, interview transcripts) were kept in a locked file in my home office, and all electronic data was password protected.

Secondary study

The main ethical considerations in the secondary study involved the preservation of confidentiality and anonymity. To this end, pseudonyms were used for individuals, performing groups, and locations. When choir directors chose to play a video or audio excerpt of a performance during an interview, I confirmed with them that prior consent was given by the members of their choirs to make recordings available to the public. In almost all cases, recordings of choirs were publicly available on their organizations' websites or YouTube channels. When video was shown, I asked choir directors that they not identify any of the singers in order to ensure their anonymity. This included referring to individuals by descriptions as well as names.

All participants were given an information sheet that explained the aims and procedures of the project and signed an informed consent form before their interview (see Appendices). All interviews were conducted through Zoom, and so all forms and documents were sent back and forth through email. All interviews were videorecorded on Zoom and saved to my computer. All research data materials (i.e., interview transcripts) were stored in a locked drawer in my personal possession. All electronic research data materials (including videorecordings and pictures of 'concert maps') were saved on my personal computer and password protected.

The "snowball" sampling method (described in a previous section) carries some ethical questions. When audience participants were recruited through a letter sent through a choir director, my contact information was shared and potential participants were required to contact me if they wanted to participate. This did not create ethical issues as I did not have direct, personal contact with potential participants unless they initiated it. The second way I used this method was to ask audience participants for names and contact information of others they know to have attended concerts. I then contacted the referrals directly. This method of snowball sampling has been problematic when individuals do not want to be identified or associated with a certain identity or group, or when there are hierarchical differences between referring participants and referred people (Queen's University, 2019). In this situation there is potential for people to feel pressured or coerced to participate. Since potential participants all had attended public performances, I anticipated the risk of discomfort in being identified or feeling pressure to participate to be very low. In the few cases where a participant referred another person to me, a separate signed consent form was required from the referring participant to disclose how the referred person's contact information was obtained.

There are additional ethical considerations when using a videoconferencing platform for interviewing research participants. Other researchers have used Zoom for qualitative data collection and have found it suitable and effective because of its ease of use, cost-

effectiveness, and security options (Archibald et al., 2019). To ensure participant privacy and confidentiality as well as security, the following steps were taken:

1. I was the 'host' of each Zoom call. I was responsible for setting up the call and managing settings.
2. All calls were password protected so uninvited people could not join the call.
3. As host I selected "mute microphones upon entry" and "video off" so that participants could control when they were first heard and seen.
4. I conducted all interviews in either my home office or work office.
5. I asked participants to use the screen sharing function only when they had previously indicated that they wanted to share a video recording of a performance.
6. Participants had given their consent to record the call before the interview, but they were also prompted by Zoom to give consent for recording during the call by clicking a box on the screen. The "record locally" function was turned off so that participants could not keep recordings. As host, I had the option to store the recording either on my computer or in the Zoom cloud. I chose to store all recordings on my personal computer which is password protected. Recordings were not able to be accessed by anyone else.

In addition to the above safeguards, Zoom does not collect or sell personal information from its users other than what is needed to facilitate a call (IP address, OS and device details).

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined my methodological approach and the specific methods of data generation and analysis I have chosen. I have detailed the role of ethnography in the project, which, though it took on a different shape in the two studies, provided for both a grounded, action-centred approach to the investigation of audiences. I have described a

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preliminary study in which I aimed to focus my questions on one concert and one performing group I was embedded within. I traced how people talked about concerts and the limitations of the methods used to elicit narratives of experience. This study uncovered broad experiences but also the cultural scripts we use to interpret them, scripts which may not be grounded in the audience's own actions. I then described a follow-up study in which I refined the interview methods to get under the cultural scripts and trace the ways participant talk was linked to action. I have highlighted methodological considerations around talk about music, the role of memory and time, and the ontological nature of the phenomena studied: concerts and audiences. I have described recruitment procedures and offered a description of a diverse, international sample of participants, a sample which provided the opportunity to investigate audiences across as many dimensions of participants and concerts as possible in order to uncover as many variables and facets of the phenomenon as possible.

I turn now to a presentation of the data. In Chapter 4, I draw on data from choir directors to show how materials and processes were resourced to frame performances and elicit modes of participation from the audience. In Chapter 5 I draw on audience participant data to present the 'strategies of audiencing' these participants engaged in. In Chapter 6 I triangulate data from choir directors and audience members to show how performances came to be co-created.

Chapter 4: Setting the Stage

In this chapter I draw mainly on data from interviews with choir directors in the second stage of the project to examine the ways in which choirs prepare for and present their performances. Using the concepts of 'framing' (Goffman, 1974) and 'furnishing' (DeNora, 2013a), I demonstrate how performances were conceived and configured through the actions, settings, and materials that were part of preparation processes. Repertoire choices, performance venues and physical configurations, and the programming of music all served to structure audience experience and provide tools for audiencing. In other words: 'framing' activities and materials offered resources for the meaning-making work that was the 'activity' of audiencing. I conclude this chapter by considering the framing and configuring of performances in relation to the aims of performances as suggested by the choir director participants. The concept of 'witnessing' emerges as a significant aspect of audiencing, an aspect evoked and shaped by choirs.

Framing the Performance

When interviewing choir directors, I was interested to learn how their concerts were prepared for and framed. This was not accomplished by asking for this information directly, but by asking about the materials and actions employed in the preparation and presentation of their concerts. Such materials and actions – the rehearsal process, the venue chosen, the décor in the performance space, the seating arrangement of the audience, the manner in which the performances were advertised – all contributed to the construction of a performance frame. Material and processual elements came together to direct audience attention to (and away from) certain features of the performance event (whether or not this was done intentionally). In this way, audiences were given tools to structure their experience.

Goffman (1974) argued that in order to make sense of events in any social situation, participants in that situation must understand the frame. That is, successful interpretation of a social event is dependent on participants sharing an understanding of the kind of situation it is. At the same time, as the participants in this study showed, a frame is not given by one group of participants as a container for the experiences of another group. Framing is an activity engaged in by all participants in a social situation – it is the negotiation of multiple, sometimes contradictory frames that shapes and re-shapes experience. As performance theorist Philip Auslander asserts: "[e]very kind of performance involves an act of collaboration between performers and audience the terms of which are known to all even when they are not expressed overtly" (2021, p.153).

In the following sections, I examine the ways in which choirs structured their performances along both material (i.e., venues, aspects of the physical space, dress) and processual (i.e., concert programming, interaction with the audience) dimensions to help the audience experience the music in particular ways. This examination reveals something of how the audience was 'constructed' before they even arrived. It tells us something of what the choirs wanted from these events, what they wanted from their audiences, and how a successful performance was defined.

Creating a Choir: Repertoire & Identity

A choir finds its identity, in large part, through their repertoire. A group of singers becomes a choir through the songs they sing. Genre, style, musical tradition, technique, but also text, language, and lyrics frame and shape a musical ensemble and define its purpose. In this section I discuss the ways repertoire (choosing and rehearsing) provided material for negotiating group identity with the choirs.

Most performance choirs are explicitly formed around a particular repertoire (i.e., oratorio, gospel, madrigals, jazz, folk songs). Yet therapeutically-oriented choirs, because they are typically organized around a particular identity group or social cause, often have different opportunities and limitations when it comes to choosing repertoire for performances. I asked each choir director I interviewed what considerations were involved when choosing repertoire for their choirs. Responses were varied, but each choir director conveyed how the process of choosing repertoire was also a process of coming to understand themselves as a group. The words "negotiation" and "ownership" summarize the categories of response.

For some, the lyrical content of the music was the primary factor in this process. Often this meant that songs with lyrics reflecting the lived experiences of singers, conveying hope for a better future, or expressing a particular worldview were focused on and represented a unifying ideal. Brigid shared her thinking on choosing repertoire for *Bravo,* a community choir for incarcerated and non-incarcerated people located in the USA:

> **Erinn:** And so how did you pick music in those early days, and has that changed along the years? What kind of considerations went into picking repertoire?

> **Brigid:** The lyrics, number one – that the words were something that would be meaningful for this particular context. In fact, the month before the choir started I had a meeting at the prison to explain the project and I told the men that showed up, I brought a copy of the song "Homeward Bound" and its choral score and said to them, you know, I don't know how long your sentences are, I don't know how you feel about singing about going home and that kind of thing, but here's an example of a song I'm thinking of, and passed it around to get their view, and they were all positive.

Like several other choir directors I interviewed, Brigid locates a song's primary meaning in its lyrical content. Songs addressed the (perceived) psychosocial concerns of the incarcerated choir members. Brigid seems to want the choir to feel 'at home' with their songs – as though they are expressing something of their lived experiences – but also feel pointed in a hopeful direction. Song titles reflect these hoped-for ideals: original songs by choir members such as, "Be Love", "Inside the Fences", "The Me Some People See", and well-known others such as, "May You Walk in Beauty", "Bridge Over Troubled Water", "Peace Train", "Love Call Me Home". The impact of song lyrics was indeed identified by audience members Barbara and Blair. Barbara recalled a meaningful moment where she felt "swept away with the words." This song happened to be a rap, which is not a musical genre Barbara normally listens to. Blair also reported being captured by the song lyrics: "I just remember following along in the program and being very much like, engaged with the words, that's what stood out to me most…I really just remember looking at the words."

Yet, choosing a particular repertoire is not simply a matter of identifying songs that fit within a particular style or tradition, convey a desired message, or conform to singers' musical preferences. As choral pedagogue and musicologist Liz Garnett writes, "Choral traditions represent communities of practice that actively maintain and promulgate musical behaviors and their associated meanings" (2017, p.129). Thus, identifying a repertoire attaches a choir to a particular tradition (or traditions) against which the group of singers becomes a choir.

Repertoire choices therefore serve to link choir members according to their shared identity, producing them as a group unified around not only their incarceration status, but around their shared commitment to personal and social change. This makes clear the divide between choir and audience, or insider and outsider. With each song, the audience is reminded of the struggle for change, foregrounding the incarceration status of the choir members. This kind of foregrounding has a potential double effect: it frames the music and the performance in terms of a single aspect of singers' identities, perhaps positioning them

as people in need of the audience's help, or, at least, as people dispossessed of power compared to the audience. At the same time, it offers the audience the opportunity to reflect and act in relation to incarcerated people in a way they may have not before. Framing the concert with lyrics about a hoped-for future reinforces the social divide between choir and audience, positioning them in a particular way, but also raises awareness and opens an opportunity to reflect on that divide. This is what Barbara and Blair report: the lyrics identified the problem, yet positioned them on the same side of the problem with the choir.

Debra, the director of *Drumroll*, also spoke of the importance of song lyrics reflecting the realities of singers' lives. Because *Drumroll's* mission is to educate the public about mental illness, many of their songs address singers' experiences directly. Indeed, their performances are built around the everyday issues faced by people living with a mental illness. But this is not the only aspect of identity they want to convey, as Debra explained:

> **Debra:** ...We've had people who...[have] written songs that we still use...Dave...died and his songs still live with the group...And others have brought in songs and sometimes people say *we're sick of them, let's let them go,* and somehow they arise again. And sometimes people will say...*I'd like to learn some new songs. I have some ideas for you*...you know...the songs tend to reflect people's experiences. We try to focus on the positive...as you know, in music therapy there's that balance that we all grapple with, where you want to acknowledge and spend time with how people are experiencing their life at that time. So that might be one type of song. And then there's a time when it's time to just get going and get moving and stuff like that and then there's that kind of song, and so we actually talk about that kind of stuff in the group, that it's good to have songs that reflect the experiences of very poor people and it's really good to have songs that just get you singing about meadowlarks. Not really, but you know what I mean, like something that's bright and cheery.

Here Debra conveys how songs can be resources to present singers along different dimensions of their identities. Though their mission is to educate the public, Debra does not think this accomplished simply by singing texts that describe the realities of living with a mental illness. As she says, sometimes songs need to be about "meadowlarks" – songs that speak to more mundane and shared aspects of everyday human existence. This opens a space for the audience to reflect on difference and sameness. It is as though the choir is saying, *we are struggling with x, and this may separate us from you, but we have more in common than you think*. This shifts attention away from an 'ill' identity and provides an opportunity for the audience to understand the singers as people who have the same concerns, hopes, struggles, and longings as they do. Audience member Dottie confirmed this commonality, describing their songs as expressing "…the human condition…they address issues that are relevant."

Drumroll's songs emerge as they become relevant in singers' lives, though they are finally chosen through a process of (sometimes contentious) negotiation. Cecily, director of *Cantabile*, also articulated this process of negotiation when she spoke of conflicting musical needs, experiences, and priorities in her choir for refugees and asylum seekers:

> **Cecily:** So at the beginning, I think the our thought was, you know, the song the songs will help them with their English too…and then [the assistant director] started like wanting to kind of introduce harmony because her thought is, you know, it's not a choir if it's in unison…So then…we did some circle songs and some of them were a little bit choreographed…And then, there was…this older man from Africa, and when we were doing some of these circle songs he's like, *this is a mess!* Like, *this sounds like cacophony…well when I was in choir, we did four-part harmony,* like, *why can't we do harmony songs?* And so I always sort of joke to myself, especially in the early days, that it was like part choir, part a UN meeting because there are some very strong opinionated people and there was always like a lot of negotiating.

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Different cultures along with different forms of musical participation collided in the shared experience of being a refugee in the US. Choosing repertoire became a process of learning from one another, compromising, arguing, negotiating – in order to both work through and present a common identity in performance. Who are we together? What music helps us convey a sense of who we are, and what music does not? Put another way, of what music do we feel we have ownership? Cecily continued, telling me about the songs that unify the choir:

> **Erinn:** Are there certain songs that seem to kind of unify the group or everybody kind of gets excited about?

> **Cecily:** Yeah. I mean everyone always loves doing "Ekpe" and there's another song…it's called "Thula Thula"…and I think it's from Lesotho…and it's like a very simple lullaby…[and it] is just such a great, like, 'Mother', like "I'm a mother! I'm a woman! I'm singing this lullaby song!" So, I think they really love that song especially.

The first song, "Ekpe", is the choir's 'signature' song, one in which they get the audience dancing and participating actively and is usually sung at the end of a concert. Cecily indicated earlier in our conversation that it is a song in which everyone seems to find a comfortable mode of participation. "Thula Thula", a lullaby, represents for the choir a common identity. It represents an identity they share with each other (the organization is for women primarily, though there are a few male clients in the choir), but an identity the audience can connect with as well. Motherhood is a universal experience, Cecily noted, and identifying themselves as mothers creates a way for their audiences to understand them in terms of a shared experience. It can be inferred that *Cantabile*, in uniting around shared forms of musical participation and universal social experiences through their repertoire, develops their identity and purpose. This identity challenges their (perhaps

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primary) identity as 'refugees'. As Cecily stated, this identity was forged through the process of negotiation – of collectively deciding what music fit the choir and what music they wanted to present to an audience.

The process of identifying with the choir through the lyrics was also noted by audience members. Camille, for example, shared her experience of a song called "I've Come This Far":

> **Camille:** ...we used to sing along with them for that song a lot. And it's impossible to sing that song without doing a little bit of self-reflection, you know, feeling the words for yourself. But also you know, projecting that the, well it's something that everybody shares. You know it's not an immigrant experience even though it certainly is. But it's something that is a human experience to be able to say, "I have come this far." And I'm an old lady so I can tell you – that is a human experience.

Other choir directors spoke of repertoire choices being driven by the musical preferences of the singers. Georgia, director of *Grace Note*, described her process of choosing songs for an incarcerated choir:

> **Georgia:** ...This is where the Community Music...side of me as a practitioner [emerges], because I've done a lot of much more formalized music-making...where you're working on a particular set of repertoire for [and] towards a performance. And with the women in this setting, it's about being really collaborative and negotiating with them and trying to be responsive to their musical tastes. And so we've had very different experiences on each of those projects. You know, you've got women who want to do hip-hop and R&B and, you know, women who actually want to do three part harmony, much more kind of choral-based pieces, and we had a woman who loves gospel music and so we were being responsive to that, and so it's really a very, very mixed bag in terms of what comes out in that space.

Like Brigid, Georgia aims for the choir's repertoire to represent the members of the choir. However, it is primarily the attachment to a musical style that represents the singers, and not the content of the lyrics. Foregrounding this attachment serves to foreground different parts of their identities – a person who likes to dance, a person who has had classical musical training, a person whose faith is important to her, for example – not necessarily their incarceration status. This range of identities, represented by a range of musical styles, offers the audience a range of positions to take in relation to the choir. They may be seen in terms of shared or differing interests, experiences, and/or values or priorities.

Being that *Grace Note* is much smaller than *Bravo*, it was easier for Georgia to select songs based on singers' preferences. It would be impossible to accommodate every singer's preference in a choir as large as *Bravo*. Yet even in a small group, the process of negotiating preferences and repertoire was often difficult. Georgia continued:

> **Georgia:** ...[I was] trying things out and just sort of seeing how it feels, and, you know, how people are responding...sometimes what's a hundred percent the wrong thing for one woman is actually someone else's favorite song. So that's really difficult. And I think that's where the negotiation comes in. So an example of that is..."This Is Me" [from *The Greatest Showman*]...I was thinking, well this would be great, this would be a brilliant piece to do and actually it might be something that could really positively resonate with the women and so we...sang it through together and one of the women really was being triggered...we could all see that it was happening and so...I stopped and we had a kind of moment together...and so there was a lot of support and there was a real sense of, if it's going to make, you know, this particular woman that uncomfortable we don't want to do it. So there are moments like that when it's just completely clear that we can't do this.

And there are other points [when] the women will bring songs…One of the women came in…with Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful" and Nelly Furtado's "Fly Like a Bird" and she was like, "These are two of my favorites. Can we do them?"…We tried them out and it was like, great, that's perfect. So we did those two but there was another group where we brought out Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful" again and they hated it. They really didn't want to do it and it was too emotional for them, and it was really difficult and they didn't respond well at all.

Here Georgia shows how the selection of repertoire cannot be prescribed, nor calculated based on the knowledge of common identity features in the choir. A group of incarcerated women will not necessarily respond positively to a song that is about hard times, or empowerment, or freedom. They will not necessarily be drawn, as a group, to songs in a style preferred by or a tradition familiar to a majority of singers. In order for the choir to feel ownership of their music, they must reach repertoire decisions through a process of negotiation. Georgia brings in songs she thinks will be meaningful, based on lyrics or associations ("This is Me"), but they do not always 'fit' the group. The selection of repertoire is not only about choosing songs that will suit the musical abilities of the choir, or contain lyrics that are representative of their experiences, or are in particular styles. The process of choosing songs is a process of negotiating the choir's identity – an identity in relation to a specific audience. This is not found in wholly within textual messages nor musical elements but in the social negotiation of these aspects of the repertoire as it is rehearsed together. Repertoire choices are answers to the questions: *Who are we? Who are we together? How do we present ourselves? How do we present ourselves in relation to this audience?*

Having a voice in the decision-making process when it comes to repertoire is crucial for *Grace Note*, as it is for many of the other choirs in this study. The value of participatory decision making also aligns with feminist choral pedagogies which encourage a conductor-singer relationship that invites singers into decision-making processes (as opposed to a

traditionally hierarchical Western choral approach). Such pedagogies produce more meaningful musical experiences for singers, resulting in "...confidence in their abilities, [and] ownership in the music-making process" (Wolfe-Hill, 2017, p.202). The desired outcome of this process is a feeling of 'ownership' – a sense that choir, repertoire, and performance come to together in a unique way to form a particular identity.

Patrice, the director of *Prelude*, spoke of her role in the complex process of choosing songs that represented the cultural diversity of the choir. The children in the choir regularly brought songs into the group which were then adapted by Patrice and the other music therapists, but she had a large role in managing these negotiations of repertoire. Because of the social context of the choir – a multi-racial group in a neighbourhood beleaguered with racial tensions – Patrice made sure that the repertoire consisted of the different languages spoken by the children: English, Afrikaans, and Xhosa, for example. She and the other music therapists would bring songs to the choir and "run it by the group and see whether it...actually...resonated with them." In doing so, she balanced the group's ownership of song choices with a concern for equity within the choir.

But it is not only the songs themselves that are carefully negotiated. The way the songs are sung, and the modes of participation involved are arrived at through a process of negotiation as well. Patrice told the story of Prelude "negotiating" the song "Catch a Falling Star" in rehearsal:

> **Patrice:** That's the song the choir was singing, and you know, the music therapist who presented the song kind of brought, you know, the version that she knew, which was unfamiliar to this group of children. It's kind of very different from their cultural music. But this was our one English song, so I can remember one rehearsal, one section of the choir started kind of improvising to...like, had kind of a beatboxing thing going, and some dance moves which became the intro to the song. But this whole process of figuring out how we're going to move, and the sounds that's going

to accompany it and who's going to do what, took quite a few sessions of the children negotiating and disagreeing and then, you know, figuring out a way that suited everybody. And generally, that was how it was with most of the songs. We would often offer something or one of the children would bring something, but it was really kind of workshopped all the way through right up to the performances. And even on the day of the performances changes were made!

Erinn: And how would that happen in a rehearsal? Would you ask for feedback or input from them? Or would it spontaneously come from somebody who said, "I don't like that!" or "I think we should do it this way"?

Patrice: Yeah, I think it was kind of, it was always the spontaneous. So, you know, I think there was also, again, a culture of children, but you know, anyone can say that they like this or don't like this or have a new idea…I think it was also…this is exactly the kind of space we wanted to create. So, this wasn't just a choir where children were singing songs, but in was a space where they were in a relationship and learning relational skills. So we really encouraged that as far as possible.

Here Patrice describes the process of negotiating repertoire and forms of participation to fit the choir. Rather than the song serving as a vehicle through which the choir displays their skills and abilities, the song changes as it flows through and is 'played with' by the group. If this process is successful, the song becomes internalized – not only to individuals but to the group. The song becomes the group; the group becomes the song. This can be seen as the process of 'ownership' described by many of the choir directors.

It is worth restating the obvious at this point: the mode of interaction in these choral groups is specifically *musical*. How can we understand how *musical* resources provide the means with which to work out group identity? DeNora (2015) writes of the way a song "offers parameters, structures, and modes for how to be and how to act, and thus, how to react

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and how to feel" (p.88). A repertoire offers modes of being: feeling states, dispositions, personalities through musical materials and the traditions in which they are embedded. When a song such as "Catch a Falling Star" is sung by a choir of children in suburban South Africa, its 'meanings' are fleshed out by the children in relation to the tradition of popular song from which it comes, in the musical-social experimentation and exploration with each other. Repertoire thus serves not to simply 'express' the performers' identities, but provides resources with which they can best identify themselves in this social space. Repertoire is a resource for being 'me with you', and as such, it is contextual, chosen, in part, on the basis of who 'you' happens to be in any given performance.

Reflections on repertoire

Repertoire does not seem to serve as a vehicle to simply present a 'message' through its lyrics, or even a set of individual self-presentations, but rather a collective mode of being – the product of a "collective musical consciousness" (DeNora, 2013a). As Hassan stated in his study of identity within a choir for disabled people: "...the...choir rehearsal may be seen as a rehearsal in a broader cultural sense; literally, it involved processes of trying out ways of being together through learning from others" (p. 221). 'Ownership' is arrived at through the processes of negotiation and is therefore emergent. Repertoire is not 'matched' to the choirs on the basis of lyrical content, but is appropriated, adjusted, and, at times, internalized by the choirs. The choir identity produced is part of the performance frame – it directs the audience's attention to aspects of their identity through its evoking of lyrics, musical styles and traditions, and the unique ways the choirs 'own' them.

Creating a Concert

DeNora (2013a) used the term "refurnishing" to describe how social actors maintain, change, or transform features of their social environment in order to make that environment habitable for themselves, to promote wellbeing, or to "maximize the self."

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Refurnishing suggests a claim to the space and therefore has social consequences: "[t]he key and defining feature...of refurnishing, is that it adds to an environment something which others will encounter...[it] is inevitably...about claiming and taking space in a social milieu..." (p.50) In this section I discuss the ways choirs 'refurnished' their social environments through performances in ways that allowed them to claim ownership of a social space through the use of language, setting, materials, and processes. In doing so, they made the environment hospitable to themselves and created a space within which they could meet their audiences.

Creating an audience

Choir directors framed their concerts in different ways for their audiences, at times, through their verbal introductions of their choirs. In doing this, they directed their audiences' attention toward certain features of the performance and communicated – both directly and somewhat indirectly – what they wanted from their audiences. The following section examines some of the ways expectations for performances were constructed through language and other texts.

Choirs *Allegro, Bravo, Nocturne*, and *Octave* included stories in their performances – the life stories of choir members, told by the singers live or videorecorded and shown during the concerts. 'Background information' such as this served to help the audience interpret and understand the music in relation to the unique circumstances of the singers' lives. Andrew, the director of *Allegro*, a choir for disabled adults, regularly addresses the audience directly during performances. The following is an example of such an address, which he played for me during our interview:

> *Many members of [Allegro] have shared their story with me and it's been an honor to hear their stories. Many of these stories include being emotionally and physically stuck in shame and fear. Shame of who they are. Shame of who they are not. Shame*

of how they developed or didn't develop. Fear of being recognized. Fear of not being recognized. Fear of being seen and fear of not being seen. "How are people going to see me? How are people going to accept me? Will they? I'm trying to do my best. Can people see that?" When people have experienced exclusion, this sometimes leads to a growing sense of not belonging anywhere. But when people experience kindness and joy and appreciation and love that emotional track changes, and they start believing that they do belong, that they can believe, and they achieve to inspire. This concert, and specifically your reaction and appreciation for our art, is a big part of the complex narrative and the continued healing of that shame and fear. Thank you. (Applause) You are part of the healing process for many and I can't imagine a more noble position to be in than to help others achieve, and you're part of this. You are part of the [Allegro] story. And we thank you. [Allegro] has big dreams.

Here Andrew provides the audience with both problem and solution: people with disabilities often experience shame and fear, but events like this concert, where they can be appreciated and affirmed for who they are, can help heal that shame and fear. The audience is thanked for their role in the healing of choir members, which they accomplish through attending the concert and responding in a certain way. In doing this, Andrew discursively produces both the boundaries of the performance event and the expectations for the audience (Atkinson, 2017). He uses 'cultures of speech' (as referenced in Chapter 3) around music, performance, and disability to organise the audience's experience and perhaps even direct their attention to their own agency in this event.

Implicit in Andrew's speech is a positioning of choir and audience. People in the choir struggle; people in the audience are in a position to help. But in setting up social positions this way, Andrew also delivers what could be seen as a subtle indictment of the audience. Shame and (social) fear are, after all, social emotions – emotions that flow from the ability to imagine another's mental state. Why might the choir members feel shame? What might they be afraid of? And who might be the ones responsible? While not blaming the audience

directly, Andrew very clearly opens an opportunity for the audience to reflect on their position to the choir members and their past actions in relation to disabled people. In doing so, he configures 'healing' as something the audience can (and perhaps has the obligation to) participate in. Andrew communicates that the audience has a responsibility to the choir and gives them specific instructions on how to fulfill it: they can support, appreciate, and affirm the choir. With this gentle, though unambiguous framing of the audience's role and responsibility in the concert, Andrew conveys a strong narrative of the story of choir and audience (and by extension, disabled and non-disabled people) and offers the audience a chance to participate in a kind of repair.

Brigid, director of *Bravo*, also structures concerts to inspire certain feelings in and encourage specific actions from the audience. Here she describes the framing of the 'problem' and the aims of the choir:

> **Brigid:** But what we hope happens is that people in the community will realize that prisons are not helpful. They're not creating any sense of healing...I want to create a concert that teaches the audience about the prison industrial complex and understands all the complexity of what that is, basically to try to inspire transformative change toward more healing approaches to conflict management. So, for example, at all the concerts we always have someone from the Inside-Out re-entry community that either speaks or provides literature, so the outside choir members can think about how to support returning citizens and can, you know, get involved in whatever way toward reform of sentences...

> ...the other big thing that we try to do is, I work really closely with a woman...who is the director of the Department of Corrections office of Restorative Justice and Victim Services. So, we always invite any victims who are comfortable coming into the prison to come to a concert, and we've used lyrics or poem by a survivor of crime and set that to music...in our system in the US when someone goes behind

bars, there's no formal process for them to talk about their crime or what they were accused of doing. There's no real accountability. And to imagine that we have an entire system set up in a way that's just, you know, not getting at the roots…the problems are so multifaceted and complex. So we want the audience to come in and walk out of there with, *we better start making some changes and we need to start now*…but nothing can happen unless people are aware of the problem.

Like Andrew, Brigid's explicit framing of the concert includes setting up the problem and proposing a solution. The music is to be heard in the context of a broken criminal justice system, one that perpetuates suffering and dehumanization rather than one that heals and restores both perpetrator and victim. The choir's aims are clear: macro-level policy change, beginning with micro-level encounters such as their performances. Locating the concert in a larger context of social activism, Brigid frames the concert in terms of a specific problem, a desired outcome, and concrete actions audience members can (and should) take. The audience is invited to feel as though they are already doing something – their presence in the concert a step toward being a part of the change.

The divide between choir and audience is deep – not many attendees have been or can imagine being incarcerated long-term – and it would be easy to reinforce this divide in a traditional choral music format where choir and audience are physically separate with no interaction between them. Audience members may certainly feel as though they are the ones who have come to 'help'. This divide is diminished, however, by the presence of non-incarcerated community members in the choir. Because the choir is an integrated mix of people inside and outside prison, audiences see the choir modeling what the choir wishes to see in the world: an encounter where offender and victim (or those who represent the victim) work together toward mutual healing. The music, as it is performed, is framed as an alternative form of justice. Audiences are to listen in relation to these aims.

Many choir directors spoke about the importance of the language used when talking about disabled or ill identities of choir members. This, too, was a way of framing audience perceptions and expectations, and emerged in my interview with Heidi, director of *Harmonia*, when I asked her whether there were ever risks associated with their performances which she needed to manage:

> **Heidi:** I guess one is, like, the language that we might use about the group. So, for the conference, we were performing because one of the founders had launched a book at the conference on music and dementia...And I do recall that one of the members looked at it and said, *Why does it say dementia? I'm not demented.* And that was quite a shock to me. Because some of the members of the choir are very open about their diagnosis and they're quite good advocates. Whereas others may be...a bit ashamed of it, and then there's others who don't remember that they have a diagnosis. Like, they might know that the memory is not quite right, but they don't quite get that they're there because they have memory challenges...So, depending on where we perform, I might mitigate some of that language. So, when we did the [International] Festival, I think I referred to it as a "neurologic choir" rather than using the word "dementia" because it's really heavily stigmatized... And...if we have someone introducing us...[it is important] that we're in control of that narrative. You know, it's easy if I'm allowed to have the mic and say, this is who we are and what we do, but it's not so easy if you give the mic to someone else and they're like, *This is the dementia choir!*...

Heidi makes choices around the presentation of the choir in relation to how she imagines each specific audience. The choir is thus configured (discursively, in this case) with a certain 'vision' in mind. This vision involves a desired outcome for the way the audience perceives the choir, which may set up certain possibilities for interaction. If the word "dementia" puts distance between choir and audience because of stigma and prejudice in certain contexts, it is left out. If the word helps the choir to advocate for themselves, and if

they feel they have ownership of the word, it is included as an important part of their overall presentation. Framing the choir through a specifically chosen introduction is part of what Leonard Meyer (1967) called the "preparatory set" of musical perception, "those things that may dispose the listener to hear and thus respond in one way rather than another" (DeNora, 2003, p.105). The choir's name is thus an important orienting element for the audience, and a way that the choir holds onto their own identity narrative. Heidi continued, sharing the experience of another group she works with:

> **Heidi**:...the other group that I mentioned – which isn't technically a choir, it's more of an ensemble, but working with people who are seeking asylum – one of the things that the members of that group...[have] really advocated for is that when we perform, the context is really important, but they don't necessarily want to be called "refugees" or "asylum seekers" when they're performing, you know, sometimes it's, *we just want to be the musicians, this is who we are,* you know, *we're not refugees, we're musicians and respect us as that*...And there might be some instances where they want to go out and perform and do advocacy and tell their story...I remember several years ago, we were performing in a jazz club and the person who hired us wanted to raise money for the center that we were associated with. And we said, *That's fine...we're happy to raise money and you can say this is a fundraising for this – just don't call the performers refugees*. And when we got there, it was in big letters above the stage, just like, *ugh*.

Here Heidi describes the complexities and ambiguities involved in presenting an 'illness' or 'alien' identity to an audience. Whether or not the choir (or the ensemble) chooses to present themselves in terms of a socially vulnerable identity, each choice has consequences, the balance of which must be weighed. Choosing to identify primarily with a 'vulnerable' identity is always considered with the specific audience in mind. This parallels the same dilemma faced by the SMART Singers, described in Ansdell & DeNora's *Musical Pathways in Recovery* (2016). The SMART Singers, a choir of people in mental

health recovery, struggled with self-identification when performing in a series alongside professional and semi-professional musicians. How were they to identify themselves, not only in front of the public, but for a public that was specifically accustomed to hearing more 'traditional' musicians? How would they position themselves – as musicians, as people? Each choice was made with a 'vision' or outcome in mind, one that may be loosely defined as creating an 'openness' between choir and audience. For both the SMART Singers and *Harmonia*, foregrounding certain aspects of identity is a way of 'controlling the narrative', or positioning choir and audience in a particular way.

Creating the stage

Appropriating the material resources available in a musical performance event offered possibilities for framing the event, for communicating the choir's aims, for cultivating audience expectations, and for eliciting different audience responses. For example, arrangements of audience seating offered different degrees of physical proximity to the choir. Décor created different types of moods and expectations. The venues themselves, and their degree of prominence in the choirs' communities, communicated differing degrees of formality. Choir directors spoke about their processes of preparation and how the physical furnishing – and refurnishing – of the performance spaces was important in creating conditions for a successful concert.

Claiming a space

Several of the choirs hold performances in several different locations and venues. *Drumroll,* because their mission is to spread information about mental illness, performs "anywhere we can educate." This means that performances have ranged from their home base/sponsoring organization ("right in front of the pool table") to hospitals ("we invited our audience to perform with us") to a technical college for nursing and dental students ("that was a time when the troupe developed some 'dental illness' skits"). They have performed in

public parks, church basements, at a large civic celebration, and at the national Poor People's Conference. Audiences in these spaces, according to Debra, have ranged from a few people to several hundred people. Because of this, the group has developed a kind of portable, permeable stage. Using minimal props and materials, they form a boundaried area from within which to sing – in whatever space they find themselves. A physical boundary around the group is not always created through physical separation from the audience (though sometimes it is), but by the singers' proximity to each other and the mood they create together. As Debra says, they "change the energy in the room" they are in.

The 'stage' they create is portable ("we would go wherever we would be asked"), it is adaptable ("if there is no electricity I bring out the guitar"), and it is permeable as well. Depending on the setting and what the particular space affords, the group may invite their audience to sing with them, as they have in hospital settings. In one instance, the group performed at the care home where the mother of one of the singers was living: "we squeezed into their living room in order that his mother and whoever else was there could have a performance." This often has more to do with what opportunities the physical setting presents rather than any advance preparations for audience participation. Each stage created emerges from the unique needs and possibilities presented by the setting, materials, and people involved.

Thinking of the stage (no matter how simple or modest) as a boundaried space emerged as an important theme for choir directors. Leah spoke at length about the years she worked with *Lyra,* a choir for disabled adults, before she was able to arrange a performance for them. Facing a lack of support from the institution, she held informal performances outside in the garden, without an accompanist or amplification. Over time, she used her own resources to bring in a microphone and pianist, which further defined their stage and identified them as a performing group. Finally, she demanded from the staff that the choir be dressed in "nice, clean, white shirts". When this happened, Leah noted that the singers sat up straighter and sang more strongly. This, in turn, attracted a different kind of attention

from the staff. Musical equipment and uniforms served to further define the space and, in a sense, confer legitimacy onto the choir. This, Leah indicated, brought out a level of confidence in the singers. A stage, no matter how small or simple, offers a place to be in the spotlight (real or metaphorical). The physical boundaries of a space serve to direct audience physical positioning and attention in certain ways as they create, in embodied ways, roles for the audience to play.

While *Drumroll* and *Lyra* developed emergent stages, *Fantasia* refurnished a public space. *Fantasia*, a singing group for people with dementia, has a unique strategy and format for performances: the flash-mob. As Flora, their director explains, the flash-mob format removes the pressure and (possible) scrutiny involved in a public performance. Rather than inviting an audience and presenting a program, *Fantasia*, along with the members' caregivers, shows up in a public place such as a department store or museum and begins to sing, surprising the unsuspecting people around them. The line between choir and 'audience' is therefore fuzzy – there are people singing songs they have prepared, but because they are scattered throughout the room, there is not an immediate sense of who is who – who is a singer and who is the audience. The listeners are therefore faced with a choice to make: Stand back, watch, and become a spectator? Join in and become part of the group? Leave, and reject the offer of either spectating or participating? Flora explains the rationale behind choosing a department store as a performing venue:

> **Flora:** ...we had to have them positioned in lots of different places just as if they were going shopping...we had to make sure that they didn't feel lost, because you know that could have been an absolutely terrible experience. We've...tried to get them in the performance space doing things as they would normally do, so that they don't feel they're doing something unfamiliar to them. So, they're in a library, they're in a shop, they're in the garden, you know, they're doing something where they feel safe, not exposed and they tend to crumble when asked to do something at a certain moment, in a certain spot. They feel there's a pressure. They will either not turn up

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for it or just not be able to do it, or it will all go very badly, wrong for them. And what must happen for them is they *must* have a life enhancing experience. It *must* be life-enhancing for them...even if they don't get direct...applause...they must feel that it's gone right for them.

Erinn: Yeah. Mmm. And how do you know when it's gone right for them? What do you see in them? What do you notice about them? How can you tell when it's gone right?

Flora: Well, in the first one, it was absolutely obvious in that by the end of it, we had 200 people dancing in the china department. You know, people have had a lovely time, they just thought it was such a lot of fun, certainly to see their friends and to have all sorts of people standing next to them singing that they've never seen, and to be the sort of, in the center of something happening, because it's also a very isolating condition. And so, being part of big social events is not such a good thing. Quite often people are timid about coming out in public. In case something goes wrong. In case, you know, behavior takes over, whereas here, they were in the midst of something, but it was entirely benign. So it was obvious from the looks on faces...there was a lady just dancing with two people and they weren't actually anybody she knew...and having such a lovely time just dancing very gently in the china department, not breaking anything!

The choir gently takes over a public space. They are refurnishing the environment to make it safe and comfortable for themselves. They do not choose the flash-mob format primarily for its novelty or shock value, but because it is a way of carving out a space for themselves where they can establish a sense of security. In any other performance format, the limitations imposed by dementia would make the social dimensions of the event extremely difficult, if not downright dehumanizing. To be watched and expected to perform at a certain standard, at a certain moment, could result in feelings of failure and shame, as

Flora indicates. But to sing as they do in the privacy of a rehearsal – only this time in a different space, with some extra people – removes this pressure and potential disorientation. By introducing their music into a public space (one that is very often inhospitable to them), they take ownership of that space (and ownership of the social moment). It is as though they are creating a stage or platform for themselves in the china department. This stage or platform extends to include anyone in the room. It becomes a way for them to invite others into their way of being – their timing, their rhythms, their groove. It is making the space hospitable for themselves so that they may comfortably and confidently relate to others.

The stage is a place to be claimed, to be distinguished (boundaried), and to be refurnished by choirs. Often, the performance stage is referred to as a 'platform', and with this term comes the assumption that the platform is a literal and metaphorical area where one is elevated, where one commands attention, where one's voice can be heard above other voices. The stage-as-platform description often implies a barrier between those on and off. The goal of creating the platform is often to make one's voice the loudest, both literally and symbolically. But this is not what choir directors indicated. Though it is true that choirs created a stage by claiming a space, by drawing a line between them and their audiences, the goal of this appropriation of a space appeared to be to create an environment in which choir members could 'maximize' their selves; in other words, "be themselves". Jillian, director of *Jubilate*, spoke of the importance of performing in a space where the choir would feel secure. Performances were held in their rehearsal space, where the choir would have a sense of security and ownership. Heidi, director of *Harmonia*, explained a process of physical refurnishing as she described how the choir arranged the environment for a collaborative concert with other community groups. The initial considerations for the performance space concerned accessibility – many of the choir members used mobility aids and some would be disoriented in a new space, and because she wanted to ensure that the choir felt comfortable and safe, Heidi had them arrive before the audience and sit in the front rows on the stage. *Harmonia* sang first, followed by the collaborative pieces

(which would normally have been at the end) so that they could sit in the audience and enjoy the rest of the groups perform.

Sitting on stage before the concert began (as opposed to filing out onto stage while the audience applauded), making room for themselves, keeping the environment calm, and going first on the program can be seen as necessary accommodations – traditional choral concert protocol adapted to meet the needs of the choir. But these adaptations need not be viewed as exemplifications of the ways in which dementia interfered with their ability to perform. Such alterations of the environment and concert protocol can offer the audience a different way of being an audience – they are invited into the choir's ways of 'choir-ing' – which involves differences in spacing, timing, and the ways in which people move within those dimensions. Adapting the space was a kind of claiming or owning the space, altering the environment so that they could feel supported and secure and give the performance they wanted to give. We could say that they were making the environment hospitable for themselves so that they could offer the audience their best. In a word, they needed to feel that they had agency.

Making a space hospitable for the audience

Perhaps the most severe, least hospitable setting for a concert is a prison. Physically hard, cold, and sterile, a prison's architecture communicates containment, rigidity, control. The environment conveys the message: you must mold yourself to fit within these structures. This fact made concert preparations for *Bravo* all the more meaningful – it was a dramatic reconfiguring of the psychosocial and physical space. Chairs were set up, plants were brought in, other objects were moved out. Brigid explained how the prison warden helped to make the concert space a welcoming one:

> **Brigid:** He [the warden] would have plants wherever the front stage was...and then the food would always be around the back walls. I mean, and keep in mind in this gym they traditionally have treadmills in the back. So when we'd have these really

big concerts – of over 300 people – the men in the prison would move the treadmills somewhere else in the gym...

Part of the gym was also transformed into a place for singers and their family members to meet and mingle before the concert:

Erinn: Do the 'inside singers' look for 'outside singers' to introduce to their families?

Brigid: It depends on their personality, you know, some of them will and some of them won't, and the other big thing that's different since [this warden] came [is that] they began a visual arts program. So, we started to have a visual arts display all around the outside of the gym, on some of the walls of the gym, [and] there will be tables where there are three-dimensional art pieces… So, the outside choir members are walking around looking and like seeing all the…art pieces and getting to know the men in a new way…So sometimes I'd come up to the microphone and invite the choir members or the audience members just to go and look at things. Oh, and the other *huge* thing [the warden] did – he had *cake,* so before the concert there were tables with *cake*!

The room is transformed from one discouraging interaction to one that welcomes and even facilitates interaction. Art softens the harshness of the bare walls and adds a human element to a space that normally feels cold and impersonal. The presence of cake invites people to linger and socialize. It also represents 'celebration' and encourages 'delight' – experiences not usually found in prison. Cake, as opposed to individual packages of snacks, for example, also symbolizes the occasion in terms of what is hoped for, socially speaking. A cake is meant to be shared (all are partaking of a common food) and has no nutritional 'utility' – it is eaten purely for pleasure. When one thinks of birthdays or other gatherings devoted to celebration, cake is often a centrepiece, symbolizing the sweetness of the occasion and of being together. We may see cake as a "situated symbol" (Streeck,

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1996). Streeck, describing "how people do things with things" (p.365), traces the transformation of material objects into symbols, which, in their context of use, come to stand as "indexical monuments to prior interactional arrangements" (ibid.), the "equivalent of illocutionary acts" (ibid.). Thus, an environment that normally supports relations based on power, control, and obedience is transformed into one that invites and supports connection and intimacy, and this is signalled and sustained by material objects such as cake.

The concert preparations serve to configure an attitude toward the event: this is important, it is special, and it will make room for joy and delight. The physical space communicates a kind of welcome: prisoners are welcome to inhabit another identity. In fact, they are welcome to welcome their audience. The reconfiguring of the prison environment allows them resources to be people who are able to offer their best to others. This is a challenge to the dominant narrative of prisoners accepted by society and reinforced in the physical structures of prison.

Isaac, director of a choir for seniors, also shared about how the arrangement of the performance space was an important part of concert preparation. *Intermezzo* performs mainly in school gyms, but they have also performed in a university and a large concert hall. Decorations, food, and café-style seating helped to frame their concerts by cultivating an atmosphere of comfort and intimacy:

> **Isaac:** Well, normally when it's coffee and everything afterwards, they sit sort of arranged with tables and chairs. So, the audience can see from any angle, right? So they don't have to stress their necks in any way or move the chairs. And decorations, we have flowers and candles, dim the lights a bit. We don't have that much audio or visual equipment to make it really fancy, but we try to make it cozy at least. So, if it's autumn-themed we have some dried leaves maybe, and decorations on the wall. So it feels like something different is going on here even though you can see [gym

equipment] on the walls and everything yet we try to, yeah, make it a little bit more like a concert area so it feels like something different.

Creating a "cozy" atmosphere in the performance space is a way of framing the performance and also the choir-audience relationship. This may communicate that it is not as formal as a concert in a large hall dedicated to performances, which typically do not have seasonal decorations, windows, or any concrete or explicit reference to the world outside the hall. In a setting such as this, the focus is on the stage and the people performing on it. Isaac did refer to performing in such a venue for the choir's tenth anniversary, which was a celebration of the choir itself; a pronounced focus on the performers was perhaps appropriate in that case. But a school gym, arranged to make people feel comfortable with one another – this communicates a different degree of formality and expectation for audience engagement. What is valued by the choir is not the audience's still and silent attention, but their comfort, their enjoyment, and their feeling cared for. They are not "bums in seats" but guests to whom the choir can offer something.

Physical spaces are arranged so that choirs may be hospitable to their audiences. This is different than thinking of the space as a platform from which a choir can simply be heard. What these choir directors indicate is that they are refurnishing spaces so that they are able to extend a welcome. Just as one cleans and arranges one's home so that guests might feel comfortable, choirs arrange the environment to facilitate a successful social interaction.

Finding a 'midway' or liminal space

Other choir directors spoke about finding a space that would meet the needs of both choir and audience, and this meant choosing something of a 'midway' or 'liminal' space. *Grace Note* performed in a part of the prison that was more a space-between-spaces than a room. As Georgia described, it was "slightly separated from the rest of the prison", its

acoustics were bad ("echoey"), it was oddly-shaped (very long and narrow), and the seating was awkward ("it's got these strange...airport lounge seats attached together"). Georgia explained that it was the only space in the prison where both choir and audience could fit, though it certainly wasn't set up for any kind of gathering of people, much less a musical performance.

Holding a performance in a space that no one has claimed for anything else, that is (relatively) 'neutral' territory provides certain opportunities. First, it may suspend expectations by obscuring the conventional performance frame. Typical expectations of performer-audience relations may be suspended in such a space, and this could be maximized by the choir. For example, close physical proximity between the choir and audience might encourage processes of sharing and connection, as opposed to a stage far removed and elevated which might emphasize musical mastery and achievement. Second, it obscures everyday prisoner-prison staff roles. Pathways and routines of power and subjugation are not established in such a space, and there is more opportunity for new and alternative forms of embodied interaction to unfold.

One of *Prelude*'s primary performance venues was a large church hall in the community the choir served. Practical concerns such as accessibility, location, and size were leading considerations in choosing a space. As Patrice explained, performances needed to be held in a place where everyone associated with the choir (family members, teachers, staff) could attend and would feel at home. The choir was arranged on an elevated stage and the audience sat in rows on the floor, though Patrice made clear that in the South African context, it was common for the audience to participate "if the music became exciting." The audience would usually get up and dance, even get onto the stage: "it was quite vibrant and busy and dynamic." Patrice described the way the venue attracted and opened up to multiple people, including not just family and extended family but other performing groups as well:

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Patrice: Generally, this was on a Friday evening and there would be...quite a lot of teachers from all the different schools, school principals. There would be family members and extended family members and neighbors and friends of the children in the choir and whoever in the community, you know, heard about this. So we generally would advertise it and children would invite people to attend, but it was a Friday evening and kind of open. So whoever arrived was welcome to come in...interestingly enough, often there would be other music groups that just are in the community. And then, if there was a concert they would also come and they also perform, because if something is happening on a stage then, you know, anyone is totally welcome to go and perform. So even though later on, I think we got a more formalized program and structure, but in the first few years, whoever showed up in order to perform had access to the stage...there would be also some funders or...other stakeholders within [the organization] who would be people that are not from the community. And again, this was actually also a really important dynamic in terms of our work in this space...this idea of integration and getting people...to kind of move across boundaries and get a sense of what life is like in this place because of the ongoing things of segregation that is still very present in our context.

Patrice describes how the venue needed to serve multiple functions. It needed a stage to 'showcase' the performers, as the choir was part of a larger program to support the children's psychosocial development. But the venue needed to provide a sense of welcome for the community as well. Specifically, it needed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and integration. A venue that was identified with one racial group or faction of the community may not have distributed ownership of the event evenly. Choosing the venue they did situated them within their local community and highlighted the relationships between the children and within the community. While the choir was at the center of the event, the venue and setting allowed a diverse group of people to come together around their mutual support of the children.

Signalling ownership of the stage: The importance of dress

The visual presentation of the choir also served to frame the performance. This was very often accomplished through the choirs' use of uniforms. Margot spoke of the "camaraderie and unity" *Melodia'*s dress generated – it turned them into a "team." Cecily shared the dramatic effect wearing a uniform had on *Cantabile*:

Cecily: …But I gotta tell you, like putting this uniform on – it transforms them too.

Erinn: Aaahhh. Tell me about that.

Cecily: …when they get dressed up they're like, *it's choir time*, you know, *it's performance time* and they've got…their outfit on and they'll put makeup on and sometimes break out a nice wig or something. And so I think, you know, they love that part of it. And… they're like…*you know, we have all these dreams for the choir,* and…*we want to get paid to perform and to travel and we're going to like have these nice fancy outfits,* and I'm just kind of like, *Uh-huh. You find the money for that, I'm all for it.* But then you know, some of them are like, *Cecily, we have to send money back to our families in Africa and so we should get paid to be in the choir*…you know, those are real concerns that they had…especially the men were like, *we're not able to work…we need to send money home.*

Uniform dress offers *Cantabile* a chance to step into different personae, ones that contrast with their everyday experiences as refugees. Uniforms communicate that they are a group, they belong together, and they have purpose. As Cecily describes, this change in their sense of identity changes what they are able to hope for. A uniform does not simply demonstrate their connection to one another; a uniform tells them they are worthy of respect and even renumeration for their work. Uniforms are one way that *Cantabile* tells their audience what to expect and how to treat them.

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The importance of dress was also identified by every interviewee associated with *Bravo:*

> **Brigid:** ...whoever's in charge of the t-shirts, usually a staff person, brings us a huge stack of green shirts that they wear. And so the men come in and they sign off and they get their shirt, and then the outside singers come in with *their* shirts. So that that in itself feels a lot different...and then we get to the day of the concert and it's like the energy is really up, and for me...people [are] coming up to me all the time – *Brigid, where's this? Brigid, what about this? What about this? What is this?*...they're all so excited and nervous...all of these things impact the energy of the event.

Uniform dress is arguably an important signifier of group identity for any choir, but it has exceptional significance for a prison choir. Covering prison uniforms with brightly coloured T-shirts offers the incarcerated singers an opportunity to redefine their identities – to the public, to the prison staff, as well as to themselves. In their choir T-shirts they are singers and group members, and this communicates a kind of belonging that they do not experience in other places in prison. This was confirmed by audience members Blair and Barbara, who noted that in their choir uniforms, it was difficult to tell who was incarcerated and who was not. In their T-shirts, incarcerated singers were able to go before others differently.

Georgia also spoke of the way that altering appearance changed choir members' self-perceptions. Aware of being seen by an audience, some choir members changed their hygiene routines. They responded to the gaze of the audience by changing their appearance to reflect the person they wanted to be seen as:

> **Georgia**: ...So, some of them do and obviously, then some of them have things with them, but that's again, the privilege, you know, it's the, so for the women who are in the more kind of open, slightly less secure spaces, they're much more likely to come in their own clothes, and come to the sessions, and they're much more likely to have

makeup on, or, you know, have properly have done their hair and washed it...So you'll get women coming in who just look like they haven't washed for weeks and, you know, haven't washed their hair. It's interesting, sometimes the transition actually, through being involved in the project and...the performance can really impact appearance, you know. And I noticed...one woman who came to the pilot project...the shift for her during that time was really remarkable...she got her hair cut in a different way and her medication had changed, but she also really spoke about being involved in the creative work...And just seeing that transition, somebody really discovering herself as an artist, and actually, the difference that made on her appearance...

Erinn: Have you seen other women in the group change anything about their appearance for performances?

Georgia: Oh yeah, definitely...it's very moving, like, they'll arrive on the day and they will have made an effort [to] look different...in some way. And they will have done their hair, or they will have put on makeup or both, or chosen something particular to wear...

This attention to physical appearance and care paralleled the same development within the SMART Singers (Ansdell & DeNora, 2016). There is a sense that going before an audience gave both choirs an opportunity to see themselves from a different vantage point.

Creating a program

Constructing a program or set-list for a performance is rarely a straightforward task for any choir director. Part of the creative process of performance includes creating a kind of aesthetic trajectory which needs to be thought through or at least acknowledged. No matter the musical tradition, style, or culture, questions of 'where to begin?' and 'where to

end?' are considered when deciding what music to perform and in what order. Choral pedagogue Richard Bjella, in exploring what makes a concert program successful, asks his readers to begin by asking themselves why they are performing at all:

> Asking a good deal of "why" questions is always critical to success. Why now? Why this program? Why with this particular choir? Why do it at all?...I would encourage you to place several great recipes for success on the table before deciding the best menu *for this particular occasion*. (2017, p.282, emphasis added)

Concert programs are not a simple collection of stand-alone 'good pieces' but selections which, when linked together, address a particular occasion and its participants. In other words, a successful program 'fits' the occasion and the people involved. This requires creating a shared experience in which the needs of both the performers and audience are balanced. Some of the choir directors I interviewed spoke about the ways in which creating a concert program was guided with this balance in mind. For example, Naomi spoke about including songs the audience would find familiar. Familiarity with the repertoire was important to give the audience a sense of having a shared experience with the choir – this was made all the more significant when the choir, people with aphasia, represented a population the audience had little in common with. Other choir directors spoke about prioritizing the choir's needs when creating a concert program. Jillian stated that *Jubilate* would sing easier pieces first so they could "hear the space with an audience in it". The program would therefore begin in a way that would make the choir feel comfortable and secure and would then increase in musical difficulty. Concerts ended with either a triumphant or reflective piece, depending on the particular audience. Programming the concert became a way of finding the 'fit' between choir and audience, but, obviously, needed to be done before the concert happened – in anticipation of audience response and *desired* audience response.

Several of the choir directors I interviewed spoke about how carefully they programmed music for concerts. Some were especially passionate about this part of the process, such as Isaac, who told me: "I take *great* care in making setlists, *great* care in it. Spend a lot of hours doing it, actually." These choir directors viewed audience experience as something that is shaped through the aesthetic flow of the program. I spoke with Debra about how she approaches creating a program:

> **Debra:** …Our content, not that it's bad or any of that kind of stuff, but it can be heavy stuff. Everything we throw in, you know, we call it a rollercoaster. You're going to laugh and cry with us.
>
> […]
>
> **Erinn:** So your aim in these presentations, performances, is to educate. Is that how you would describe it?
>
> **Debra:** I think it would be, part of it is educate but educate sounds like sitting down at a desk. I think it has to do with the roller coaster kind of thing…I think the group caught on to that phrase and keeps it, you know, the roller coaster kind of thing – laugh and cry with us as we talk about the -isms in society and mental health: mental health and racism, mental health and sexism, mental health and whatever -ism, you know…that is present in our society, and try to get people to feel with them, have a laugh. And the group is quite good at getting people to laugh…
>
> […]
>
> **Debra:** Usually, I think there was a progression that happens from the time we start to when we go into the different kinds of things, I can hear [and] see the rollercoaster kind of thing. There are some songs that bring people into a quiet space and I feel it

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in the room, and then there are other songs that get people rip-roaring and stuff like that, and there are things in the skits that people talk about [and] everybody is quiet and listening. And then there are times when you can hear that they weren't expecting what you were going to say so you hear this burst of laughter. And we finish with a fairly, usually with a fairly quiet song, rather than often, you know concerts will end with a big bombastic, but we tend to finish with a quiet song often…and then sometimes there's a silence in the room and I always appreciate that – when between the performance finishing and the audience response there's a silence, so I think that's really, really important. So I'm often listening for that and then people will burst into applause and give the 'Standing O' and some of our group will burst into jokes and grab the microphone and add more to it.

If the choir's aim is to educate their audiences about mental illness, this is done through showing rather than telling. Or perhaps, inviting rather than informing. As Debra explains, the choir does not simply disseminate information about mental illness, they aim to take their audiences through the emotional range of what it is like to live with a mental illness in an often inhospitable environment. The music and skits programmed power the "rollercoaster" she describes and give it shape and a trajectory, which directs but also contains the audience's experiences. They may be invited to empathize, to care, to be surprised, fearful, or angry, or to laugh. Humour may be used as a way of caring for the audience – of protecting them from the weight of suffering that is shared with them. Interesting is how Debra describes the end of the performances: the audience is brought to a quiet place, much like the calm at the end of an actual rollercoaster. The state of quiet reflection the audience is brought to can help them absorb or assimilate what they have learned and experienced.

Interestingly, Debra was not the only choir director to describe the performance process as a "rollercoaster." Isaac, mentioned above, described constructing a program using the same image:

Erinn: If you can recall a particular concert, what would have been the order of songs that you did? What do you like to start out a concert with? What kind of song?

Isaac: That's depends a lot on the situation. I take *great* care in making setlists, *great* care in it. Spend a lot of hours doing it, actually.

Erinn: So tell me, what considerations go into that planning?

Isaac: Well, I try to build a curve in intensity like any other music therapist maybe would set up their sessions. Something to start off with...if I know the concert is mostly something that needs to be energized from the get-go, I start with something in, [*gestures with his hand out flat, bouncing up and down*] yeah, a bit over the intensity and not with something slow or anything. Something to get things going right. Sometimes I like to start off with huge amounts of energy just to get it down a bit, but mostly, mostly I start with something a bit under the base level of intensity...Yeah, so something slightly calm but maybe a little bit rhythmic just to keep the curiosity piquing...And then I start building things up to the climax and then I start to land off a bit and maybe a grand finale or not that grand but a bit. So it's, this was nice. [*gestures with both hands, palms up, moving up and down in alternation – as though balancing something*] Yeah, a sort of feeling to it, if you know what I mean.

Isaac was clearly passionate about this part of his work in our interview, though, as is evident from the passage above, it was difficult for him to find the words to describe the process. Words like *energy, intensity, rhythm, calm, climax,* and *land* painted a picture of a dynamic process – a process that would coordinate and shape the experience of both choir and audience. I asked him then if he could sketch out the process he was describing, to see if it was more easily communicated through a visual medium:
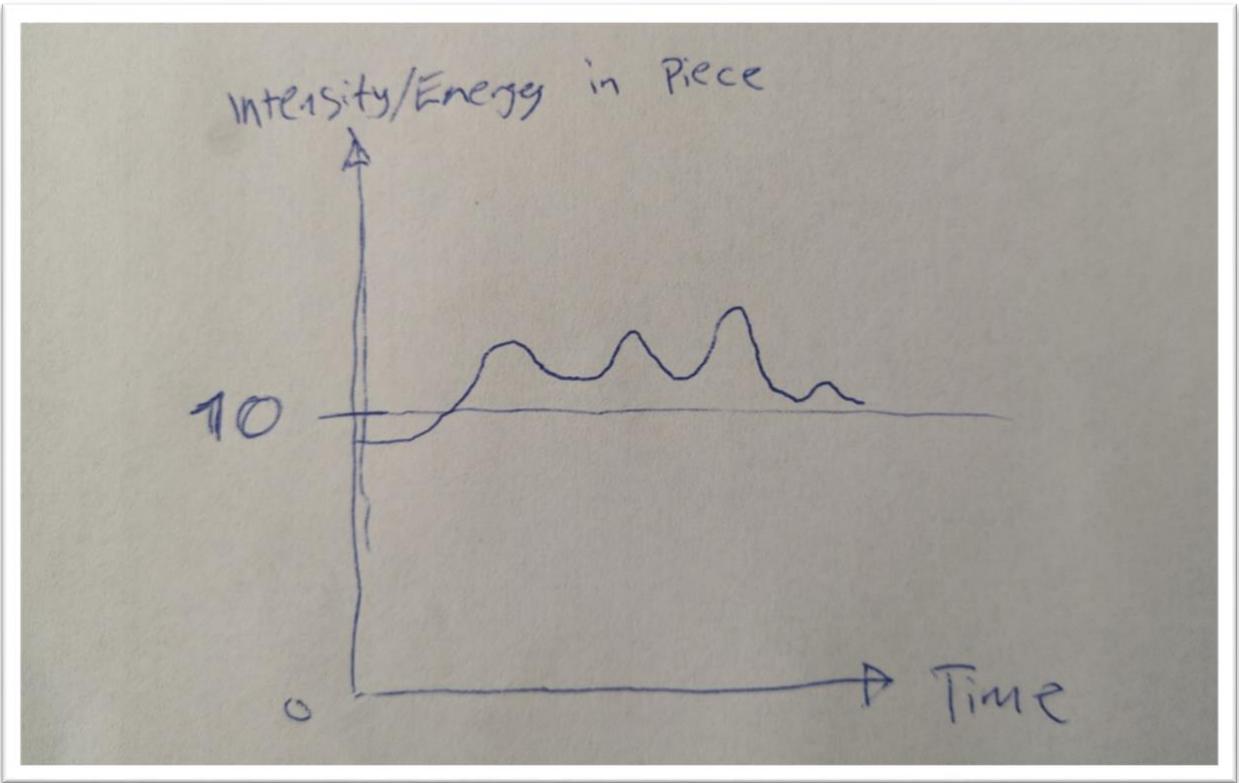
Figure 8: Isaac's concert program arc

Isaac continued, elaborating on his sketch:

> **Isaac:** That's the start, and then it's a peak there. Calm them down a bit, getting them ready for the big roller coaster, *wah-bam*! and end, right?

> **Erinn:** The rollercoaster! That's so interesting. Another choir director used the same image to describe what they take the choir and their audience through. A rollercoaster.

> **Isaac:** Yeah, I find that to be the most effective to keep the attention and intensity because I like to really engage the audience in a different manner. I like to touch them emotionally. That's where I find the core of music. For my sake at least, that's what music therapy is all about in my book. Yeah.

Erinn: How do you know when that's when that's happened – when you have touched them emotionally?

Isaac: I almost can feel, even though I have my back to the [audience], I can almost feel the electricity in the air in this situation, when this piece has landed, has been grandiose or anything big, and it just lands...And then I raise my hands, and I can just *feel* it's tingling. I know it's so stupid to assume, or naïve maybe, but then I turn to the audience, I can see tears, maybe I can see this [*demonstrates with eyes wide, mouth open*]...and the applause...and I can feel it in the air.

Erinn: Right after the song's done?

Isaac: Yeah...And I can because the choir, the members, sort of is my mirror to the audience. So if I can feel they getting engaged...then I get even more engaged and then they get more engaged. Then the audience gets more, and then it's going, positive loop of some sort. I don't know.

For Isaac, the concert program is a means of structuring choir-audience engagement. The above sketch may be thought of an 'aesthetic arc' – a contour of musical experience traced along the dynamic properties of the music and the affective and interactive possibilities it presents. Isaac sequences the songs in his concert programs to afford the emotional and interactive experiences he (and, presumably, the choir) wishes to see. The 'aesthetic arc' of the concert is a design or blueprint for a shared experience. This is not achieved simply through the presentation of particular songs with specific musical properties, however. The aesthetic arc Isaac describes seems to be realized in the response of the audience and the subsequent response of the choir. The dynamic intensity and energy Isaac describes is continually monitored and calibrated, forming something of a feedback loop, as he says.

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The process Isaac describes was further explained in my interview with Odette. Odette, a music therapist, singer, and cabaret performer, shared at length about how she thinks of concert programming in terms of "caring for the audience":

Odette: Well, my passion is singing and performing and doing cabaret. And so...I have written a lot of shows and performed in a lot of my own solo shows. So that means choosing the songs, changing the lyrics, writing a song, putting stories in amongst the songs...And then as I grew as a performer in cabaret, learning how to take care of my audience. So, how do they walk in? What's their first experience? How to, you know, create a flow. So, I might sort of start here...and then come down, not too many ballads. If I do something that's very 'connecting heart'...how do I bring them into that? And how do I bring them out of it that, so taking care of my audience so that they can process as well.

So, I put that into the choir. So...I would look at the audience...a lot of them have family members and they come to see their families and connect. So...apart from the choir and bringing the choir out to shine, what could be going on for the for the family members? So, seeing their loved one that has no communication suddenly singing, or something that's highlighted in them that they haven't seen for a long time, or someone who's never seen the choir...sometimes it can be really emotional to see someone who [now] has physical movement and speech and ability to connect with others. And then seeing them...come to life through this musical experience can be quite upsetting and joyful...so, being mindful of when I share a story of a choir member...how I do it gently. So...[I] try to shape the journey a little bit and then...move it into something else. So maybe a joint sing along where we're singing something really positive as a community, connecting, sharing music together.

Odette describes creating a concert "flow" with the needs of the audience in mind. The aesthetic arc involves the audience in different ways and keeps them active. It offers but does not require nor demand. Odette guides her audiences in and out of different emotional experiences, led by the question, what do I need to do to keep the audience engaged and connected to the choir?

The concert program is not simply a collection of songs chosen to represent choirs' musical preferences or showcase their abilities (though this may happen as well). The concert program gives shape to audience experience, providing opportunities to feel and experience certain things (structured by musical properties), pacing their 'digestion' of what they see and hear.

Reflections on creating concerts

In this section I have examined the ways in which choirs structure concerts in ways that provide certain opportunities for and create certain expectations in their audiences. The way the physical environment is refurnished, the way the choir appears in terms of dress and physical arrangement, and the temporal organization of the event frame the performance and direct audience attention toward certain features.

Each feature of the performance was constructed with the aim of 'ownership' in mind. As Patrice stated when she described how songs were chosen: "...something we were quite intentional about is that the children needed to feel a sense of ownership when it came to the performance." Choirs establish performance spaces, materials, and processes as their 'own' – but to what end? What do choirs want to do, or accomplish with their stages, their performances? How might this be demonstrated?

What are Concerts Created *For*?

What do choirs want to do with the environments they construct? Following Goffman (1959), who argued that people, in situated ways, construct self-presentations that project the impression they want to give others, we could say that choirs create environments to facilitate self-presentations that are favourable to others and have the potential to increase their members' social standing – or at least help them avoid humiliation. In fact, for Goffman, every social encounter is a struggle to control definitions of the self (Raffel, 2002). The stage, for Goffman, is a place where that control can be maintained; therefore, we may see choir repertoire, venues, and uniforms as cultural materials that choir members can make use of to project a desired impression. The stage could be seen as a platform for projecting desired attributes: ability and achievement, for example. The stage could be seen as a tool deployed for attracting praise.

But does this capture what choir directors say their choirs want from their audiences? What choirs 'want' came up explicitly in interviews, both spontaneously and in response to direct questions regarding choirs' needs from their audiences. For nearly all the choir directors I spoke with, the experience of being seen, of commanding attention, and of having their voices heard was undoubtedly important. The comments from Elora, Jillian, and Leah summarize this importance:

> **Elora:** Yeah, they're invisible. I think that is the one of the most, maybe beautiful and powerful things about [concerts]...it's just a platform to bring the voices...to bring them, to be shown – it's not a regular feeling for them.

> **Jillian:** ...the big thing for us was that, you know, these are...not seniors with dementia who sing. These are *singers* who may have, may be living with dementia, right?...And so we wanted people to see them as singers for one brief moment,

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not...with the label...you know, written on their forehead that they have dementia. That was supposed to be forgotten for a brief moment.

Leah: [*speaking about the choir for Holocaust survivors*] They are tired. They have ache in everywhere, but they are coming and they want to sing. They want to perform. They want to show everyone that they are still in their power. They are still people. They can sing...they want to show everyone...their liveliness. It's very strong.

Some of the choir directors also encouraged songwriting in their choirs. Brigid began a songwriting program, as an extension of the idea that music could amplify choir members' voices. Certainly, exposure, elevation, amplification were all important to these choirs. Being recognized on their own terms was clearly a hoped-for outcome.

But it was not simply exposure the choirs were after. It was a particular kind of attention, a kind of being seen and heard that exceeded mere observation. Naomi, for example, used the words "reconnection" and "recognition" to describe the desired gaze of the audience. Other choir directors described a quality of attention that included active engagement and acceptance:

Erinn: What would you say they want, or they need from their audience?

Georgia: I think focus and responsiveness and attention, and to feel heard... I think there's something for them about...actually having that attention from their audience where, you know, there's a sense of togetherness for them. And I'm sure, in part, inviting the wardens that work closely with them...it's kind of about inviting them into a different part of their prison life as well, actually. You know, something about kind of connecting...[with] someone they might see on the wings on a daily basis, but actually who doesn't have any interaction with them outside of that context, to go, *look at what I'm doing*, you know?

Interesting here is Georgia's use of the word "inviting." The audience, as she describes, is invited to pay attention to another side of the prisoners: another persona, another dimension of who they are. *Inviting* the audience implies a sense of control over the performance space, but also implies a measure of vulnerability, a reaching out for connection and acceptance. The performance 'platform' becomes an arena where the audience is invited to respond. Debra, below, answered the same question in a similar way, stressing that it is the interaction with the audience that is most important to the choir:

> **Debra:** I think attention, first of all, you know, attention and then, an energy. But I think the energy…tends to grow together the audience and the troupe. The troupe members always love it when there's a standing ovation, of course…[but] I think it's the interaction with the audience that's really important and their interest in you know, maybe the audience going away with something to think about too. But also remembering the laughs and you know, the roller coaster.

It is not simply attention they are after, but a kind of attention that draws the audience closer and engages them – where the energy of the performance "grows together" choir and audience, weaving them together in a way that likely wouldn't happen anywhere else. At the same time, the energy created in the music doesn't stop at the end of the performance. Debra also stated that the choir loves to talk to the audience post-performance – the energy transfers to informal interactions following the performance, and those connections are central to the performance experience for some members of the choir.

Georgia and Debra's responses point toward qualities of both attention *and* interaction: the choirs want both from their audience. They want to be seen and heard, but they want to

invite. They want a kind of spotlight or distinction, but they want to narrow the space between themselves and their audiences.

It is from this position, and within this gaze, that some of the choirs developed their sense of identity, or distinction. *Cantabile*, led by Cecily, gave their first performance spontaneously. Cecily recalled that the choir, made up of people speaking several different languages, with varying degrees of musical experience, began as a rather ragged group: "I think we were all just kind of like, *Wow, what are we doing? Is there any chance of this even happening?...* we were just kind of in the trenches, just trying to get through a song." Given their tenuous beginnings, performance was not on the horizon in the early days of the choir. When the sponsoring organization held an annual beach party, involving staff, volunteers, and participants, some members of the choir asked to sing some of the songs they had been working on for the rest of the attendees at the party. Cecily described how this spontaneous performance had a uniting and focusing effect – she noticed how suddenly proud choir members became. I asked her if and how the choir looked and sounded differently on the beach than in their regular rehearsals, and she identified their physical positioning toward their audience:

> **Cecily:** Well, normally we were kind of smushed around this table...in [a] tiny little room...and so they were usually sitting and...looking at their music and, like, struggling. And [in the performance]...they were standing, we were kind of like in a little cluster between these picnic tables, and...they didn't have any music. And they were smiling and singing very...loudly, you know individually loudly and just joyfully...I think it was quite a surprise for me because...it had only been, I don't know, a month or a month and a half of rehearsals at the most. And of course, you know, the English was still muddled.

Cecily spoke of this moment as a significant turning point in the evolution of the choir. Something of a choir identity solidified in this performance – their purpose became clear

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when an audience was present. Up until then, the choir's purpose was not arrived at (solely) through the act of singing, in developing musical skills, or in being musical with each other – but in the performance they understood themselves as a group in relation to those outside the group, perhaps in the way they saw themselves in the faces of the others. The choir came to understand themselves in difference, in what they could offer to their audience. Cecily remarked that the audience's response to their impromptu performance was extremely positive, which bolstered the choir ("they were really excited") and carried through to their subsequent rehearsals. The improvised 'stage' helped them to both find identity and distinction and create an interactional space within which to reach out to others.

In sum, choir directors spoke about their choirs wanting to be seen, heard, and accepted as they are, on their own terms. In this sense, Goffman's characterization of the presentation of self in a social encounter resonates – the performance is a place where the choir is able to control their own identity narrative. Yet, the responses of choir directors also indicate that choirs want more from the performance than a simple presentation of their 'best selves'. Perhaps what choirs seek is what those 'best selves' might be able to *do* in the interactional space, as Jillian points to:

> **Jillian:** ...I think they would want the audience to be proud of...what they accomplished...But I also think...we go in into music for the community of it, for the sharing of something that is a gift. Like, the gift of music, the gift of our voices. And so that ability to share it and to move others, I think is really important...I feel that this is like it's as a gift that that they can give to others and...they're in control of making other people feel good. And...when you're someone needing care, you feel like you don't have very much control.

The audience as 'witness'

"What does the choir want from their audiences?" is, of course, an impossible question to answer. Choirs are made up of many people, with diverse desires, intentions, motivations, and needs. What a group of people 'want' from an experience is necessarily multi-layered and dynamic. As would be the case for the members of any choir, the only answer to this question is: they want to sing for them. At the same time, the responses from choir directors above demonstrate hoped-for outcomes of performances: first, the choirs want a certain kind of attention from their audiences – an attention that includes acceptance. Second, they want to interact with their audiences in a way where they feel a sense of agency and control.

Kendrick used the word "witness" to describe the kind of attention his choir sought:

> **Kendrick:** ...what I would come back to is...the idea of the audience as witness, as witnesses, certainly where our work as music therapists and...the community choirs that we're working with as part of our work as music therapists, that the role, rather something in the role of the audience being as kind of, be there for the performer and to witness...those people achieving what they're achieving. Which...I think it's easy for us as seasoned performers to underestimate what it actually means for somebody to be part of a performance, and how nervous people get about it. You know what a big deal it is for them.

> **Erinn:** What's involved in witnessing? In your words, in your thinking? I'm just thinking as you use the word 'witness', how is that different than, for example, spectating? Or is it the same thing?

> **Kendrick:** Maybe it is the same thing, I don't know. It's being, it's being present. Something about being present, obviously...you're not there to tell the audience

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what to do and how to behave and all that kind of thing. But I think it's more, a sort of a sense of they are there because they want to be present, for that group of people and maybe for specific individuals within the choir. Family friends, etc. You know, they are there because they want to support, because they want, it's like it's almost a personal role, for them. I don't know. Maybe I'm conjecturing to some extent.

The word 'witness,' in its common usage, carries a different meaning than other similar words: see, look at, regard, watch, spectate. 'Witness' is linked to its usage as a legal term; the witness is one who was present, who saw or experienced something of significance, who is called on as the carrier of the memory of something important. Similarly, the word 'witness' in a religious context refers to someone who sees or experiences something extraordinary and is transformed by it. The witness responds by telling others of the transformation and the cause of it. In both the legal and religious contexts, 'witnessing' is an activity that compels further action. The witness does not merely watch the event unfold and go about her business; the witness bears a responsibility to tell others the truth of what she has seen ("testifying"). Witnessing also has consequences. The legal witness is called on to help establish the truth of harm done. Justice depends on witnesses. The biblical witness does not see her transformation (and its source) as something to be owned or kept within, but something that transcends the individual affected and therefore must be shared. Both the legal and the biblical witness come to see what they have witnessed as an event in a larger story. It is through witnesses that events ripple out.

Kendrick's ponderings on the concept 'witness' suggests a particular kind of presence. The audience does not simply watch, they are not just there, they are there to "be there *for*". Kendrick describes a kind of presence that is open to the way the performers might 'show up' in music. There is a spaciousness implied in this kind of presence – it is though he imagines that the audience positions themselves in a way where they are able to be surprised – by the choir, by the music, by the performance.

As I reflected further on the implications of the term 'witness', I was drawn to the resonance between Kendrick's use of the word and the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas' (1969) conception of the face-to-face encounter. For Levinas, to be truly attentive and present to another human being is preserve their 'Other-ness'. Any attempt to define, categorize, or otherwise reduce the Other into a kind of knowable totality destroys this presence. To be attentive to the Other is to be attentive to their wholeness and responsive to their 'call': their needs and their vulnerability. To be attentive to someone is to be not simply *with* them, but *for* them. In other words, attention involves not a passive presence but an active sense of responsibility for the Other. The "support" Kendrick speaks of parallels the hospitable posture Levinas states is the only ethical option available to us when we encounter the Other.

For Levinas, the *asymmetry* of the relationship is key. Hospitality is impossible without preserving the Other's essential difference. In our everyday transactional modes of relating we may treat others as we understand them to be – and we may therefore view each encounter within a framework of predictable categories, actions, and reactions. The asymmetrical encounter, however, is one in which no reciprocity is expected, where interactional rules and scripts are suspended. The Other is not one to be invested in because of a promised return; the Other is one to be welcomed as she is *because* she is.

Might it be that choirs desire this kind of asymmetry of relationship? What kind of attention do choirs want from their audiences? How do they wish to be seen? Regarded? Witnessed? Returning to the words of choir directors presented above: "recognition...acceptance...reconnection...(re)integration". In short, choirs want an encounter in which they are witnessed as they are. They do not appear to want their acceptance by others contingent on the demonstration of sufficient skill or ability (we accept you because you've shown us what you *can* do), nor on the demonstration of the need for pity/charity (we accept you because you need us to). The stage they create is a

space within which they can encounter others and be encountered – without expectation, without evaluation, without containing or being contained.

The choirs are not concerned with projecting a favourable impression as much as they are concerned with creating a space within which they can be 'themselves' and invite others to join them. In pursuit of this, they appropriate cultural materials (repertoire, venues, décor, uniforms) and mould them to fit – negotiate their form and use, together in rehearsals – until they arrive at a sense of 'ownership' of these materials. 'Ownership' can be understood as a kind of agency – an agency with which the choirs redefine for their audiences what these cultural materials can be and can mean (DeNora, 2013a). The performance stage is a place where agency can be increased, but to what end? DeNora (2013a) writes that for Goffman, the asylum is a place where the self can both be maximized and also offered to others, but responses from the choir directors above indicate that perhaps the choirs strive to maximize the self *in order to* offer it to others. That is, the goal of performances for the choirs appears to be located in the interactional nature of the performance – the musical encounter, in which choir and audience meet. Music provides the materials with which to be generous.

It is worth returning to Kendrick's comment that "people want to support the choir...it's almost like a personal role for them". Support, construed as "being there", is what enables the performers to perform:

> **Erinn:** What do you suppose [the choir] wants or needs from their audience?

> **Kendrick:** I think that for a lot of people, it's just about the audience being there. *It's like the audience is there to enable them to be in this performing role*...they come because they want to come, they come because they want to be there. So, they are a naturally kind of supportive group of people who provide the choir members with this by their presence, with this opportunity to perform. [emphasis added]

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On one hand, this is true – the presence of an audience is necessary for the kind of performance the choir wants to give. The audience literally is "there to enable them to be in this performing role." But it also may be true that music, or the performance, enables the *audience* to be in a *supporting* role. By this I mean that the witnessing Kendrick describes, which can be thought of as a kind of Levinasian "non-possessive" gaze, is made possible by musical performance. The choir, through their performance, provides the audience with an opportunity to regard the choir differently – to suspend assumptions, to accept the unexpected, to make room for choir members' agency to unfold. In short, through the processes, materials, and structures of the performance, the audience is enabled to be there *for*, in the way the choir wants and needs them to be. This relational dynamic is, for many of the participants in this study, an outside-of-everyday experience, where interactions tend to be transactional and people are reduced to categories. Music, for them, preserves the asymmetry of the gaze – which is both of the eyes and the ears.

What happens when an audience is enabled to support the choir in this way? "The process of witnessing generates a kind of knowledge that did not exist before. Therefore, witnessing produces a crisis" (Ullman, 2006, p185). Levinas refers to this crisis as the "abyss" (Naef, 2006). Each encounter presents a choice to be made: turn toward the Other, or turn away. This is not a single decision, made internally, however – it is a product of moment-to-moment choices and actions. Witnessing produces an opportunity: action is compelled, but of what kind?

If the choir builds a stage on which to present themselves, but they do so in order to invite the audience to witness them and engage with them, how does the audience respond? How does the audience attend to the performance and performers? What are the actions they take? How does music offer the materials for a 'non-possessing' kind of witnessing? In the following chapter I turn to the actions and experiences of the audience in order to explore these questions.

Chapter 5: Strategies of Audiencing and the Musical Persona

Constructing Performers

Who are the people performing, and what or whom do they perform? Music therapy theory has had conflicting answers to these questions (Ansdell, 2005). In much of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, performance within music therapy settings appears to have been influenced by psychological models of the self (Baker, 2013) and has perhaps implicitly relied on the idea that the self is portrayed directly and singularly across contexts. Indeed, it is arguable that the practice of music therapy developed in relation to an assumption that the goal of therapy is something of a process of self-exploration and self-definition that takes place removed from 'normal' or 'everyday' social spaces (Ansdell, 2005). The self in musical performance, then, has been understood as a direct representation of an essential self, an essence transmitted to an audience. An ecological perspective on music therapy, however, would emphasize the relational constitution of the self. To account for the interactional space between choir and audience, then, a psycho-social lens is needed – to understand both the relational constitution of the self and the way the self might be presented musically. This chapter traces the ways in which audience members came to 'co-produce' the people performing, and how performances came to be understood in their musical and social dimensions.

How do people talk about performers?

Given that the focus of my study involves the relationships between people who are separated by social differences[9], I was interested in audience member interviewees'

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[9] The nature of these differences is defined in Chapter 1.

descriptions of the people performing. However, questioning participants directly about their view of the performers would have likely elicited predictable and possibly contrived or 'appropriate' responses. I did not begin by asking participants about the performers specifically, but about features of the performance that stood out to them and how/where they focused their attention. At times I asked if they focused on any particular individuals. In response, many participants began with a description of the singers themselves, and specifically, the different performance styles and behaviours of individual singers.

A singer's performance style was often linked with aspects of their personality (as imagined or projected by the audience member, in some cases) and how they felt about performing. Many interviewees spoke of being drawn into different performance styles, noting their differences and comparing them. Barbara, who attended concerts given by *Bravo*, a prison choir, said that one of the first things she focused on in a concert was "the different ways of performing":

> **Erinn**: Can you tell me about some of the different ways of performing?
>
> **Barbara**: Some of the men, and some of the community members too, would just be so jubilant in the way they performed, and their mouths...[and] facial expressions would be just vibrant, but others would be a little more subdued, and it's so...interesting seeing how that worked.

Barbara was immediately drawn to the way individuals in the choir seemed to be animated differently, through their varied emotional presentations and displays of energy. She, like many other participants, compared singers through features of their performing styles. This opened an opportunity for me to ask further questions about the interviewees' perceptions of the performers.

Dierdre, who attended a single performance given by *Drumroll* (a choir for people with chronic mental health issues) twenty years earlier, remembered not words or music, but the expressive qualities of the performers:

> **Dierdre:** I can't remember words or music. What I remember is more facial expression, body tone, but I do remember...this gentleman who spoke...he kind of told his story about what he'd experienced. I think he suffered from schizophrenia. And you know... he didn't present beautifully in terms of how we think about beauty...but...his face and his words came together in a way that was so, so positive and [with] such dignity. I'm sorry, I can't think of the words. He just, he told his story, he told it with such dignity and strength and patience. And he just made a very powerful image. It happened so long ago I can't remember the words at all.

The content of the message was not remembered, nor was the lyrical or musical content of the songs. Rather, Dierdre speaks here of noticing certain performance qualities which were interpreted as personal qualities – dignity, strength, patience – and this came through the singer's visual presentation (facial expression, posture) as well as his aural presentation. Like Barbara, Dierdre was oriented toward and focused on the qualities of *people* – emotional and communicative – that emerged in the performance, rather than on the musical content alone.

Sensory triggers, aesthetic experience, and sensemaking

How does the audience member's perception of these performance qualities and their subsequent response (things noticed, thought, and felt) become cognition? In other words, how do the features that audience members notice combine to produce knowledge – about their experience, and about the situation? Sutherland & Jelinek (2015) describe the process of "aesthetic sensemaking", that is, "meaning making based on one's feelings

about what's going on" (p.291). Drawing from Dewey's (1934) work on experience, the authors outline a process that begins with the focusing of attention:

> Whether tremendous or slight, experience becomes experience when one series of moments stands out in comparison to others. This occurs at the intersection of engaged participation within an event and making connections between that event and one's self. Connections arise through sensemaking, the activity of giving meaning to experience. (p.291)

It was these "moments" that I aimed to explore with my interview questions, as the linkages between sensory detail and new knowledge could then then be traced:

> The work of sensemaking began with attention grabbing sensory triggers that brought aesthetic experience into relief. Once in relief, the experience became the focus of associative work. This associative work followed a process of articulation leading to the transformation of experience into new knowing. (p.297)

The interview was an activity through which reflective, sensemaking work about performances could take place. My line of questioning focused on the sensory details that were foregrounded by the participant, and traced the way these details were pulled together to create a narrative of experience. However, as I explained in Chapter 3, the narrative, as it unfolded in the interview, was not a representation of the experience but served to constitute the experience.

A similar process of meaning-making is offered by DeNora (2000) in her analysis of the uses and functions of music in everyday life. Participants in her study identified bits of music, or "semiotic particles" that stood out and triggered an association to an aspect of the self or past experiences. These musical 'bits' (which could range from a tempo, to a melodic contour, to a harmonic texture, to a musical style) became a frame for experience, drawing

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paramusical elements into the musical moment: "Musical framing occurs when music's properties are somehow projected or mapped on to something else, when music's properties are applied to and come to organize something outside themselves" (p.27). Semiotic particles are not experienced as 'pure music', however. The experience of music is always intertextual, embedded in its relationship to many other dimensions of its performance. Lyrics, aspects of the physical setting (and visual cues), props and movement, and the people involved all come to bear on the audience's perception of the musical 'bits' identified. The result of this process is a reciprocal linking of musical sounds and structures with textual, visual, material, and relational features, interpreted through one's personal experiences and memories, building a "semiotic web" of sensory triggers and associations. Skånland (2011, 2013) describes a very similar process in her studies of Mp3 users, where she demonstrates how Mp3 listeners are able to shift mood, affect, and attention very quickly through their listening practices. Associative work is done through choosing the 'right' music in a given context, making Mp3 users "active agents" (Skånland, 2013, p.7) in their own affect regulation.

The associative work described by Sutherland & Jelinek, DeNora, and Skånland can be seen in the following section of interview dialogue with Barbara, the audience member quoted above. Barbara used both metaphor and comparison when talking about her experience:

> **Erinn:** You also mentioned…that it was almost like going to church, right?…Can you tell me more about what that means?

> **Barbara:** Well, I felt that kind of inner transformation that you get from worship. It's really meaningful and comes inside and is not just a performance. It's just, it's a gentling and enriching sensation inside. I guess that's what I meant.

Here, Barbara compares her audiencing experience to religious worship. Earlier in our conversation she described the way she would sit quietly before the music began, centering herself and becoming "open" for what was to come. Sitting in this receptive state, she experienced a kind of emotional movement, or "transformation" as she put it. She begins by comparing the concert to going to church, but as I question her further, she identifies the specific musical features (sensory triggers) that stood out for her and were linked together to produce this association.

> **Erinn:** And would those be at points where the music is really loud and exciting and people are really being expressive? Would they be at moments where there's something in the text, the words that are really striking you?

> **Barbara:** Well, partly it would be connected to words, but also there were times when the harmony was so rich and just uplifting. I felt that when I was in Swaziland and you go into a church service and the music is that kind of dissonance [*sic*], but is so vibrant and rich and it just keeps going, lifting you up and up. And so I had that same sensation at times during the community choir. That uplifting. Just feeling blessed by it, really.

> **Erinn:** Tell me what you mean by 'dissonance', a little more.

> **Barbara:** Well, In Swaziland, during the time when music comes, they don't sing from their mouths, they just sing from here [*puts her hand on her chest*] and it just *flows* out and everyone sings, fully. And so there's sometimes not that refined harmony. There's this kind of dissonance that just reverberates. And so that's, not that the community choir did that, but it's just that same feeling, that uplifting feeling. I had a cousin, who, we were in the Art Gallery in Minnesota and we sat down for a time, and we were watching snow falling down on a pine tree outside.

And she said, don't you feel more beautiful? After seeing all this art? And that's the same feeling that you get at a concert like [this] one.

In the above passage Barbara identifies the harmony – specifically, the "dissonance" in the harmony – as the focus of her attention. The dissonance, which she defines as not polished choral singing, but a full, spirited kind of singing where individual voices might stick out and enthusiasm is prized over a perfect blend, is the quality that led her into an "uplifting" (later she uses the word "transcendent") feeling, much like she experiences in religious worship. Barbara compares her *Bravo* experience with her Swaziland experience, indicating both experiences evoked similar musical-social-spiritual responses for her. Linking them provides a template or form for how to think about the prison concert.

Interestingly, Barbara jumps right into another, contrasting, metaphor. She describes a wintry scene in Minnesota where she reflected on her experience of beauty in an art museum, far from the songs of the people of Swaziland. Yet it too serves to provide a template for sensemaking. The exuberance and 'messiness' of the singing in Swaziland and the tranquility of a winter scene of art and nature were both called up to transform her experience of the prison concert into "new aesthetic knowing" (Sutherland & Jelinek, 2015, p.298). Perhaps neither metaphor was a perfect match, but each was identified with an aspect of her experience and she found a new aesthetic knowing in their combination.

Barbara went on to reflect on the lives of the people she met with in Swaziland. She recalled their poverty, the illness they faced, and the way they spontaneously began singing in their everyday lives: after working in the field, while carrying laundry. In the following excerpt, she imagines that music functions for the men in prison in a similar way:

Barbara: I would imagine that [music] is one way they survive the hardships that they've endured, having a high incidence of AIDS and now Covid, tuberculosis,

drought...Music helps...and...look at the guys in prison and how...music works for them in that way. It's a transcending.

In her narrative, Barbara links together disparate people, places and experiences involving both suffering and hope, or "transcending." As a witness to what she perceives as a musical process of transcending, she feels similarly uplifted and enriched. This is an example of the musical framing DeNora describes: "Music can serve as a container for the temporal structure of past circumstances – musical structures may provide a grid or grammar for the temporal structures of emotional and embodied patterns as they were originally experienced" (p.68). A semiotic web is constructed and what comes into focus is a picture of the singers as people who struggle, who nevertheless hope and strive for a different life. Or, what comes into focus is the gap between how things are and what things could be. This engages Barbara emotionally, and perhaps spiritually, and produces a moment of heightened awareness and experience – one that music therapist and researcher Mercédès Pavlicevic might have called a "magic moment" (2010). As Pavlicevic demonstrates in her reflection on "optimal moments" in a CoMT group setting, ""music's power" was not a "given"...but needed to be evoked, invoked, crafted, shared, and worked with in a very particular way" (p.99). Barbara's account shows us how "music's power" is produced and made sense of for an audience member – through sifting through and organizing multiple sensory triggers, actions, and memories.

Interviewees articulated many distinct sensemaking processes in their concert experiences; I turn now to the specific sensemaking strategies they employed.

Strategies of Audiencing

What follows in this chapter are accounts of sensemaking – the sounds, sights, thoughts, feelings, actions, and memories that audience members foregrounded and became central

to their semiotic webs of meaning. What I want to emphasize is not simply the accounts of *what* was linked together, but also *how* things came to be linked – the strategies audience members employed to produce these heightened moments and navigate within them. These strategies tell us something of how audience members perceive and make meaning of their concert experiences.

'Potentializing' the concert

Blair: "Unexpected beauty"

Blair is a graduate student in chemistry who had been to a single performance by *Bravo*. In our interview, as in most other interviews with audience members, I asked Blair to draw a map of the performance space: "[can you] sketch it out for me to kind of take me through the concert with you?" As stated earlier, drawing the map had two functions: 1) it grounded her recollections of the event in the sensory details of the performance (as she remembered them), and 2) it provided her a frame within which to collect the important features of the concert for her, allowing her to construct a story of her experience.
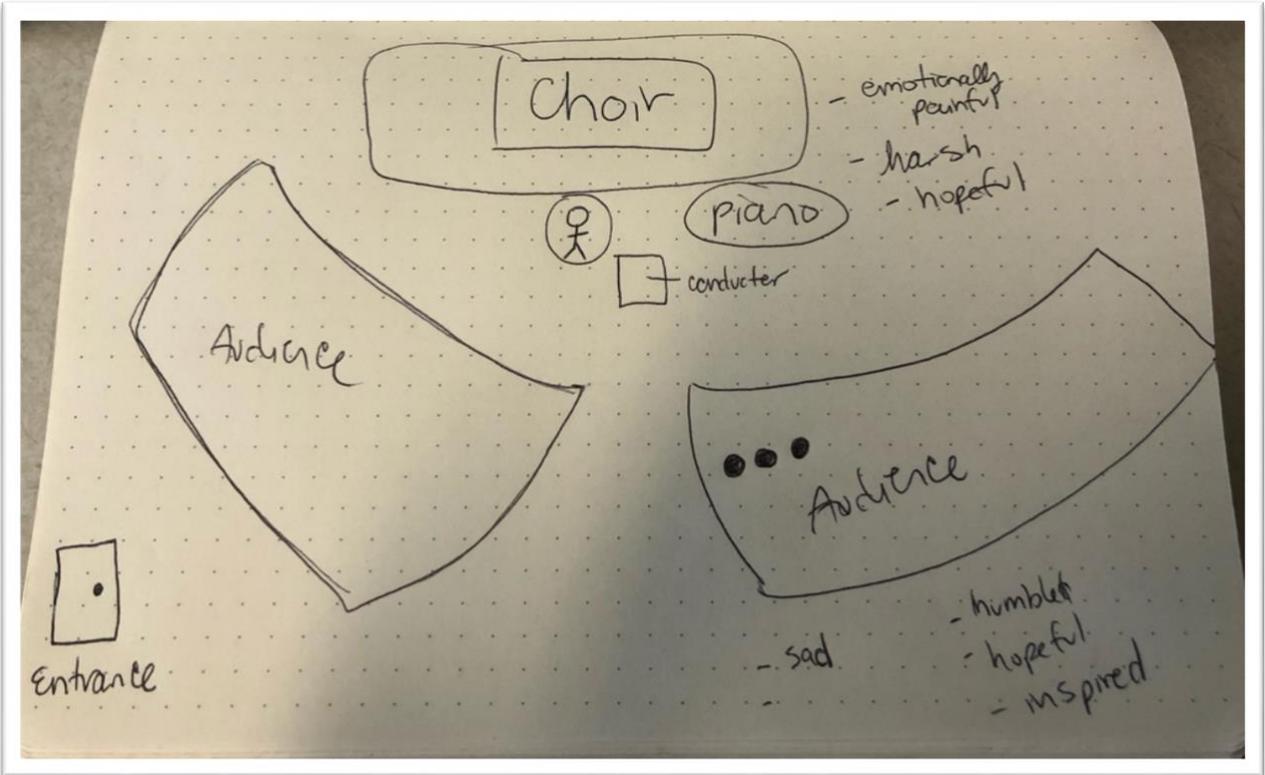
Figure 9: Blair's concert map

Blair learned about the concert when a friend (who was a student in the music department) forwarded an email to her advertising the concert. Blair and this friend ended up attending the concert together. Though her educational and career path immersed her in the sciences, she had a robust musical background: she had played the trombone and violin in her high school and college orchestras and bands and had been a frequent attender of symphony and choral performances since childhood. Despite her extensive concert experience, she felt unprepared, though eager, to attend a concert in a prison:

> **Blair:** ...I'd never heard about anything like this in my entire life. So completely new. I didn't even know stuff like this existed and immediately I was like, yes, of course I'll go...this is so, so powerful, and I had no idea what to expect.

I asked her about her state of mind as she drove (alone) to the concert. The prison was located in a nearby town, approximately a 45-minute drive away.

> **Erinn:** So, on the drive down there what were you thinking about? What were you feeling? What was going through your mind?

> **Blair:** I was anxious and I have never been to a prison – ever...And so I was a little bit anxious, but I think I was just really excited because I do think that, with my musical background, events like this are so meaningful and powerful. And so I remember just thinking, wow, this is something that I've never experienced. And it's something that I'm super excited to see and I...was definitely a little emotional too, like, wow, this is something like I'm a firm believer in, like, music heals. Music brings people together...And so I remember thinking...I wonder what I'm going to get out of this? I wonder...what kinds of things are going to stand out, be powerful to me in this setting? And just, like, very excited, but also obviously a little bit nervous...being in this new setting.

Blair conveyed a mix of enthusiasm and apprehension about preparing for the concert in the interview. Here, she describes the things she pulls together to set up a frame for her experience. Her background as a musician and personal experiences with the healing 'power' of music dispose her to a particular set of expectations, unspecified and open-ended as they may be. She articulates a strong belief in the power of music to "heal" and "bring people together" and describes the very idea of the concert as "powerful", though at the same time, she "didn't know what to expect." Here, Blair is describing a process of clearing her mind in order to be open to hearing unexpected things – things she might not hear in another choir concert – yet part of this mind-opening involves, paradoxically, creating strong expectations for a positive experience. She imagines that the performers will be impacted positively, and this is rooted in her own experiences of performing. Blair's

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process of preparation involved creating expectations that she would be impacted personally, possibly in a different way than at a typical choral concert.

Blair neatly articulates what music sociologist Antoine Hennion (2007) describes as a "process of attachment" (p.104):

> ...this perspective thinks of taste as a pragmatic activity involving *amateurs* turned towards their object in a *perplexed* mode. By 'perplexed' we mean them being on the lookout for what it does to them, attentive to traces of what it does to others; a sharing out among the direct sensations to be experienced (or whose experience is being sought), and the indirect relays that permit one to change one's own judgement a bit, while relying in part on the advice of others. (p.104, emphasis in original)

According to Hennion, the uninitiated (or *amateur*) participant (here, audience member) actively puts herself in a mode of attention where she is focused on both the object (performance) and her own response to it. Blair is "perplexed", not knowing what the performance will bring, but this state of perplexity is an active positioning of herself in a state where she expects something to happen to the performers ("music heals"), to the audience ("music brings people together") and to herself ("What am I going to get out of it?"). This is a different frame, and a different strategy of positioning than she creates when attending other concerts. Blair actively makes herself available to certain potentials within the performance. This frame directs her toward particular qualities in the performance and facilitates experiences of contact and surprise, as Hennion states:

> Taste is a making, a 'making aware of', and not a simple act of sensing. It is active, but contrary to an action, it is entirely turned toward an availability to what comes. It is an active way of putting oneself in such a state that something may happen to oneself...it is a passivity actively sought, or an activity intentionally undergone,

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letting oneself be carried away, overflowing with the surprises that arise through contact with things. (p.109)

Blair's process of preparation is a process of making sense of the performance before it even begins. She arranges past experience and reports of the experiences of others (her friend Beth) to actively construct a frame within which certain aspects of the performance appear. In a way, Blair is actively producing the performance as she is making herself available to particular qualities that fit within her frame of reference. Conversely, Blair is also 'produced' as a certain kind of audience member by becoming sensitised to her own response to the performance's frame (a community choir event focused on building healing relationships between incarcerated and free people). She develops strategies that allow her to be "swept away" in the music and in the experience. The frame she builds serves to help her "potentialize" the concert as a beautiful and powerful thing.

I then asked Blair about her specific musical expectations:

> **Erinn:** What did you expect, musically? What did you expect to hear?
>
> **Blair:** Um, I mean, to be honest, I hope this doesn't come across rude, but to be honest I wasn't expecting like, beautiful music, right? Because I was like, these people probably aren't, like, trained musicians and trained vocalists. Yeah, so I wasn't really expecting anything like the New York Philharmonic but...I was so pleasantly surprised, yeah.

Imagining that the incarcerated singers were limited in terms of musical training and experience, she prepared to hear a lower level of musical ability than she would in other concerts. This is something that many participants either said outright or alluded to. Many were careful to avoid sounding as though they had low musical expectations, as though that would be an indication of a low view of the choir members themselves.

This indicates something of the way audience members positioned themselves in relation to the choir. They were not motivated to attend the concerts for the musical quality alone, as they often stated they were in other musical events (though, as we have seen, the assumption that only 'purely musical' qualities draw us to live music events has been robustly challenged). Rather, it was common for audience members to see themselves as 'supporters' of the choir, and very often, the cause the choir represented. This does not mean that they did not expect to have a satisfying musical experience, but it does suggest a difference in what they expected the performers could deliver, musically speaking.

> **Erinn:** So, what do you recall about the first phrase out of the choir's mouth when they began the music, when the music started? What was that like? What do you remember about it?

> **Blair:** Yeah, I guess I remember just feeling...almost like in awe of what it was. I really didn't know what to expect, like I said earlier. And so hearing this beautiful music coming from, just a lot of, I don't know...I had no sense of how much training these people had, like the rehearsal schedules or anything, so I just wasn't expecting a lot...and I just love live music, so hearing it was just, like, very awe-inspiring, and I felt very at peace.

When the music started, Blair was initially struck by the incongruence between the sound of the music and the people singing it. While she had created a frame for a positive experience, allowing herself to be open to a different kind of choral singing, she was still surprised by the musical quality and beauty that met her. This provided her an opportunity to make sense of the incongruence and integrate her experience of the choir singing with her assumptions about incarcerated people (while she did not share any strong, specific assumptions, her notions would undoubtedly be influenced by societal ideas about prisoners being musically untrained/unsophisticated and prisons being devoid of beauty).

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Her response is one of "awe." It seems as though Blair is not sure what to make of this sound in this setting, and this is important: her uncertainty allows her to continue to listen with a degree of openness and curiosity. I then asked her to elaborate on what she meant by "beautiful":

> **Erinn:** ...So when you say it was beautiful, what was beautiful? How would you describe beautiful? What does that mean for you?

> **Blair:** So, beautiful music to me means...that every single aspect of the performance, so all the members, the piano, the conductor, they're working together in a very, I don't want to use the word beautiful again, but in a like a very clear, obvious passion...I think, in live music like this, it doesn't matter what your taste of music is, you can hear all the different parts of the performance working together so well and I think that's where I was like, whoa, everything's fitting together beautifully and everything's coming together, and...I could feel the work and the passion and the effort, and that's where I kind of remember feeling like, that's why I was kind of inspired by it...I could just witness that.

Blair identifies "beautiful" with the qualities of cooperation and purpose. Likely because of her own background as a performer, she hears individual parts and people working together, linked by a common identity and purpose. She is drawn toward the singers' "passion" – wholehearted commitment to their singing and teamwork. As a musician herself, Blair is not hearing the performance as an object to be evaluated but reframes her mode of listening to focus on the process of its creation. Blair listens from the 'inside' – to the "work and the passion and the effort." Beauty, for Blair, is in this case the outcome of the synchronization of many different parts. She is focused on the way individual difference is negotiated and how a diverse collection of individuals becomes a group. Blair hears individuals as members of a group, and invests them with purpose, agency, and belonging. This contrasts with her earlier ideas of who the singers were.

Harlow: 'Self-care' and 'comforting timbres'

Harlow attended one performance by *Harmonia,* a choir for people with dementia. She had been a long-time friend of the director, but her interest in the choir had to do with her close relationship with her grandmother, who had dementia. Harlow attended the concert wondering if the choir might be something her grandmother would be interested in and benefit from. Because she was close to the director, she ended up attending with several mutual friends. I began by asking Harlow about preparing to go to the concert:

> **Erinn:** So, do you remember anything about preparing to go to the concert that day? And do you remember, did you prepare differently, or not differently, than if you had gone to another kind of concert?

> **Harlow:** I did prepare a little differently, I did feel already very emotionally involved. This is something that I'd hoped that I could have gotten Grandma involved in...she was a very, very social person even right up to the end...So, there was a bit of a bittersweet element to it. So, I did prepare by getting proper aloe vera tissues because I knew I'd need them. I knew there'd be a little bit of that, but also like, usually I'd probably dress up a little bit more for a concert. I kind of thought I needed a little bit of self-care, and I had comfortable clothes. I can remember, I was wearing a cardigan that my mum had knitted for me, which was a nice cardigan, she's good knitter, but that's not what I usually wear out to a concert. I think it was just jeans and a cardigan. Yeah. So, preparing for the concert itself was probably a little bit more of, I would say, emotional preparation.

> By this stage I'd already formed some very hard views on how I really wanted to see people with dementia empowered and listened to and cared for rather than bossed around and organized. And so, I already had a bit of... I guess, defensiveness of, you know, I'm hoping I'm going to see things like I want to see them. I hope I'm going to

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see people who aren't sort of spoken down to, or talked to as if they're much younger than they actually are, or not acknowledging their lived experience…

So there was a lot of, how am I going to cope with that in the moment? What can I do? What is my role?…So there was a lot…of preparation for something that I was expecting to see that I wouldn't like. Which you don't usually do when you go out to a concert.

Like Blair, Harlow's preparation involved cultivating strong feelings about what could be possible in the performance, but unlike Blair, she anticipated being uncomfortable with the way the choir was presented. Each step of her preparation (dress, tissues, mindset) had a self-protective element to it, indicating a level of personal investment in the outcome of the performance. Harlow's frame was constituted by conflicting experiences and emotions – a close relationship with her grandparents, a sense of loss as her grandmother's abilities are eroded by dementia, strong views on disability and individual dignity, her friendship with the director, and a background in amateur music ensembles – and a strong desire for a particular outcome that she did not think would actually happen, sensitising her to the complexity of the event and the possibility that she would find it misguided, even offensive. She 'potentializes' the concert in different directions and her preparation therefore involves planning for the worst-case scenario.

A bit later in the interview I asked Harlow about her first impressions of the sound:

Erinn: So – at the beginning of the concert, what do you recall about the first thing you heard?

Harlow: Remarkably little! I always loved that timbre of, just, when older people sing, there's something very sort of comforting about it…I grew up with my grandma and my grandpa under the same roof so I've always been sort of around them and

around them singing. My grandma, unfortunately, was told by someone when she was...in primary school...that she couldn't sing and so she often didn't, so it was rare that I would actually hear her sing. I think she had this very sort of unpractised voice, not used to finding notes or finding quite where she was. She'd kind of find a loose contour of a melody and, you know, for her, it was more about, did she remember the lyrics rather than the musical side of it? So, yeah, there's something very comforting to me about hearing older people sing, it just sort of reminds me of my grandma and my grandpa...Yeah, so it was immediately very comforting.

Noting that the voices seem 'unpracticed', Harlow is drawn into memories of her grandmother's everyday singing around the house. The expectations and memories she brought to the performance sensitised her to this sound – she was hoping to hear people like her grandmother represented with dignity, with a sense of naturalness, and on their own terms, and in the timbre of their voices she hears this confirmed. These memories call forth feelings of comfort and connection, and position Harlow within a very familiar interactional pattern: familiar voices, bringing her a familiar kind of comfort. This sets up parameters for the experience: she positions the choir as caregivers, and herself in a 'cared-for' role. In a way, the relationship with her grandmother is 're-activated'.

Both Blair and Harlow describe strategies of positioning so that they remain open to the unexpected, but set up a frame so the unexpected can be made meaningful.

Choosing modes of listening

The first descriptions of audience member experience referenced the sounds of the performance. Early on in an interview I would ask the participant what she remembered about the sound, not to evaluate the musical accuracy or the technical abilities of the performers, but to identify qualities of the sound that stood out to her. Of course, responses varied depending on participants' musical backgrounds and the musical

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vocabularies they used, but I tried to focus questions away from musical terminology and toward the sensory realm – *What did the voice(s) sound like? What adjectives would you use to describe it? What comparison/metaphor would you use?*, etc. For example, in the section above where Barbara compared the sound of *Bravo* to the singing she experienced in Swaziland, she used the musical term "dissonance." Rather than assuming what she meant by that term, I asked her to explain what she meant, and she was able to identify the specific qualities that stood out for her and the images and associations she connected to those qualities: "not that refined harmony," "it flows out" [from the chest], and "everyone sings, fully." From this I understood Barbara to be attending to a sound that seemed natural, uncontrived, unrefined, and unrestrained.

By far, the most common response to my questions about the sound had to do with the blend of voices. Some respondents noted how well the choir blended. Kathleen spoke of *Kalimba*'s "volume of pure voice" striking her as a unified, rich sound, while Carole spoke of *Cantabile*'s blend as more of a quality of their collective energy heard in the music: "Blended and enthusiastic and really just into it." Others remarked that they noticed how individual voices stood out, in contrast to other choral performances they had attended. Of course, this was partially conditioned by the musical and social conventions within which most of these performances were held. In the traditions of Western choral music, the dominant aesthetic involves the unified blending of voices – many should sound as one, and no single singer should draw attention to herself (unless singing a precomposed solo). It is against these conventions that comments about the musical blend were made.

The way that audience members responded to 'unblended' sounds provided a window into their sensemaking strategies. Lilith, who attended multiple concerts given by *Lyra*, began by simply stating that she expected the choir to be out of tune – "a mess of voices." Describing a performance where certain voices were dominant, some seemingly unaware of their volume level, Lilith stated that "it didn't matter, you know, you overlooked it" and focused on the "emotion and the feeling of accomplishment." Nikolett, by contrast, stated

that she began listening for variations in the sound: "I was curious about whether I [could] detect that they are dealing with aphasia." She noted the diversity within the choir: "...it was not like an organized whole but...different voices and people singing together." Nikolett's sensemaking process was therefore centered on musical discrepancies.

Dierdre: "Sensory jarring"

Dierdre's experience with *Drumroll* was limited to one performance, roughly twenty years ago. Dierdre knew Debra, the musical director of *Drumroll*, in different contexts: they had worked together on church and social justice-related projects, and Debra had taught piano lessons to her children many years ago. Dierdre had invited *Drumroll* to perform at a church-related workshop she was co-leading that aimed to educate lay ministers about mental illness. The workshop, as she described it, was "small and interactive", creating a small but engaged and somewhat prepared audience for the choir. Dierdre had not seen the group perform previously, but because she had heard about them from Debra, she felt they would be a good addition to the workshop as they would be, in her words, more "active" than the other workshop activities planned. Dierdre was therefore an audience member but also the host of the performance.

Throughout the interview, Dierdre compared aspects of *Drumroll*'s performance to what she was drawn to in other performances. For example, she described what she found beautiful about Handel's *Messiah*: the blend and the balance of voices and instruments, or in her words, "how *well* people do it together as a group." After talking about what she listens for in other concerts, I asked Dierdre about how *Drumroll*'s performance compared:

> **Erinn:** So with [*Drumroll*], they probably don't have the same kind of blend and the same kind of balance. So...what do you hear when they're singing, that alerts you to, 'that's not a blend' or 'that stands out'?

Dierdre: Well, I hear courage. I hear courage in the fact that they dare to do it, right, and they're not professional. So that's courage. And I hear humor in the lyrics that are used. Yeah, and I hear effort, you know, I hear effort. I hear, again, it's about this is not their first skill, it's about it's about having the courage in making a commitment to bring this message to the public...obviously that's the important part of their performance.

Erinn: Mmm-hmm. So, when you hear courage, what does it sound like?

Dierdre: What it sounds like may be, may be jarring. May be not melodious.

Erinn: Okay.

Dierdre: Maybe just, "I know that's a bit off-key, but I don't care."

Erinn: Okay, right.

Dierdre: Yeah, maybe somebody's a little bit behind but that's not what's important here. It's probably the opposite of why I go to Handel's *Messiah* in some ways.

[...]

Erinn: Hmm. When somebody comes in at the wrong time or falls behind the group or sings the wrong words, what do you think? What's your immediate, before – actually, before you think – what's your immediate reaction to that?

Dierdre: It's jarring. My immediate impulse is that's jarring. And then I think.

Erinn: Then you think. And how does that process go?

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Dierdre: Well you have that realization within your brain, within your mind, within your, whatever you heard sensory-wise and went *ugh*, and then you went, *oh, but this is not a professional group. These are people with a message*. So you have to allow that little bit of sensory jarring. Because the message is more important than the melodiousness of the song...I mean I work in long-term care as a nurse and [I've] heard [and] seen Debra work in that context as a music therapist in long-term care, and [I've] also [seen her] bringing groups in to perform. And I see, again, that it's not about being perfectly melodious at all. It's about empowering.

Erinn: Hmm.

Dierdre: So there's jarring.

Dierdre's sensemaking process begins with a musical quality that catches her attention because it contrasts with other choral performances she has experienced: the lack of a perfect blend. She hears individual voices, off-key voices, the absence of synchronization. She then contextualizes the sound qualities (which we might call 'musical inaccuracies') within the goal of the performance (as she sees it) – to communicate a message, and to empower the participants.

This is a 're-tuning' of Dierdre's ears, in a sense. Musical inaccuracies and unexpected sounds which might trigger her disapproval in another kind of concert setting become, in this context, indices of personal qualities – in this instance, courage. We might say that this is a quality of the performer persona that Dierdre is affirming. As she does, she transfers this quality onto the performers themselves. 'Out-of-time' and 'out-of-tune' sounds do not signal a lack of musical competence but reveal the gap between who she may have thought the performers to be (ill, weak) and a possible identity (courageous). This recalls the work of Charles Keil (1987), whose "participatory discrepancies" are the "out-of-time"

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and "out-of tune" moments that enliven music, making it "personally involving and socially valuable" (p.275). Keil points out how listeners are drawn into slight variations in musical time and texture. Music therapists have made use of Keil's notion of participatory discrepancies (Aigen, 2003; Ruud, 2008). Aigen (2003), in his case study of the use of popular musical styles in clinical improvisation, notes that the concept of participatory discrepancies grounds the aesthetic quality of music in its social processes rather than its technical accuracy:

> The creation of vital, alive, quality music does not derive from the ability of musicians to link with each other around perfect tunings and precise co-temporal musical events, merging their identities into some perfect unity. Instead, music is created by an ability to connect with others in unique ways that preserve our separateness. (p.53-54)

Moments of participatory discrepancy can prompt turning points for audience members – moments when listeners must make a decision or take action if they want to remain involved in the music. This is what Dierdre does. She is drawn into these discrepancies, but instead of bristling, losing interest, or withdrawing from the experience, she chooses to adjust, or 're-tune' her ears. The discrepancies she hears open a space to foreground the human action and interaction involved in the performance. The ways in which the singers move, gesture, produce sound, the ways in which they fit themselves into and around the musical structure rise to the foreground for Dierdre. She is drawn to the *action* of the performance (not simply the sound structures) and the way difference and uniformity are heard and experienced together.

It is important to note that this is a choice Dierdre makes. She is not compelled by the music 'itself' as a decontextualized structure. "Sensory jarring" could be experienced as uncomfortable, unpleasant, or even ugly – something to escape from. Dierdre could have withdrawn, but she chose to stay connected and adapt to the unexpected sounds she

heard. In a way, music provided her with an opportunity to change the way she is accustomed to listening to music. The response to the moment of musical discrepancy therefore contains an ethical element. In the 'invitation' to experience music differently, Dierdre is presented with an opportunity to 'take a stand' in Goffmanian terms. For Goffman, the way one conceives of his/her identity vis-à-vis the world can be traced through "...happenings which mark a turning point in the way in which the person views the world" (Goffman, 1961, p.168 in DeNora, 2013a, p.91). The choice Dierdre makes represents not only a decision to consider the performers and their music in an expanded way, but also shifts her position in relation to them.

Fitting the things that don't fit

Live performance is always intertextual, meaning that musical sounds are embedded in many other dimensions of the event – most notably, visual ones: "...the visual and behavioral dimensions of musical performance...are essential to both the production and the reception of musical sound" (Auslander, 2021, p.49). Live musical performance involves real bodies moving in real time, and this is not ancillary to the musical sound but indeed a generator of it. Listeners connect visual aspects of the performance to the sound, but also to the 'effort' the performer is making. Watching a performance links sound to action, and, crucially, to *people* – and visual aspects help listeners understand the human agency behind the production of sound. This sense of agency includes the emotion and mindset of the performer. We may hear a performance as passionate, ironic, genuine, light-hearted, etc., based on visual cues and our interpretation of them. The effort we understand the performers to be taking and the way we understand them to be feeling about it informs the way we hear the music. Visual and aural aspects of performance form a kind of feedback loop of mutual influence.

What emerged in audience interviews as significant visual (and aural) cues were often the unanticipated, the contrasting or contradictory, and the out-of-everyday. For example, both

Lilith and Lailie (who were unknown to each other) commented on several visual aspects of a *Lyra* performance. The theatre setting, lights, uniforms, and makeup highlighted for Lilith that "they were out of their everyday realm." Lailie, knowing the participants in *Lyra* only as dependent and relatively immobile, was struck by the sight of the choir performing unassisted: "How can these people do this? It was like seeing the unbelievable." For her, watching the choir *act* – seeing their agency-in-action – contrasted with her assumptions about who the choir members were and opened for her new ideas about who they might be.

Elora: "You could feel her confidence"

Elora attended a performance by *Ensemble* (a choir for homeless women), the only choir that held a performance during the span of data collection. The decrease in Covid cases in Israel in the spring of 2021 meant that I was able to interview Elora approximately two months after she had attended the performance. Elora was a friend of the choir director, but despite that she knew fairly little about the choir. She reported arriving at the performance not knowing what to expect and registering surprise at the style of music the choir sang. Elora began by telling me that one of the first things she noticed was the diversity of age and clothing style in the choir. One woman in particular caught her attention: she was dressed "really elegant[ly]...like she was going to a prom or something," and seemed a bit out of place, according to Elora. As the choir sang, she gave Elora "a really strong impression of her as a strong woman." Elora continued to describe her physical presence: standing tall, "you could feel her confidence. Yeah, she gave the feeling of lots of confidence and she was happy with herself and with the situation. She was singing strongly, I think."

While Elora noted that there were a variety of presentation styles in the choir (some women seemed shy, some seemed expressive, some seemed intensely focused), it was the quality of confidence that stood out for her and drew her in. Elora was struck by the contradiction: an elegant homeless woman standing tall and exuding confidence. Perhaps because this

was an unexpected quality, something homeless people are not "supposed" to convey, it held Elora's attention and became the frame through which she experienced the performance.

> **Erinn:** So, thinking about to the whole thing, was there a song or a moment in a song that sticks in your mind most clearly in your memory?

> **Elora:** It wasn't a performance song, but it was the end of the concert...It was the end when they finished the last song and then, like spontaneously, one of them started to play the drums...And then the others just joined there, and started to dance, spontaneous, like, clap their hands with her, and they created this circle and just start to dance with themself with lots of joy, and trust. Such a beautiful moment to see it from outside, how they feel comfortable with each other...it looked like a strong group that they are in. Give lots of force to each other. That's how it looks like. It was moving, just to see it, and I remember I wanted to join them. I think part of the audience did.

The spontaneous drumming and dancing (happening 'outside' the formal performance) was, for Elora, less a presentation of skill and teamwork (as in the formal performance) and more a display of the creative capabilities the women possessed, and their own confidence in those abilities. The formal part of the performance may have emphasized preparation and discipline, but the spontaneous eruption of drumming and dancing appeared to have emphasized qualities that were especially not expected: the choir was a unified creative force, demonstrating that they could lead the crowd through an unplanned, unscripted, unrehearsed experience.

The portrait of the woman as 'playing against type' – as seen through her dress and gestures – opened up the possibility that she (and maybe others) were not who Elora thought they were. Elora considers that the woman has something to be confident about, and by the

time they are drumming and dancing she is 'convinced' that the woman (and the choir) will be able to lead them.

Phillip: "We're not supposed to play marimbas"

Prelude is a children's choir in a suburban area of a large city in South Africa. Though the term "suburban" may conjure images of a comfortable and secure middle-class lifestyle in some areas of the world, in this South African context it refers to a very different social reality. The suburb, created in the 1960s as a neighbourhood for forced relocation during the Apartheid era, is impacted – economically, socially, and politically – by a legacy of racial oppression, resulting in cycles of poverty and violence. *Prelude* was part of an organization providing musical opportunities for children in the neighbourhood, and Phillip had been a member of the board of this organization.

Though he had been a board member for several years, Phillip did not attend a choir performance until directly invited (as all board members were) by the choir director. Phillip stated he was almost never on site, so the performance was one of his first direct involvements with the people the organization served. Because of his role in the organization, he was sensitised to the way that programs could provide opportunities for the children to "be affirmed" by their families and community. He stated that he found himself watching the audience as much as the choir during the performance – for him, the audience's reaction indicated whether the program was meeting its goals. Phillip occupied something of a dual role during the performance: he was both an audience member and a 'sponsor' of the event, invested in the success of the concert while knowing relatively little about how it would unfold.

In his interview, Phillip explained that the children's families would likely not have attended performances of this kind before. While music (and musicking) is very much a part of social life in this community, attendance at a 'formal' performance is not, as these are typically regarded as white, upper-class activities. Phillip noted that there was a sense of

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uncertainty in the audience as they waited for the performance to begin – families seemed to be uncharacteristically reserved. But when the children came onto the stage, Phillip remembered the strength of their response – applause, cheering, surprised faces – to the choir presenting themselves in a manner outside of everyday activities and routines, demonstrating group belonging through their uniforms and evidence of skills and relationships unfamiliar to their families. Even before the music began, it was clear to Phillip that this was a very different experience of the children for their families.

> **Phillip:** And then, you know, what's also very profound is with the marimba, which is, you know, obviously indigenous, a very African instrument...but for many of the children we serve they've never been exposed to African indigenous instruments. Now, people like me in South Africa are called "coloured," right? And...culturally, we're supposed to be very different to what is called "African black." So, to see coloured children play the marimba is – that was like another, "wow," – ... because we're not supposed to play marimbas. I mean, it's not true. It's a myth. But [it's] the perception, and so that was also...just so eye-opening for some of the parents to see that the children are playing these instruments that they have not seen before, not heard before, and it's making the most beautiful sound...So very powerful...just the symbolism behind the instrument and what that represents. I also recall seeing...these instruments taken into a local community, took the children there and they took the concept to the community in the flats area. And they played, and people could just join and dance and sing and join the choir. So yeah, that's brilliant. That's brilliant.

Here again, Phillip identifies what they children were not "supposed" to be doing. Just as they were not "supposed" to be putting on a performance (which was outside familiar cultural activities), they were also not "supposed" to be playing the marimba, an instrument traditionally played by another racial group. The choir demonstrating these skills and relationships resulted in surprise in Phillip and the audience and an opportunity

for families to expand their perceptions of who their children were and could be, and what their community could be, by showing possibilities for cross-cultural engagement.

This gap – between 'what should be' and 'what could be' – recalls educational psychologist Lev Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development". Though Vygotsky developed his theory to explain the difference between what a child can learn on her own versus what she can learn when guided by more experienced learning partners, it also has resonance for a performance context. Ansdell (2005) invokes Vygotsky's theory when writing on the role of performance in music therapy, stating that music serves as a zone of proximal development where participants perform – both musically and socially – "a head taller than [they are]" (Vygotsky, 1967, p.16). The musical-social milieu brings out of the children qualities that they may not have experienced otherwise. For Phillip, these unexpected qualities emerge in the gap between what 'is' and what 'is not supposed to be.' To explore his experience of this discrepancy further, I asked Phillip to draw a concert map:
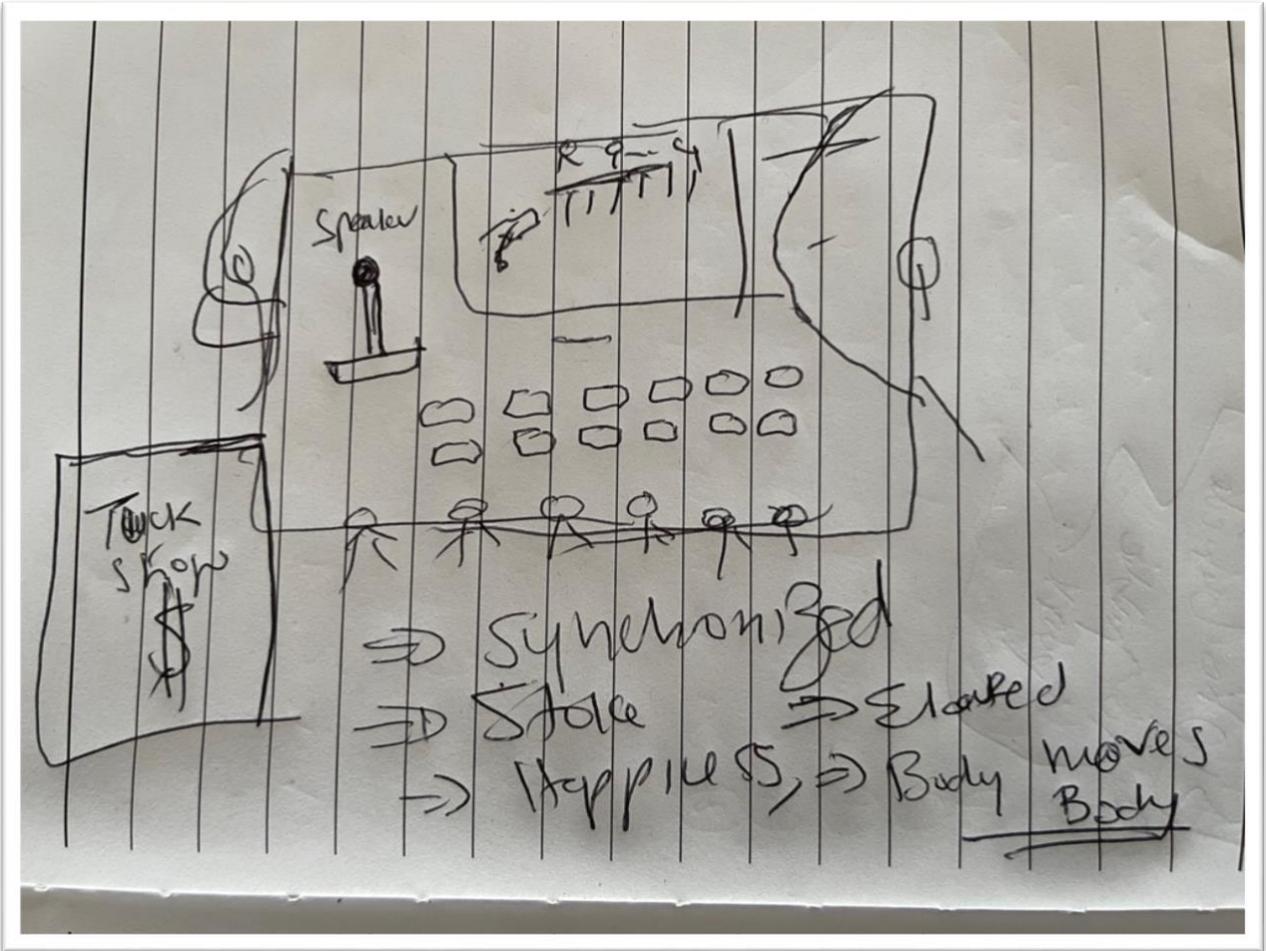
Figure 10: Phillip's concert map

Erinn: Can you now, on the paper, use any words or pictures or images, or phrases [to describe the sound]?

Phillip: I think for me, synchronized. Especially the marimbas, you know, I could hear that they were in tune, you know, and I've never seen people kind of adapt a song and then play it on an instrument that it was not originally played on. And they danced wildly doing it, because it's already so complex playing it and they do it with almost effortless, you know, the way they could swing their bodies behind their instruments. I mean, I know for me that was mind blowing but I remember just

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thinking that it's so synchronized, they're all in tune, they know what beats to play and everybody is having a different dance to, I mean even the dancing is like the music, it's like it's so synchronized with the music and the sound. So that I think for me stood out, the fact that felt very synchronized.

Synchronization is noticed, and this is, again, unexpected, because of the instability in the children's lives (where emotional synchronization or attunement may be difficult) but also because of the musical skill and focus it demonstrated. If these are under-resourced children, who endure the stresses of poverty, discrimination, racial conflict, and violence, the joyful presentation of themselves as a unified, synchronized group is not who they are "supposed" to be. When everything about their daily lives suggests fragmentation, musical and social synchronization implies there is more to these children than their community perceives.

This is the opposite of "participatory discrepancies" – what is noticed is unity, togetherness, bondedness, and not the familiar fragmentation. In both cases, it is the unexpected that emerges and rises to the foreground. Music opens a space for the out-of-place to be integrated, made sense of. The out-of-place changes the audience's perspective on who these performers might be, and what music can be.

As audience members created expectations for the performance, adopted modes of listening, and integrated unexpected elements into what was familiar, they often imagined narratives about the people performing. In doing this, they created a story of identity, and very often, this story of identity involved a changed (or reinforced, or challenged) understanding of their own position toward the performer(s).

Creating the *Musical Persona*

In the previous section, I outlined the ways in which sensemaking processes involving the 'potentializing' of the performance, choosing modes of listening, and integrating incompatible or unexpected things produced ideas and narratives about the people performing. In the following section I consider the audience's co-construction of performer identity in light of performance theorist Philip Auslander's (2021) concept of the *musical persona*.

The *musical persona* is a theory of musical identity. Auslander, following scholarship that asks the question, "In musical performance, what is the object performed?", reviews challenges to the idea that the object performed is a musical text (Cook, 2014). Finding more resonance with Godlovitch's (1998) theory of *personalism*, which posits that what is performed is not a score but a person, he ultimately rejects Godlovitch's conclusion on the basis of its assumption that a 'person' is identified with an essential personality that can be expressed independently of the specific musical context. Instead, Auslander draws on the heritage of symbolic interactionism, which argues that the self is relationally constituted. Thus, what is performed in musical performance is not a text, not an 'essential self', but rather the unique self-presentation of the person in music. This self-presentation is contextual and relational, and, as such, is co-created with the other participants in the event, namely, the audience. *Musical personae* "derive from and are specific to the performance context at hand" (p.10). Drawing on Goffman (1959), Auslander emphasizes that the self is emergent:"...this self – is a *product* of a scene that comes off, and is not a *cause* of it." (Goffman, 1959, p.252 in Auslander, 2021, p.122; emphasis in original).

The musical persona is the interface between the performer and audience. It is the version of the person the audience interacts with. This concept helps us to understand how strategies of sensemaking result in stories of performer identities, and how those identity stories provide a frame for interaction.

Making sense of the person vis-à-vis the *Musical Persona*

Sensory triggers, thoughts, and memories, all described in the previous sections of this chapter, were linked together by audience members in a sensemaking process that, for many, prompted curiosity about the lives of the performers. For some, noting the unexpected qualities of the performance led them into a process of comparing the persona to the person they knew or wondered about. As a choir director myself, this did not come as a surprise. I recall a conversation with a university staff member a few days after a performance given by a choir of incarcerated university students (which I direct). When I asked her what she noticed in the performance she replied, "I focused on the men who were doing something that seemed different than what I expected. I guess I was looking to see if who they were while singing matched who I thought they were." It seems the musical persona created a desire to get to know the person 'behind the music'. It is this tension that some audience members worked through in their interviews.

Responses to questions about where one's attention was drawn regularly settled on features of the performers' personalities perceived by audience members. For example, Alistair, like several participants, reported he was drawn to "the shyer ones" in the choir. In particular, a young woman who was "very anxious but [had] such a powerful, incredible voice" highlighted the gap between who he thought she was and who he experienced her as in music. Gabrielle remembered an audience member reacting to one of the singers: "She's like a totally different person." Carl spoke of the contrast between *Cantabile*'s joyful, enthusiastic musical presentation and the realities of the singers' lives, which had been traumatic and full of "hurdles". The gap between the person-in-music and the person-out-of-music came into focus, (implicitly) raising the questions, *Who are these people? How do I relate to them?*

Camille: "She became the life of the party"

Camille volunteered for the organization that sponsored *Cantabile* (a choir for refugees) and therefore knew the members of the choir before the choir even came into being. I asked her if she noticed anything in the participants when they were singing that she didn't see outside music. She spoke about one woman who was "always beaming and moving and so very animated." Like Carl, Camille worked to make sense of the 'new' person that emerged in music, a more 'liberated' (her word) person. Her sensemaking process centered the contradiction between the 'inside music' and 'outside music' personae she experienced, and how the gap between them held possibilities for relating to this woman in new ways:

> **Camille:** …There was one person that just became, well,…she came with her husband, and…he spoke four words of English and she didn't know a word…and…her husband was sort of the boss, you know? She followed him and you'd ask her a question and he'd answer, that sort of thing. And when the choir started, oh boy, did she come into her own…she became the life of the party! She became the person who was really animated and would get everybody else involved, and when staff and volunteers were around, she'd come over and pick me up, pull me up from a chair and make me sing with her and dance with her…this was something that was really transformative for her.

Camille speaks of the woman's participation in music as transformative for her, but it was also transformative for Camille. Music animated the woman in a way that changed the way she presented herself, but this change, in turn, brought out behavioural changes in the people around her. Her musical persona offered a change in the terms of their relationship.

 In this way, we can see that the materials offered by musical performance – musical structures and processes, but also the conventions of performance such as gesture, facial expression, emotional presentation – allowed this woman to step into a different persona,

changing her identity 'type' in this context[10]. For example, a 'refugee' identity in the US might certainly reinforce meekness. If the performer Camille identified, seen as a 'refugee,' lived up to the social expectations associated with that identity type, it is not difficult to see how the interaction of type and behaviour would result in her exclusion from full participation in society. Little would be expected of her, and she would therefore likely feel she had little to contribute, thus inhibiting experiences of social participation and belonging. Given the chance to step into an alternate persona, however, she may gather the resources to act in ways that do not fit within her identity type, thereby altering the type itself. The musical persona has the potential to problematize or complexify the way people are categorized or 'typed'.

Positioning (and being positioned by) the *Musical Persona*

According to Auslander, performer identities, which are constructed in relation to specific audiences, are "identities that both define and adhere to the norms for a genre of music" (p.95). Thus, the conventions associated with the particular genre are important factors in the construction of the musical-social frame and the script that both performers and audience members have to interact with. Audience member Angela demonstrates how the conventions of musical genre are an ingredient in the co-construction of the musical persona, and how this construction can lead to a re-positioning of performer and audience.

Angela: "Woman to woman"

Angela, a retired special education teacher, learned of *Allegro* (a choir for disabled adults) through a conversation she overheard at a school where she was volunteering (post-

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[10] Or, in philosopher Ian Hacking's (2002) term, a new "classification." Hacking wrote of the processes by which people come to be classified, and how that classification impacts their behaviour, as people begin to see themselves in terms of their classification. However, people change as we interact with them, and those out-of-category behaviours impact the categories (or classifications) we have made, much like a feedback loop. The' looping effect' (1995) is a process of negotiation where people mutually influence and define one another through interaction.

retirement). She was intrigued enough to seek out the choir, and she has been a regular attender at concerts for the last five years. Her interview was a mix of her recollections, questions (of herself and of me), feelings, interpretations, and imagination.

Erinn: Can you tell me about a memorable moment in the concert?

Angela: [*thinks for a bit*] I did love it and I don't know her name. She was a young woman. She was a wheelchair user and she sang Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah." And it was very haunting and she went right into it. And I loved that because it showed people the depth of her soul. And her mind. And I was taken aback by it too. I thought, *That's a very deep song, Andrew.* Most of the songs he chooses are rather light: "You've Got a Friend in Me," something, you know, along those lines. And then he chose this song and I thought, *Whoa, that's quite deep*. And it impressed me because she went for it and she didn't cheap out and...she sung it deeply and with passion...and I really was moved by that. I felt like I really knew her so much better, and I knew her better as a *woman*. Not as a girl in a wheelchair...I don't know how old she was, maybe 26 or 27, and it showed me her maturity, and he [Andrew] gave her that responsibility and he expected that of her. And she clearly wanted to go for it and she did it. And I just thought that was a very special moment for me to see.

Angela linked many aspects of her experience together in her initial response. She connected the song (which was unexpected, surprising), with a thought (it has more emotional depth and complexity than other songs they sing), with a feeling (nervous, unsure, what if they're not ok with this level of vulnerability?), to another perception ("she went for it" – she sang it wholeheartedly, became vulnerable, showed ownership of her performance), to new knowledge ("I know her better as a woman"). At this point I engaged her in the map-drawing technique and tried to 'slow down' the story to identify these linkages in more detail.
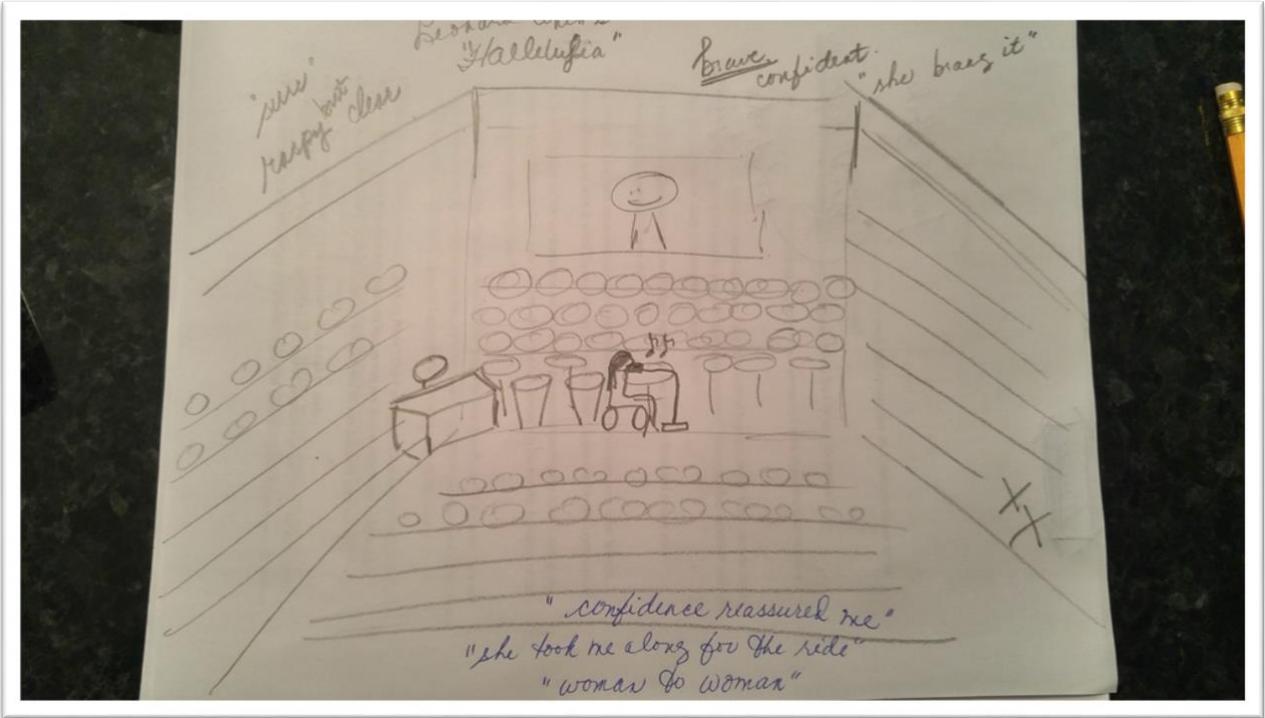
Figure 11: Angela's concert map

Erinn: Can you, as best you can, can you describe the sound? What did it sound like?

Angela: Her voice was a little bit husky and the performance was kind of slow. And at first, it was for me almost a little bit uncomfortably slow. And I kind of thought, oh, this is a little bit embarrassing or something, but, you know, it was very good...it was slow and her voice was husky and everything else was quiet...I remember being able to see her very well... And I liked it because she didn't show any sense of faltering, she just kept going through it and her voice didn't disappear at any points. Even when the more difficult points came, she kept bringing it, and clearly she had rehearsed it well and she just kept bringing it...and I think the audience was so moved by that...yeah, she had a beautiful voice. It was clear, a little bit raspy but then it was also a clearer voice at some points...

…And then I remember the microphone was right there and she just kind of *let it go* [*gestures with hands out to the side to indicate completely open, unrestrained singing*]…you know, when people are standing up to sing, sometimes they stand back from the mic, and then they come forward or they take the mic and they move with it, and she didn't do any of that. So, I guess the mic was stationery, and she just had to be right there to do it. So…I remember thinking, *Oh, that's cool. She doesn't shy away at all.*

Angela's response echoes the idea of a song's "double performance" (DeNora, 2013a; Ansdell & DeNora, 2016). A song performance projects multiple things – its lyrical content, its musical style/idiom, and something of the performer herself. A performance is the song but more than the song. It is a version of the person but more than the person. It is a "double performance" in the sense that it is "a rendition of…the singer (as a person through how they sing) and the implied speaker of the song" (DeNora, 2013a, p.86).

Angela's experience of the performance rests on her previous experiences with this song. She hears this singer's rendition against the other renditions she is familiar with. The song contains a particular "depth", as she indicated earlier, but this singer gives it a strength and confidence that she is not expecting – not from the singer, and likely not from the song itself (for all his talents, 'strength' and 'confidence' are not qualities one would immediately associate with Leonard Cohen) and for this reason she is surprised to hear it in this concert. This is a song that does not 'fit', in her estimation, but the fact that it does 'work' prompts the sensemaking process that generates new knowledge for Angela:

Erinn: So what was your feeling then in the moment? What were you thinking about as it was unfolding?

Angela: Probably, I remember being impressed and I was able to share in the song with her as a performer, as a woman…I remember being able to do that. That was

my feeling, like, I'm enjoying going through this piece with you, a fellow woman up there on the stage and I think...that was my strongest feeling at that point. That I was connecting with her even though I'm probably 40 years older than she is...I was making that connection with her. And I had no qualms about whether she was going to complete the song or, or whatever, because she was doing a fabulous job and was well prepared. And so that allowed me to just, she just took me along for the ride.

The experience doesn't end with Angela simply perceiving new qualities in the singer, and this is important. To interpret this experience as the performer's display of ability and the audience member's perception of those abilities and consequent feelings of commonality and connection would put us back into transmission theory territory. It is true that Angela perceives unexpected strengths in the singer, but this is not where things end. Angela's experience serves to shift the interactional space between them and opens a relational possibility. Angela has a previous, separate relationship to the song, but now she feels like they are enjoying the song together. The song is both different and the same for them. Angela's attention then shifts – from, *is she going to be able to pull it off?* to, *I am enjoying this with you; you're taking me along for the ride*. This is also a shift in positioning: from looking *at* the singer, to looking *with* the singer, and also being *led by* the singer.

After we spoke for awhile about this moment in the concert, Angela returned to her concert map:

> **Angela:** [*draws/writes*] Okay, I'm going to put something down here that I didn't say...it struck me when I wrote "confident": her confidence *reassured* me. I didn't need to feel, oh, she's shaky, she's not prepared, she has a disability, she uses a wheelchair. Her confidence reassured me as an audience member that I could just sit back and connect...

Again, Angela shifts her attention from focusing on the person to the performance itself. It is interesting that she does not say that it was the singer's skill or technique that reassured her (*'Will the notes be accurate? Whew, they are'!*) – it was the singer's confidence, a quality of her musical persona that emerged in relation to the audience, that brought reassurance. Angela hears confidence in relation to the genre frame – "Hallelujah", and the folk-rock genre which can be said to convey emotional intimacy and vulnerability – and also in relation to the social frame – a performance where disability (and perhaps vulnerability) is foregrounded. The confident musical persona is ultimately affirmed by Angela, though not as a static feature of personality (the woman is confident) but in its situated, relational enactment: the woman is 'performing' confidence. This results in a shift of positioning, as Angela allows herself to "sit back and connect" instead of positioning herself as a supporter.

The *Musical Persona* in relationship

> **Jillian:** And, and so, like, the big thing for us was that, you know, these are, they're not seniors with dementia, who sing. These are singers, who may have, may be living with dementia, right? So it was always that singing piece. And so we wanted people to see them as singers for one brief moment not as, as you know, not with the label and the, you know, written on their forehead that they have dementia, That was supposed to be forgotten for, for a brief moment.

Many audience respondents spoke of the significance of seeing the choirs in uniform, in physical formation, in coordinated movement – in other words, as a unified group. Though this is not uncommon in Western choral music traditions (it is so commonplace for choirs to dress in uniform that it is rarely worth noting), it was a memorable and noteworthy feature for many audience members in this study. As Paulo Friere noted in his influential work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the process of marginalizing people turns them

into passive 'objects', lacking in agency and purpose, waiting to be 'filled' with meaning (in his case, via information banking) by external sources. In contrast, a common theme from audience members was the way they saw performers not as isolated individuals waiting to be helped but as community members, people with roles and relationships. Guido Fackler (2007), writing about the role of music in Nazi-run concentration camps, argued that the presence of musical activity among prisoners demonstrated the way they actively resourced cultural tools to maintain their individual and cultural identities. The presence of music in the camps revealed people to be creative, generative "cultural beings", engaging in strategies of resisting dehumanization. This is an important shift from a purely expressivist view: rather than viewing prisoners as victims and their music an expression of suffering, we can view them as agents who were resourcing their aesthetic pasts in order to survive. Though certainly not faced with equivalent circumstances, participants in the choirs featured in this study were also revealed to be members of meaning-making groups: cultural beings, members of communities, and not simply collections of individuals in need. Lailie summarizes the dynamic nature of cultural belonging: "...they feel like a part of a group that is *doing* something...something *significant,* to the future, to the past of their lives that they will remember it. They will talk about it in the future."

Audra: "A death grip on the drumsticks"

Audra, a retired teacher who had spent some of her career teaching students with disabilities, is a regular attender at *Allegro*'s concerts; she has seen at least one concert every year since 2012. Over the years she has brought family members with her, and she describes her mother, daughter, and herself as choir "groupies". Audra has attended performances by *Allegro* in several different settings, but her favourite venue to see them is a large church in which they hold their annual spring concert.
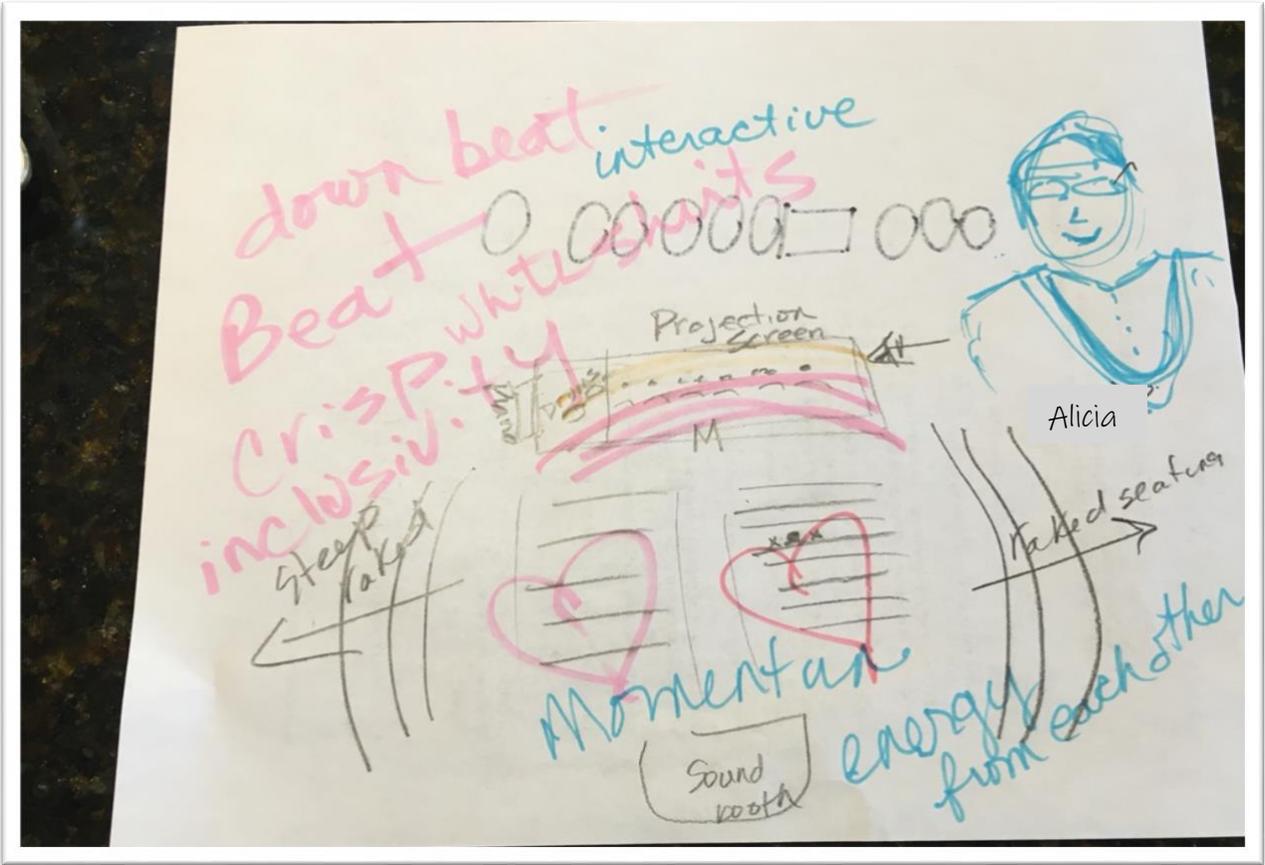
Figure 12: Audra's concert map

Audra's description of her concert map is as follows:

> **Audra:** ...This is Alicia...and this is her scarf...that they have to wear and her...white shirt and her smile. Alicia doesn't smile very often. And then I just have...happiness, rainbows, love. And that's, you know...I just see the crisp white shirts and the beats...and inclusivity...crisp, white shirts and the beat. The downstroke, the downbeat when he starts, right? It's an "oomph" and then they go. It's the downbeat and the momentum. It starts a momentum in the kids. They catch the energy from each other.

Audra goes on to explain that the choir's uniforms (crisp, white shirts and scarves) and strong downbeats performed by the drummers are visually striking features that catch her attention. When I ask her about where the choir focuses their gaze while singing, she identifies those singers/instrumentalists who are passionately involved in what they are doing, emphasizing the intensity of focus with which the drummers look at their director:

> **Erinn:** Where do you find that you are focused visually? Do you find yourself looking at certain individuals? Do you find yourself just scanning the whole group? Looking at the instrumentalists? Where do you typically focus?

> **Audra:** I think, you know, I definitely do the sweep of everybody...and there will be some faces, that because they're so into it, you tend to stare at them a little longer because they are so involved, you know, their passion is coming out a little bit bigger than the person beside them. Their intensity on Andrew [the choir director]...they just don't want to miss a moment, like "this is my job and I have to do it." So it is a sweep, but I mean I can't help but, like, still see the death grip...on the drumsticks.

Audra links together the expressivity of certain singers and the percussionists' grip on the drumsticks with a projected thought process: "this is my job and I have to do it." For her, the grip on the drumsticks represents the drummers' commitment to their duty as members of the group. She imagines that they feel a strong sense of responsibility in this role. I ask her where the choir's gaze is directed, and she returns to the drummers' posture and facial expressions:

> **Erinn:** Where are the singers looking as they are singing? Are they looking all over, or are they scanning –

> **Audra:** Oh, they're *very* focused on Andrew.

Erinn: On Andrew. Oh good, OK.

Audra: Oh, they are very focused. Yes. They, you know, the eyeballs get sometimes, especially the percussion people with their drumsticks, it's just, like, very, very focused [*she opens her eyes wide and holds her fists up as if holding drumstick – very tightly, focused, in anticipation of a cue to play*].

At this point, I ask Audra to explain the gesture she has repeated several times during the interview:

Erinn: What's the word for this? [*I imitate her action - fists gripping drumsticks*] If you had to summarize this in a word, in an adjective or –

Audra: Intense responsibility.

Erinn: I love that. Intense responsibility. Yes, I can see it.

Audra: And you can't let anyone down because – *it's important*.

Audra links the various visual and aural features together in a way that produces the choir as a dynamic *group*. The drummers are people invested with responsibility by the ensemble. They provide the rhythmic scaffolding which supports and animates the singers. Audra senses the drummers are aware of this – not only their specific musical task but the significance of the role of their task in the overall performance. Another way of putting this is to say that what Audra notices is the not just the drummers themselves, but the *drummers in relationship*. She sees the role they play in the unfolding drama of the performance, and this is a role, an aspect of their musical personae, that she is surprised by but affirms.

Camille: "Like the Beatles doing "Let it Be""

Camille had worked at the organization that sponsors *Cantabile* and therefore interacted with many of the singers outside choir rehearsals and performances. She has extensive experience working with a vast range of women refugees and asylum seekers from all continents of the world. Much of her work took place in a day program for women and children that offered parenting classes, language instruction, job finding, sewing classes, and other educational activities. Because of Camille's long involvement with the organization, she was able to notice the impact of the choir immediately: "And then out of the blue came Cecily with her music, and in my opinion, just created a fabric that hadn't existed before."

In our interview, Camille continued to emphasize the connections made between choir members and the ways in which they presented themselves as a unified group, even though she knew them to self-segregate by ethnic group outside the choir. She goes on to convey how this unity was perceived through visual features (in part):

> **Erinn:** ...Let's start out with...a vivid memory that you have from any of those three performances that you went to...any memorable moment you can tell me about.
>
> **Camille:** They had a song that they sang all the time, and we all got to know it very well and I have *no* idea what it meant, because it was an African song. But it was sort of like their calling card...And they got very proud when they did that...even in front of the public...I think that they were very proud to be on a stage and...performing for the general public to start out with. But then when they did that [song] it was like, *this is us*, you know...this was the Beatles doing "Let it Be" or something like that.
>
> And it was a very happy song and it had a dance that went with it, which they usually did also, and they would encourage people in the audience to sing with them, which

I thought was great, you know? And of course, they had their fans there who would...be singing with them and everything. I mean, the thing that just stands out to me is...I think, *pride,* you know: *look at me*. It's been so long since they had any kind of attention like that or the ability to share things with other people.

...I remember going to one concert when...they were one of the groups and Cecily had had them all...try to dress alike, with black bottoms and white tops and stuff. And just the way that they carried themselves, because everyone there could tell that they were...a choir, and those things are just...so basic [for us], but they...[meant so much] for them. They had such depth of meaning...I think it's the *ownership* that I remember...standing out, and the pride.

Erinn: So, how did they carry themselves? You mentioned they carried themselves differently in this particular song, or you noticed something was –

Camille: Well, I think they carried themselves differently when they showed up in uniform.

Erinn: In uniform, OK. And...what was that like? If you had to point to specific ways they stood, they moved, could you describe that?

Camille: Well, you know...the way that graduates look, walk around when they've got their caps and gowns on? That's the kind of thing. It's just the sort of...they're up straighter and they sort of, the heads are up, and this is a population that walks with their heads down a lot, you know? So yeah, just kind of like, *I'm a little bit important today*, you know? And that was wonderful.

For Camille, who saw choir members in several different activities and environments, the presentation of the choir contrasted with her everyday experience of the choir members.

The singers' uniforms, postures, and expressions all helped to transform a fairly ragged collection of individuals into a group that appeared unified and purposeful. While she may not have understood the content or message of each song ("I have *no* idea what it meant"), Camille is clear that she understood the qualities of "pride" and "ownership" conveyed by the choir. In Auslander's terms, we might say that she experiences the choir's collective persona – a strong, vibrant, confident group – and that it offers her a different version of the people she had come to know in other contexts. In producing the choir as a dynamic *group*, Camille could see these individuals as part of a working team. They are identified in their performing personae not as individuals lost and in need (as is often the perception of refugees) but as people who belong together and have pride in what they have created.

It is this visual display of belonging that strikes Camille and contributes to her perception that the choir possessed a kind of "ownership." Interesting here is Camille's reference to the choir's "fans." These were regular attenders, many of whom would have been staff or volunteers at the organization, a setting in which these staff/volunteers were the ones providing services, giving assistance, and offering support to the choir members. In the performance event, these same people behaved as "fans" – following the musicians they loved, submitting to their lead, grateful for every 'hit' they played. In doing so, the choir became identified as people with something to offer others – something that others wanted. The ability to attract and hold the attention of the audience and offer something personal, unique, and beautiful created a (momentary) repositioning of the relationship between the singers and their audience. Whereas the everyday relationship was one of service user and service provider, in performance these roles were reversed: the choir became more like the Beatles to their audience than immigrants in need.

The *Musical Persona* in action

Expressive qualities in the music were regularly identified by audience members, frequently in terms of the performing styles that they found compelling. One of the first things to be identified was the emotional energy of the choirs. When I asked an audience member, "How did they sound?", the response typically focused not on musical technique, but on the passion, joy, or vitality in the sound, qualities that were then linked to their perception of the singers' enjoyment. For example, audience member Carole described *Cantabile*'s sound as, "[b]lended and enthusiastic and just really into it. You didn't need to understand what they were saying. That wasn't essential, it was the mood they created."

Related to qualities of emotional expression was participants' use of the word "ownership". This word came up over and over in the interviews, by choir directors and audience members alike. Frequently it was linked to the choirs' command of their songs – how well they knew their material and how accurately they were able to sing – but it was never simply linked to musical technique. Rather, the word "ownership" seemed to encompass performance qualities such as passion, commitment, spontaneity, and confidence – qualities that seem to emerge when the audience sees the way the music is 'playing' the performer (Auslander, 2021). Harlow, when asked to elaborate on her description of the choir's sound as "happy," linked this emotional presentation to her sense that they had command of the song: "I think they certainly had a lot of ownership over it." Other audience members evoked the term in connection with qualities of work, dedication, and purpose. Kristen remarked that one of her first impressions was that the choir "...sounded like they knew what they were doing." Lailie was struck by *Lyra*'s commitment: "They were really *serious.*" I had the sense that audience members were frequently surprised and compelled by such qualities, and that this helped them to produce choir members as confident, creative agents. Lailie, after hearing the choir of Holocaust survivors, imagined what they must have thought of themselves and the music they generated: "I'm good, I'm okay, I'm worth it, this is mine, don't take it."

Often, participants' use of this word suggested a dimension of inevitability: this performance was identified with this person/choir and could not have been given by anyone else. This dimension usually appeared when audience members spoke of performers' confidence. Sociologist Lisa McCormick (2015), in her ethnography of international competitions in classical music, noted that 'confident' performers routinely receive higher marks than performers who are perceived as shy or insecure. Even at this level of musicianship, there is a "magic" quality, beyond that of technical accuracy, that is sought by judges and other listeners. This 'magic' quality is identified in its ability to move listeners emotionally, and when it is present, listeners experience a condition known in social performance theory as "fusion":

> When the observer identifies with the performer's projection of sacred qualities, those elements of performance become fused together; the audience member does not just understand what the performer is conveying on a cognitive level, but responds emotionally to the moral dimension as well. (McCormick, 2015, p.171)

Important here is the audience's contribution to the state of fusion described. In their positioning, or framing of the performance: "The audience needs to be more than merely attentive; it must also cooperate with the performer by being willing to be moved" (ibid.) and also in their participation, it is through the audience's response that elements become fused together. However, McCormick does not attempt to trace the production of fusion – its elements and the way they come to be linked together in an environment by participants in the music in real time. McCormick does not follow audience action; however, the following interview respondents from *Grace Note*, though they do not use the academic term "fusion", speak of a comparable phenomenon and offer clues as to how heightened moments might be produced in action and linked to "ownership."

Gwyneth & Gabrielle: "Owning the song"

A unique perspective on choir-audience interaction was provided by the participants from *Grace Note*. This group was located within a women's prison (in the UK) and could not invite the public to their performances, so audiences consisted exclusively of other incarcerated women and prison staff. I was therefore not able to interview any audience members, but I was able to speak with three women who volunteered with the choir. Gwyneth, Gabrielle, and Grace were undergraduate music students (one was a recent grad), brought in by director Georgia to provide some musical support for the choir. Each of them participated in a few rehearsals (2 or 3 of the 10) and the final concert.[11] Because of their 'mid-way' position (neither leaders who knew the choir members well nor audience members who had never heard the choir prior to the performance), they were able to offer the perspective of a somewhat 'uninitiated' audience member who had no experience of incarcerated people prior to the event, but from a position of very close proximity where they were actually making music with the choir. Added to this, their physical positions during the performances allowed them to watch the audience and note their reactions.

Though they were involved in two different concerts, both Gwyneth and Gabrielle identified the choir's original songs (written as a group as part of the 10-week process) as moments of heightened energy and excitement. In Gwyneth's words, "...when they performed [their original song] it was the best moment in the performance, in my opinion, because...they had ownership of it." The language of 'ownership' came through in Gabrielle's interview as well. Here she responds to a question about her favourite song from the performance:

> **Erinn:** And how did they sound singing this song compared to other songs that they sang?

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[11] Gwyneth and Grace participated in one concert. Gabrielle participated in two concerts.

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Gabrielle: Just really confident I think, because they had that sense of ownership, because it was *their* song and no one can take that away from them. This is theirs. So, you know, there was a real difference from when they were performing the cover songs to the original song. You could tell that they know this is theirs, they're going to sing it and be proud of it and they were.

Erinn: Mmm-hmm. How did you hear confidence in their voices or maybe you saw it in their movement, gesture, demeanor? How was that confidence conveyed musically?

Gabrielle: I think...they started, sort of swayed [*she sways back and forth to demonstrate*]. I don't know if that was intentional but just, the whole stance, their position, it sort of changed, they became, you know when you look more confident you feel like, sort of shoulders back...I do remember that happening, and just with the voices, it was just a lot louder and it just came out more, more clearer.

Erinn: Did it, did that catch your attention in the moment? I mean, you've heard, obviously heard the song many times in rehearsal but when they performed it did that catch your attention?

Gabrielle: Definitely, I just noticed it straight away. I thought, wow, this is amazing. Sort of a real great moment to go with it and, and actually, playing it as well, you feel it and I think it rubbed off on everyone else. I think they felt that positivity from the women singing it. It just sort of changed the room almost, it just became like a real wave of just, everyone's just really happy in that moment because there's this song and it's really positive, and yeah, it was great.

Gabrielle identifies a sense of "ownership" given off by the choir, though this seems to be produced by the interaction of the song [original music and lyrics), performer action

(movement, posture, volume), and audience response (clapping, facial expressions). Ownership was conveyed not simply through the fact that the choir had written the song but because it was performed with confidence and pride – it was internalized, perhaps. The enthusiasm of the audience was not simply in response to the display of technical skills learned (singing, songwriting) or a message given (the personal content of the lyrics), but in response to the choir bringing something to the music that wasn't there before (as Gabrielle noted, it sounded unlike it had in rehearsals). Gabrielle recognized this quality as "ownership" ("it was "their song" and no one can take that away from them"): the song, and the performance, was theirs to give.

Important here is that the quality of ownership was not present without an audience, calling into question the 'thing' owned. Gabrielle's response suggests that the thing owned was not a 'thing' possessed (by the choir, independent of context), but a quality that emerged in interaction. What is 'owned' may be the ability to offer something to their audience, something only they are in the position to give. It is the *action* of owning that produces performers as people who have 'ownership' over their performance, and the audience response was a confirmation of the choir's actions of ownership; in other words, the audience response was an affirmation of performer agency.

For Grace, a heightened moment in the concert came through a cover song:

> **Grace:** But I think with "This is Me", the words...*this is me*...spoke a lot more to the women...it was just a song that felt very empowering for them and because we saw them enjoying it, it made us enjoy it...I think as a group that song sort of made us overall feel like one unit...

"Ownership" in Grace's comments appears to refer to something beyond authorship and even beyond the confident presentation of the songs. "Ownership" may also refer to the ownership of the choir's position, as Grace suggests. It was not just a confident

performance: it was confidence 'in-relation-to.' Gwyneth, Gabrielle, and Grace perceived this quality and sensed the audience was affirming it, as they indicated by their accounts of increased feelings of connection and positive energy in the room. Scenes of ownership, as described here, are examples of the co-construction of the musical persona: as aspects of the musical persona are affirmed by the audience, they are reflected back to the choir. These qualities, if repeatedly reflected back, may then become a part of the self, recognizable to the individual and available as resources in non-musical contexts. Qualities that emerge in performance are not simply a 'front' donned to project a certain impression (Goffman, 1959), but as DeNora (2013a) writes, "[t]he elements of performance style become proxies for identity, signs of embodied and tacit dispositions that shoot through and structure social action" (p.88). Thus, the musical persona, co-constructed in performance, can be seen as "a means of resource generation, a way of generating materials for the sustenance and development of self" (p.90).

Camille: "Sharing with people"

Discussions of 'ownership' were often accompanied by mentions of 'sharing'. The act of performing can be an experience of the act of sharing, as Camille attests:

> **Camille:** …The music brought together all those groups of people from different countries…so they weren't separate entities anymore. They were all together and not only were they together like learning a song from Cecily and singing it, but she…would let them choose…[she'd say] "bring me music and we'll all learn your music." And so then they were sharing and I think that's one of the things that's very, very difficult for immigrants. They come here and everybody wants to give them, give them, give them. Let me tell you all about America. Let me tell you what you can do to become more American *et cetera* and they do, I think many times, they feel like they have nothing to offer, you know, they come empty-handed…and instead, when the music came…it was their way of expressing where they came from, you know, their cultures, *sharing* with people and showing other people in some way that they,

you know, *I'm somebody*, you know, *I didn't just show up with no background or no personality or no, anything for you to mold into whatever you want, this is who I am*. And I think…it brings, just, happiness, and so many times the staff, the volunteers, everybody, we would end up joining them, singing, dancing with them. And yeah, it was just absolute joy.

'Sharing', a social concept and action, has obvious links with the concept of 'ownership'. We can share only that which we already own. Belk (2010) examined sharing as a form of economic distribution, and though his focus was consumer research, his conclusions echo broadly. Belk distinguishes two forms of sharing – 'sharing in' and 'sharing out' – though both "tend[s] to be a communal act that link[s] us to other people" and "create[s] feelings of solidarity and bonding" (Widlock, 2004, p.61 in Belk, 2010, p.717). "Sharing in" is what happens when we share what we possess with friends, family, and neighbours, "extending the circle of people who can enjoy the benefits of the shared resource" (p.725). "Sharing out" involves sharing with those outside our community boundaries. The effect of sharing is to reinforce relationships and widen the boundaries of one's community of belonging – to "extend the aggregate self," in Belk's words. The act of sharing is one that implies ownership yet simultaneously contests it. Camille feels the choir is sharing with her when they perform, and that this runs contrary to their everyday interactions. She views their performance as something they have ownership of, but that they are eager to give to others. This positions them as people who have something to contribute and brings them into a social economy of exchange.

Concluding Thoughts

As we have seen in this chapter, audiences make sense of what they see, hear, feel, think, and do in performances. They use a variety of sensemaking strategies to do this, and these strategies help them construct meaning in relation to the musical-social frame of the

performance. Sensemaking strategies do not only help audiences make sense of the music; they help them make sense of people, of the social situation they are in. Through these strategies they co-construct performers' musical personae, or the version of the person that is presented in music. Central to this process are heightened moments – moments of surprise, the unexpected, and the out-of-the-everyday.

Audiences can affirm or reject aspects of the musical persona. Very often, audience members describe (and therefore construct) performers in ways that suggest they see them as cultural, meaning-making beings, in contrast to the ways they are able to experience them in other contexts. As such, the musical persona can reposition performer and audience and change the scripts of interaction. When performers are described as people who have ownership of certain things (skills, identities, abilities, cultural resources, knowledge), and when they are described as people who are able to share, they are experienced as people with a different agential capacity – one that may be surprising for some. The audiences in this study often affirmed these aspects of performers' musical personae, and performers were therefore co-constructed as people who create, own, and share.

These actions (creating, owning, and sharing) have the potential for the choir to 'extend the aggregate self' – the group of people the choir identifies with and feels a connection to, and this may also be true of the audience. These actions can shift the positioning between choir and audience where interactional patterns can be reshaped. However, the performance is not a simple map for establishing new social scripts or patterns. The materials and processes of the performance do not compel specific action; as Auslander reminds us, "[c]onvention provides a set of expectations, but it does not in any way determine what will actually happen in a given performance; that reality unfolds through convention-bound but unscripted negotiation between performers and audience in each instance" (Auslander, 2021, p.99). It is this negotiation, or the moment-to-moment action and interaction within the performance, to which we now turn.

Chapter 6: Rituals of Proximity

The previous data chapters examined the framing of performances by choirs and the sensemaking strategies of audiences. In this chapter I trace aspects of the temporal unfolding of the performances. To do this, I look at choir director and audience member data side by side, tracing reported actions and interactions, focusing on what choirs and audiences *do* together and how this is understood by them. I examine what is involved in the two most widely reported modes of audience participation: still-and-silent listening and active participation in the music. I suggest that audiencing involves embodied forms of attention that may generate a kind of mutuality, or give-and-take, between choir and audience. I then consider this reported experience of mutuality through the lens of interaction ritual theory (as it is treated by Stige, 2010a, following Collins, 2004, and Goffman, 1967). Through this lens, I suggest that the interaction ritual in these performances is one of exploring the proximity between choir and audience.

Embodied Attention: 'Still-and-Silent' Audiencing

In this section I trace the *action* involved in *attention*, or, in other words, how *listening is performed*. Jonathan Gross (2013), in his ethnography of concert going at the BBC Proms, uses the term "still and silent listening" to characterize conventional audience behaviour in these events; I find the term concise and appropriate to my own context and use it here. 'Still and silent' refers "to the normative behaviour found amongst audiences at classical concerts in which, broadly speaking, they remain still and silent whilst the performance is taking place" (p.8). Audience members in this study were typically positioned in relation to the choirs in the conventional performer-audience configuration associated with Western choral music – sitting in rows facing the choir and listening quietly. Though this type of audience behaviour is often termed relatively 'passive', the data show that different kinds

of action are involved in and result from 'still-and-silent' listening: action which configures their experience and at times influences the unfolding of the performance.

Bravo: 'Still-and-silent' listening

Bravo usefully illustrates the action of still-and-silent listening, and in the following section I examine the experiences of Barbara and Blair. These two audience members – unknown to one another – attended the same concert and identified both similar and different features of the performance as memorable. Song lyrics were an important feature of both their experiences, and as the centrality of song lyrics was emphasized by choir director Brigid in Chapter 4, the example of *Bravo* provides the opportunity to triangulate perspectives on this aspect of performances. In Chapter 4 I examined the framing of *Bravo*'s concerts and noted how the social agenda was made explicit in different ways. Brigid stated that the lyrics were the primary consideration when choosing repertoire; the psycho-socio-political aims of the choir needed to be embedded in the texts they sang. This, Brigid felt, was crucial for influencing the audience's actions post-concert and creating real social change. Indeed, the importance of song lyrics was a common theme in many of my interviews with choir directors – lyrics were described as carriers of the 'messages' the choirs wanted to convey.

Of course, lyrics are not presented in isolation in a choral concert; they are but one part of an event involving many other elements, including those which audience members brought in with them. In this section I trace what Barbara and Blair brought in – their expectations, prior experiences, and interpretive frames – what elements they noticed in the performance, how they made sense of what they heard and saw, and what the immediate consequences of their concert experiences were. I will show that song lyrics did not function as a message transmitted but served as an orienting feature within the bigger web of sensory and affective features of the performance. In other words, powerful musical

moments were not driven by the 'agenda' of songs (as specified in the lyrics) but found in the interactional space the songs created.

Barbara

At the time of the interview, Barbara, an elderly woman recently widowed, had attended approximately five concerts by *Bravo*. She had volunteered in prisons as a lay chaplain for several years, and through this work she developed a friendship with Benjamin, an inmate she visited regularly. When he was transferred to the prison where *Bravo* was situated, Benjamin joined the choir. Over the years, Barbara and Benjamin's friendship developed through their involvement in religious activities and their experiences of the loss of family members. Benjamin had been on Barbara's discernment team when she went forward to become a deacon in her church. When Barbara's husband died of Alzheimer's disease a few years after she had lost her daughter, Benjamin was a support to her through her grief. Barbara, in turn, supported Benjamin after he lost his son and could not attend the funeral due to his incarceration.

This connection to a choir member brought Barbara and her husband to *Bravo*'s performances, and performances, in turn, helped her get to know Benjamin more deeply. Barbara's involvement with the choir began with a personal connection, but she felt enfolded into a bigger community – perhaps into a bigger project – as she attended with many other people gathered around the same concerns. One of the things Barbara appreciated about the concerts was the large and diverse audience: "it was just a huge overflowing audience of bigwigs from state government and from city government and the university, but also just some fairly normal folks. It was just like a sense of euphoria, going to those concerts."

Barbara continued to describe features of the scene that stood out to her because they were unique to concert days in the prison: a line of dogs and their handlers[12] welcomed audience members as they came through the security gate, inmates' art hung on the walls, punch was available for people while mingling before the concert began, a table with coffee and cake signaled there would be more socializing post-concert. These 'out-of-the-everyday' elements created an environment where she was attuned to the celebratory atmosphere and the relationships between people. "Important" and "regular" people mingled together, and this mixture may have represented what the event aimed to do: offer an alternative vision of justice where people were integrated and welcomed into relationship rather than cast out and isolated. The diversity of people at the event, representing many different parts of society (including Barbara's own life – she stated she often bumped into former coworkers who were city employees) came together around this common concern.

The first song Barbara identified as memorable was a song for which Benjamin had written the lyrics and dedicated to her. Barbara noted that the song was "...not quite like a lullaby or a hymn but...kind of gentle, quiet...it was just a lovely restful kind of song." As the song unfolded, she found herself drawn into "the words, and how it was combined with music and the beautiful way the choir rendered it". She focused on the "collaboration" between Benjamin and the woman who had written the music, a woman whose husband had also died. She was drawn into the past relationships and grief that generated this music, and the way the music then created more opportunities for further relationships. She was also very surprised to hear the content of the lyrics, as she didn't know how their conversations had impacted him: "I didn't realize how much that had meant to him until this song came out...I didn't realize the depth."

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[12] This prison, like many in the USA, offers a dog-training program where inmates learn how to train puppies for work as service dogs.

The second song Barbara recalled was a rap that a young African-American man had written and performed, backed up by the rest of the choir. Rap was not a genre Barbara was familiar with, but she found a point of connection to the song through its lyrics:

> **Barbara:** ...it was just an extraordinary piece, it was so eloquent and right on target with – certainly it was well before George Floyd – but you know, with that kind of calling for understanding. And so it just really stood out for me. I've been involved with some anti-racism work in the last two years...one of my daughters is African-American and we adopted her as a baby and so of course, I'm very keyed into that, and maybe that is another reason that particular rap meant so much to me.

Here Barbara offers another interpretive frame she entered the concert with. The lyrics of the song resonated with her worldview and life experiences, and this served to hold her attention even though the musical style was unfamiliar. I wondered about her experience of the musical style and how that might have impacted the message of the lyrics for her:

> **Erinn:** What was it like, hearing those words in a rap format? What do you remember feeling or thinking?

> **Barbara:** I think that it was very effective and...eloquent...as someone who loves to read and enjoys writing, I just felt great respect for that craft.

Brigid's hopes that the lyrics would stand out to people were confirmed in Barbara's experience of this song. Barbara did not remember moving to the music, tapping her foot or clapping along, only her focus on the lyrics: "*I just was swept away with the words*." Here we see how Barbara's interpretive frames (worldview, respect for writing) and the way they resonated with the lyrics pulled her into the temporal flow of the music, as she suggests with the words "swept away" – indicating a kind of surrender to the music. I asked her to describe this feeling and she made the following comparison:

Barbara: ...like I'd been to church...I felt that kind of inner transformation that you get from worship. It's really meaningful and comes inside and is not just a performance. It's just, it's a gentling and enriching sensation inside.

Important here is that is not the lyrics alone that produce Barbara's experience. She does not speak of the song in terms of the message she received, nor does she compare the experience to any other nonmusical experience of a text (i.e., reading, listening to a lecture). Instead, she compares the song to the ritual of worship – she feels she is *participating* in the text rather than simply comprehending it – "it is not *just* a performance."

Barbara then maps the *Bravo* concert onto another listening experience: the choral singing she heard while in Swaziland (this experience was discussed in Chapter 5) which she speaks about in terms of individual participation and human cooperation. In linking these experiences, Barbara indicates she hears not simply a song, not a message delivered musically, but *people* in music. Her experience was guided by the words of the songs and the expressive presentation of them by the choir, but it was a *dynamic* experience – she did not leave with a singular thought or feeling received – and she uses dynamic terms to describe her response: "swept away", "gentling and enriching", and later, "contagious joy". It appears that Barbara feels *led* through a varied terrain of feeling and understanding.

After the concerts, Barbara posted about the concert on Facebook, referring to it with words such as "marvelous" and how she was moved to see families together during the event. Talking about how she talked about the concert afterward led her to a conclusion about her experience:

Barbara: ...I'm not sure that I mentioned this...it was so moving to see the families that were there and the pride that they had in the person who was imprisoned and what they were doing...it was such a beautiful, *respect,* I guess, for the individuals,

and seeing beyond the worst thing they had done, or the reason that they were in prison – that they were more than that. And so, I don't think I put all of that in the Facebook post but...as much as the music, that was what really touched me, was that respect.

Barbara is a witness to a quality of relationship she sees which she interprets as respect. For Barbara, the concert is a scene of respect, something she wants other people to know about. Something she wants other people to know is possible.

Blair

Blair did not have any experience with prisons or incarcerated people prior to her attendance at *Bravo*'s concert, the same concert attended by Barbara. In Chapter 5 I introduced Blair in the context of her processes of preparation, or "potentializing the concert." In this section I look at the ways in which she engaged with different songs, including the rap that Barbara identified.

Blair found that her attention and modes of response changed with different songs. I asked her what she remembered about the sound of the choir:

> **Blair:** ... I think the first word that comes to mind is 'rich'...one of the first songs was just such a fun little ditty and I don't even remember what it was, but I remember me and [my friend]...looking at each other and smiling and laughing, because it was just such a fun little song...There were some really emotional, like, more solemn songs but I remember at the beginning...just feeling, *oh, this is so fun!*

Blair smiled and looked at her friend, turning outward during an energetic "fun" song – seeking out face-to-face contact and reflecting the joyful presentation of the choir, perhaps enacting some of the "contagious joy" to which Barbara referred. Here she describes matching the choir's energy and emotional tone, taking it on, internalizing it, and bringing it

to others. She continued to describe the qualities of the music she remembered: "So, *rich* – like, being able to hear the different voices. The piano, the collaboration, 'bright' comes to mind with some of the more upbeat, fun songs." Blair hears "brightness" (a description of the musical timbre) and the sound of many different musical people and elements coming together (a description of the musical texture), representing for her the diversity of people and circumstances that came together in the event. She hears the product of these musical and social elements as "rich" – full, deep, and multi-layered. She is compelled to turn outward during a song such as this, to actively respond, to make connections with other audience members, to acknowledge somehow the shared experience they are having.

But Blair had another, contrasting experience during the concert:

> **Blair:** There was a song that was written by one of the prison members. And it...was... almost like a freestyle [rap] sort of thing...[about] a lot of the issues that are present right now in the United States. And it reminded me of the song, "Where is the Love?"...it kind of reminded me of that, of pointing out these very obvious, horrible issues that are going on in our world right now...and I just remember it was super emotional and everyone was very intrigued, but I remember that being...the one instance that stood out to me most...this song of this [choir] member just pointing out so many things that are wrong in the United States.

Like Barbara, Blair latched onto the lyrics because they rang true for her – they connected to ideas and beliefs about the world outside the concert. They represented a future she believed in and wanted to see. In a moment, Blair connected musical and textual material to past experience, associating the musical style and energy with the socio-political views expressed. This attachment directed her attention to elements of the performer's style:

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Blair: Yeah…I remember just sitting there – it was so passionate – and being able to, like, understand that he wrote this song and now he's performing this song…I could really, just like, *feel* the passion and the pain…and all the emotions that went into it. So yeah…you could just…feel the emotions that went into writing it in his voice.

Given the framing of the concert and its explicit social agenda, it is not difficult to see how the text would be foregrounded by any audience member. What is interesting here, however, is not (primarily) the way Blair understood and resonated with the lyrics and worldview they represented. What is significant is what Blair did in response ("I remember just sitting there"), as she described further when I asked what the performer looked like:

Erinn: What did he look like? How was he in terms of his performance style?

Blair: That's what I – so the problem there is, I don't remember looking at him because the lyrics were written in the program. So, I just remember following along in the program and being very much, like, engaged with the words…that's what stood out to me most…the lyrics of the song were so painful. So, I really just remember looking at the words…when I read programs, I always sit like this [*she shows me by leaning forward, resting her elbow on her knee, her hand supporting her chin*] and look down at the program. And I just remember sitting there and…I got tearful because it was just very emotional. And so, I just remember, like, looking down at the lyrics and just kind of being in my own space but also really engaged with the sounds of what was happening.

While the content of the lyrics was certainly important to her experience, it is notable that she was "drawn inward" during this song; she was not really aware of the rest of the audience as she was in the first example. This song afforded a different experience of the choir (and the audience, and herself) than the "fun" song. Different songs directed her to absorb the text in different ways. A "fun" song led her to seek interaction, and a more

'serious,' 'emotional' song compelled stillness and quiet reflection. This is in part due to the different musical properties structuring her experience – the fast tempo of the first may have supported movement and active participation, while the slower, more serious song may have led her into still reflection. Musical features such as tempo may guide attention and participation, yet it is not a matter of Blair being manipulated by musical structures, nor is it a matter of simply comprehending the songs' texts. Blair is not simply responding to the songs' 'meanings' but participating in the temporal flow of the music – led by the choir – and within this flow making connections to past experiences and interacting with the people around her in varied ways. Different musical properties present different opportunities to reach outward or draw inward, or change proximity to others in the room – as they are experienced in relation to the lyrics. This changes the positioning of choir and audience, through the kind of attention the choir asks of their audience. It is perhaps significant that the 'emotional' song was delivered by a soloist, as this would likely be experienced as a more direct and personal communicative gesture, inspiring a quiet, focused mode of response. Leonard Meyer (1954) referred to this kind of framing as the "preparatory set" – when we believe that something will be meaningful, we are primed to look for meaning in all that we see and hear. As DeNora (1986) explained: "The preparatory set then, is part of what is required to inspire belief or trust necessary for the collaborative, cooperative relationship between listener and composer which gets the "work" of constituting meaning done in music" (p.91). The lyrics, combined with the performance style (rap, soloist) provided cues for constructing meaning in this musical moment.

Both songs generated experiences for Blair that were outside her expected interactions with incarcerated people. In the first case (the "fun" song), she did not expect to find joy and delight and lightheartedness within prison walls. In the second case (the "emotional" song), she did not expect to be invited into a passionate and vulnerable performance by a prisoner. Both songs provided materials (musical and textual) for Blair to experience incarcerated people differently, through her very physical, embodied response to the presentation of those materials. If patterns of social relations are reproduced in the body –

in bodily patterns of action and interaction (Bourdieu, 1977) – then we might say that the concert here is providing an opportunity to transgress the 'normal' social relations both audience and choir are accustomed to. This is not achieved through the presentation of a message, but through a reconfigured positioning of choir and audience within the temporal flow of the music: the choir led the audience into new experiences. Blair did not 'receive a message'; she was led into new social (and emotional) terrain, and she 'received' materials with which she could choose to (or not to) disrupt cultural patterns of engagement with incarcerated people. Blair was invited into this temporal flow, Blair was led through this temporal flow, and through her embodied response, Blair shows us how reception (at times in the form of still and silent listening) opens possibilities for different forms of action.

Blair stressed the performer's emotional presentation ("I really could, just like, *feel* the passion and the pain...and all the emotions that went into it"), and she found herself wondering about the person performing, or the person behind the musical persona:

> **Blair:** ...when you're in a setting like that you can't help but...wonder how they got here...but honestly, I feel like those thoughts kind of went away as soon as you get more into the music and the choir...I think that's kind of one of the best things about something like this...you're kind of separating the story at that point and you're just like, enjoying what is going on in that moment.

Blair undergoes an interesting process here. The "passion and the pain" she hears draws her into the life of the performer, and likely, the gap between the two of them, but after that gap is acknowledged, it seems to be crossed. Blair slips into a mode of musical enjoyment and does not focus any longer on the conditions that separate her and the performer. The musical persona – the person right in front of her – is more compelling than the backstory of the performer.

When Blair got home she texted her friend (also a musician): "I remember texting one of my best friends being like, *Oh my gosh, like I just experienced this amazing thing – I gotta tell you about it*...I was like, *wow*. I had to tell someone about how enlightened I felt..." The urgency she felt immediately following the concert came through in her interview as she recalled this moment:

> **Blair:** and I just remember like thinking well like this is something that I hope is more common around the country. And I hope that, I really just wanted everyone to experience what I had just experienced. I was like, I was like, I want this to be a *thing*. I want everyone, I know to be able to have done this because I think it really goes to show, not only the power of music but just like the power of integration and the power of getting to know people who you might just pass judgments for in general because they're at a prison or whatever.

Though both Blair and Barbara identified song lyrics as memorable and significant, it is worth repeating that it is not the lyrics alone, but the performance of the lyrics, by this particular choir, that produced Blair's experience. It is not the music (alone) or the text (alone) that is the object of meaning here. Rather, it is the *activity* of singing and audiencing. The lyrics, configured musically, opened possibilities for people to engage with and respond to them. In giving the choir her (different kinds of) attention, Blair is enacting the kind of participation and interaction the choir desires: to attend to them (see and hear them), to receive what is on offer, to spread it around. In the terms used in Chapter 4, this is embodied 'witnessing'. The lyrics are not absorbed by the audience as a reduction of the singers' states of mind or worldviews; the meaning of the lyrics was fleshed out in the activity of singing. The lyrics have a framing or guiding function as they make room for choir agency to unfold with this particular audience. Blair and Barbara put themselves into a position where they cannot anticipate what the rapper will do, but they understand the 'call' to witness, to be present. This is the action of still-and-silent audiencing.

Brigid

As I stated above, the choir director, Brigid, felt that lyrical content was the essential consideration in choosing repertoire. I found it interesting, then, when Brigid identified one of her most powerful concert memories, it featured a song that seemed only peripherally connected to the social agenda. If the lyrics, as Brigid stated earlier, were central to the performance – if they communicated a message the audience was to leave with, what was the function of a song that did not directly communicate this message? Why would it generate such a strong experience for Brigid?

While grieving the death of her father, Brigid wrote a song called "Heavenly Snowfall", inspired by the peaceful view of the outdoors she had while composing as well as conversations she had recently had at a spiritual retreat. She described to me the musical elements of the song:

> **Brigid:** …I…compose[d] this piece called "Heavenly Snowfall" and it had a lot of free improv in it, simple things like…people…can just sing the D flat [tonic] or the A flat [dominant] on "ooh". And so, I had it semi-structured and I had a simple little "ooh" melody [*she sings a 5-note descending melody*] that I taught the group that they improvised on, on one section of the song…So I also got to have my colleague…who plays French horn…and one of his students who's in the choir…I had written a short little melody for French horn…and then one of my students…was conducting and I was at the piano…that opportunity to have created that song in honour of my dad and share it with the choir and with audience was just really meaningful [*she tears up, her voice breaks a little*]. And so, it was just a beautiful kind of thing for me to get that opportunity.

While connected to themes of hope, love, and peace (values around which the choir is oriented), Brigid's song reflects these themes in a less abstract and more personal way. Its construction originates in her grieving process and is a window into her personal grief, but

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its development and eventual performance is more about inviting others into that process rather than expressing her experience of it. She structures the song to involve people close to her (friends and colleagues) as well as the wider community (the audience) so that the entire room actively participates in the song. We continued:

> **Erinn:** Absolutely. Do you remember anything about the sound in that moment?

> **Brigid:** Well, I think for me it's a mixture...it was a simple ABA structure...with the beginning having this piano introduction that I created and then the choir just singing that simple little "ooh", the drone, and it ended with that same kind of melody. But when we got to that little improv place, that "ooh" melody, I don't know, that just, I just really loved that opportunity to be creating in a *group,* in the *moment*, that free improv...the power of deeply listening and connecting [to] each other...But yeah, it was just it was that beautiful mix of having something that was personally meaningful and the people that I've connected with through this project, to be able to express it.

On one hand, this concert moment may seem to be a departure of Brigid's stated aims for the choir – it is removed from the 'education-and-activism' stance of the choir community and the specific socio-political agenda it promotes. On the other hand, this moment is consistent with those aims in that it opens an opportunity for choir and audience to enact them. It is not a song that projects a direct message (through its text) but a song that opens itself up to invite different forms and levels of embodied participation. In other words, the power of the moment (for Brigid) was not driven by the 'agenda' of the song (as specified in the lyrics) but found in the interactional space the song created. This moment was not simply about the social agenda or expressing grief but about performing the agenda, enacting care and support through collective vulnerability.

Barbara, Blair, and Brigid demonstrate how song lyrics are an orienting feature of performances but are part of a larger constellation of factors (musical, contextual, biographical) that bear on participants' experiences. Audiences don't just quietly absorb the text – it becomes an ingredient in an embodied experience of the music.

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There are very few settings where socially vulnerable people can command attention – on their own terms. The setting and the format of the performances discussed required that the audience pay attention in a largely still and silent manner. On one hand, this would seem a relatively passive reception of the performance. On the other hand, the data discussed above suggests that reception, as an action, opens up further courses of action. What is interesting is that the outcome of audience attention was not simply approval, validation, evaluation, etc., but it was often a more personal kind of engagement that led to other forms of action. Audience members do not just attend (to) the performance, they respond in some manner. The next section will examine the varieties of response.

The Invitation: Moving into an Unexpected Mutuality

In this section I follow audience movements toward active participation. The concert is often experienced as a kind of invitation to participate, to share in "mutual joy," in the words of choir director Naomi. Many audience members described an experience of mutuality, particularly in moments when they are actively participating in the music with the choir. The unexpected dimensions of these moments were frequently emphasized by audience members, and I suggest that the kind of mutuality experienced is often 'disruptive', in that it involves the disruption of everyday patterns of interaction with people belonging to the identity group the choir represents. In this section I consider *Kalimba*, whose participants

speak of being invited into an alternate space, and *Harmonia*, whose participants speak of being together in musical time.

Kalimba: Between attention and participation

Kalimba, a community choir, is situated within a hospice organization but it is not limited to those needing the hospice's services. It is open to anyone who wants to join; choir director Kendrick noted that the choir's ethos of welcome attracts people who are looking for a certain social experience, one that, perhaps, facilitates social connection and restores hope:

> **Kendrick:** ...what I think I have discovered is that people come...to sing to take them out of themselves. They want to come along and forget all their problems for two hours each week and, you know, just engage with people and connect and have a great time...they want to sing songs that...just make them feel uplifted and joyful.

Kendrick identified songs where the "soaring, final notes in the song" (such as in "Tomorrow" from *Annie*) created a common focus and direction. Such moments of musical intensity seem to gather people and put them on the same path: the music "pulls us into a different place," suggesting a movement away from the present situation and toward a different space, or future. Whether the audience was directly invited to participate or not, Kendrick sensed that these moments brought the audience closer, effectively inviting the audience to join in that movement: "the lines were blurred between who were the performers and who were the listeners."

The audience members I interviewed associated with *Kalimba* were unique in that they had both joined the choir after hearing the choir perform. They did not know each other prior to joining and it was not evident in the course of either of our conversations that they knew each other after joining. Because they had been both audience member and choir

member, both Kathleen and Kristen provided insight into the factors that might draw an audience member from still-and-silent attention into active participation.

Kathleen, a relatively new resident of the region, attended a performance of *Kalimba* and felt immediately overtaken by the power of their live sound. Though she was an avid listener of recorded music, for her it did not compare to the experience of live singing, which she described as: "...*real* people, *real* singing...hearing what I call that 'volume of pure voice'." The experience of listening was rich and immersive for her; Kathleen described it as a kind of 'merging' with the choir:

> **Kathleen:** ...joining in with that 'upliftment' of something, I mean, I can't explain it. It's almost like it *draws* you, your own voice *out*, when you're hearing others. Does that make sense?

Though her words here are vague, the action she described was clear: she began to join in the singing. Kathleen felt a sense of invitation, a kind of pull by the group, which led to her decision to join the choir in order to get closer to the sound. Interestingly, she also disclosed that for a significant period of time after joining, she did not sing at all, but rather lip-synced instead (and pleaded with me not to tell the choir director!). Though she does not lip-sync as often anymore, she does like to sit back and 'be the audience' during choir rehearsals to experience the feeling she had at her first performance. She is part of the audience until she feels 'overtaken' by the music, until she has no choice but to sing, where she feels her voice is being 'drawn out' by the others: "Oh, I'm letting my voice go. I truly am letting my voice go because of the support of all the other singers." She is then both singer and audience. In a sense, she feels led into the music, invited into active participation. The most powerful experience for her is crossing that threshold: "...there's this expansion of a voice when the environment's right, or the song is right, or the enjoyment's happening..."

For Kathleen, the experience of audiencing is one of feeling supported – she feels the choir provides the scaffolding needed and the invitation required for her own voice to come out. Kathleen had suffered many tragedies and had health issues of her own, and this 'lifting out' of her present circumstances, by live people making live music, enables her to experience an "expansion" of herself through the "expansion of her voice" – where her identity is as a member of a meaning-making group, rather than one who is ill or bereaved.

Kathleen offers an interesting description of the moment between listening and actively participating, and how profound audience experiences are sometimes found in the undefined space between the two. Kristen also joined the choir after hearing one performance, after her own experience of 'invitation.' Kristen stated she was immediately drawn to the singers, even before the concert started. She sensed an excitement in the air coming from the choir members themselves, and she found their exuberant, yet relaxed, energy very compelling. Once the choir began to sing, she found herself being drawn in, much like Kathleen was, into the flow of the music and she found herself singing along:

> **Kristen:** ...I said...isn't it lovely? We know these songs...the experience being in the audience just wasn't what I expected. I thought I was just going to go and sit and they'll be very nice. And I've helped somebody out by saying I'd go, you know, that's very nice, but it wasn't like that at all.

Though she had anticipated staying in a supportive role as an audience member, even maintaining some distance, she and her husband found Kendrick during the interval and asked to join the choir. The moment she knew she wanted to join was when she began projecting herself into the choir: "I knew it was something I could do, because I looked at the people who were doing it and I thought, I can do this. I've got to find my voice."

What Kristen describes here is not simply an experience of hearing some nice music, or offering support to a community choir. What she describes is a feeling of invitation. She

sees the choir as a group she would like to join, perhaps because they represent who and where she wants to be. Her map, drawn in the interview, captures some of the processes of thought and feeling she experienced and what led to her decision to join: what she noticed in the choir ("radiate"), how she interpreted their behaviour and/or performing personae ("comfortable in their own skin") and her emotional response: ("overwhelmed" and "happy").
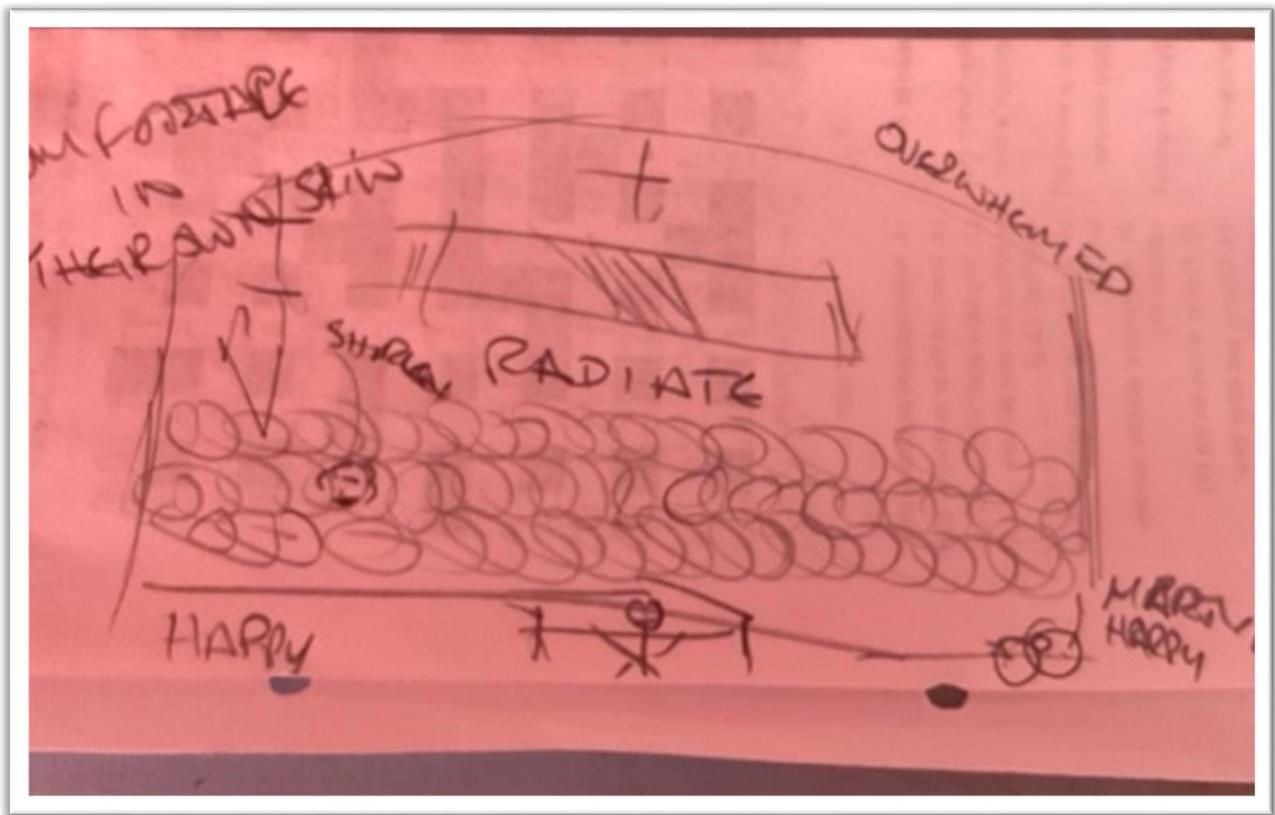
Figure 13: Kristen's concert map

Kendrick's earlier comments suggest the concert is a kind of *atopia* – a different, undefined place, a 'non-place' where people are gathered and fully present with one another. Both choir and audience are 'elsewhere' – meeting on a different level – and he describes this as a place of "forgetting": their sorrow, their loss, perhaps even their mortality. But Kathleen and Kristen's comments and actions characterize this place less as a place of forgetting or denial, and more as a place of engagement – where they can hold both the reality of the

hardships of life and the resistance against them in the reaching out toward one another in musical participation. Kathleen's and Kristen's comments suggest that there is no forgetting where they are, no forgetting the reality of losses they have sustained by this point in their lives. Perhaps it is in these concerts that they are able to find a place to hold their present situations and their hoped-for futures together, through identifying with, and being invited by a group that is enacting just that. The result is the sharing of materials (music) with which to cope with the struggles of everyday life, and a community that will help them re-identify themselves as people who are able to resist and to hope.

An atopia is disruptive in that it unsettles everyday identities and roles. But it does this not by enabling people to retreat from one another but by enabling people to draw closer. For the participants of *Kalimba*, who are surrounded by death, loss, and grief, an experience of escape may seem desirable (it may even be what people think they want, as in: "music enables people to forget"). However, the data suggests that *Kalimba* invites their audiences to engage, to move toward one another in disrupted – or, more positively, *expanded* – identities, and this sounds much more like hope than escape.

Harmonia: Time and timing

The experience of 'joining in' or participating actively from the audience described in the previous section was a common theme throughout the data. In the following section I explore the significance of participating together in musical time, and I argue that the data presents a kind of mutuality, or back-and-forth flow between choir and audience, and that this mutuality, at times, disrupts or reshapes the everyday interactional patterns of choir and audience.

Harlow, who attended a concert given by *Harmonia*, whose members have dementia, recalled a peak moment in the performance where she stood up to dance and sing – very unexpectedly. In her interview she took me through how that moment came to be,

describing how her participation was impacted by both the choir and other audience members.

Erinn: When you think about that concert, what, what comes to mind first?

Harlow: There was a song that I can remember...I can remember Hannah, who is sitting in the row in front of me...I remember when they started singing this song she turned around and goes, *Ah yes!* I think we were kind of looking at each other and dancing around a bit. I can't remember if we were encouraged to sing along or not but I think there was a bit of spontaneous singing. It was a bit of a, *Ah, this is great! We love hearing this!* kind of a moment.

[...]

Erinn: So what did they sound like when they were singing it? How would you describe their voices?

Harlow: Happy. You...know how you can hear someone's expression a bit when they sing?...You could kind of hear...that they were enjoying themselves, they were enjoying what they do. And it was certainly very infectious and it was very, like a: *They're enjoying this song. We love this song. This is fantastic!*

Harlow describes a moment of recognition and delight, of intersubjectivity: she and her long-time friend share in the realization that they are all moved by the same song. This is a moment of unexpected personal resonance for Harlow, and she responds by looking at her friend to acknowledge this common ground (and perhaps have her response affirmed). This leads into active participation:

Erinn: And so, tell me more about the moment where people started to spontaneously sing. Do you remember at what point in the song that was? Did people jump in right at the beginning? Or was there a point later on in the song?

Harlow: I think it kind of slowed into it. I think there was a bit of a, we were looking at each other going, *I love this song*, and I think there'd already been people sort of quietly humming or just sort of mouthing along to the song. But I remember other people outside my group of friends were also kind of getting into it a bit, so it wasn't just us.

Erinn: Okay, you noticed the others around the room?

Harlow: I think that was sort of a bit of a contagious, sort of a: *Some people are singing a little bit, those people are singing it a lot more. Okay - we can. It's probably okay to sing a little bit too.*

Erinn: Oh, so as audience members, you were kind of feeding off each other and encouraging each other in a sense.

Harlow: Yes, I think so. I think we were all kind of taking a few social cues of people particularly outside of our group. It's like, okay, it's not just my crazy social group who are very – I mean, we kind of identified ourselves as a misfit group in high school, so [it was] probably natural to have that nervousness and be like, *is everyone else on this page or what?* [*laughs*]

Here Harlow describes an emergent, collective process of audiencing (Browning, 2020). As audience members are moved to respond actively, they look at not just the choir but to each other, matching their modes of participation. They look to each other to determine if

what they feel moved to do 'fits' in with the choir's presentation and with each other. She continues:

> **Erinn:** And so, were you moving as well? Any dancing or swaying?

> **Harlow:** I was swaying which is unusual because I don't dance. I don't really move along to music at all which is, yeah, I think I got that from my dad. My dad and I, both musicians, neither of us really do the dancing. So yeah, I definitely remember swaying. I remember – actually, I've got arthritis in my knees – I remember thinking, *Okay, just think about your knees. Don't forget to, you know, sway in a controlled manner.* I can't believe I can remember that!

> **Erinn:** Well, you might not have expected a concert like this to be this physical, right?

> **Harlow:** No, I didn't expect that at all. I thought I'd be very politely sitting down the whole time, so I didn't expect that...

> **Erinn:** Mmm, was this moment unexpected?

> **Harlow:** Yes. I'd say it was unexpected.

The emergent, collective forms of audiencing lead Harlow into another unexpected experience. Musical performance is multi-modal, involving not just sound but movement and gesture which are seen and experienced as well (Davidson & Correia, 2011). These movements and gestures are "tuned in to" (Schütz, 1964) and responded to, creating a shared understanding of the experience. The audience, as the example of Harlow demonstrates, participates in the co-production of the musical moment in its social and multi-modal dimensions. Importantly, this moment drew out of Harlow behaviours and

responses that were wholly out of character – not being inclined to dance, this experience represented for Harlow an unexpected moment where she left her comfort zone to follow the choir (and the rest of the audience) where they led. I asked Harlow about her expectations of the music the choir would perform:

> **Harlow:** ...I think in terms of audience behavior, expectations...I think maybe it being at a church sort of framed my thinking that I'd be sitting there very formally and very respectfully, although there are many ways to be respectful in a concert, but [I expected a] very much non-participatory setting. You know, eyes to the front, politely clapping in between. I think that's sort of the expectation that I came there with. I didn't expect to get involved at any point.

Harlow expected to be relatively passive as an audience member in this concert, but she instead experienced a kind of mutuality – between herself and the choir, and between herself and the audience – that produced unexpected modes of participation. Important here is the fact that the choir is leading. The choir has chosen the song, set the pace, presented it in a certain style, and leads the audience through it. While Harlow describes a back-and-forth flow of sound, movement, and energy, it should be noted that the choir is 'in charge.' They control the space, they hold the 'platform', they determine the program. It is a mutuality that is asymmetrical, in that there is a clear leader in the event.

Also important here is that the choir is not simply leading the audience in an activity; they are leading the audience through *time*. Harlow and her friends do not move or dance the way they might in another musical situation, not exactly. While they do bring in with them certain cultures of audiencing, certain culturally learned modes of what to do at a concert, these modes of participation come into contact with the offerings of this particular choir in this particular moment. This involves synchronizing their repertoires of musical actions with that of the choir, who guides and calibrates the audience's responses through the pace they set. Harlow, in other words, is pulled into the choir's 'timing.' Later in the concert,

she shifts her mode of participation again to conform to the choir's timing. During a slower-paced song, a choir member danced slowly with another person (Harlow wasn't sure if it was a choir member or not) as part of the performance. Harlow feels the audience's energy slow to match and support this dance. Audience movements and vocalizations stop and the focus from the room seems unified on the "careful and deliberate" movements of the dancers.
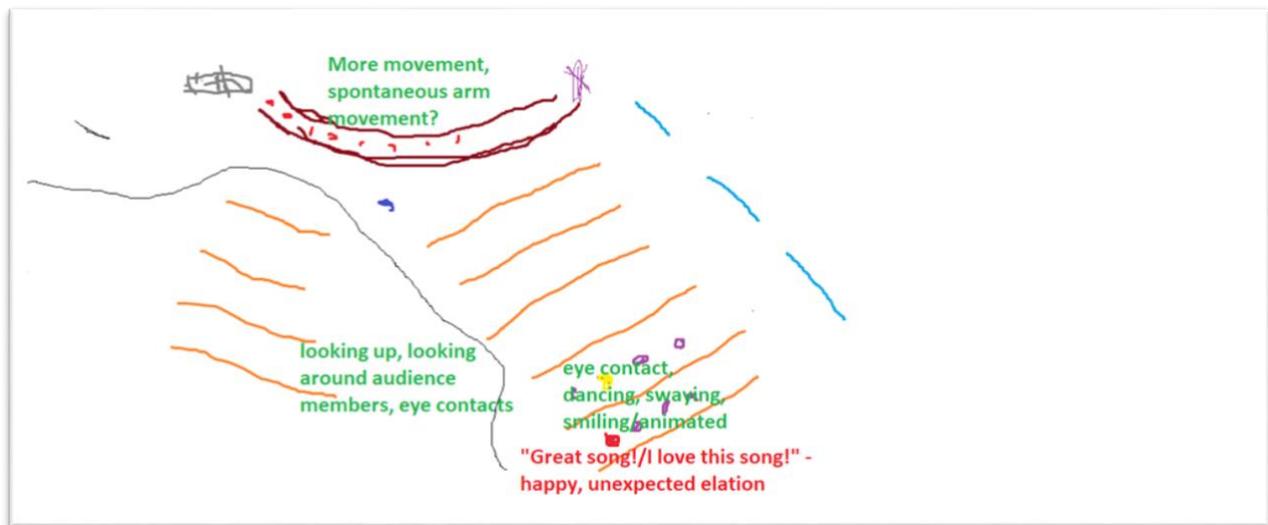
Figure 14: Harlow's concert map

Harlow's experience highlights the ways in which music's temporal, embodied nature offers different social possibilities. Studies in embodied cognition in music reveal that perception and sensemaking processes are rooted in bodily movement, that mental states are not distinct from sensory-motor processes (Geeves & Sutton, 2014; De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007). In any kind of musicking situation, participants anticipate each other's next actions, and the temporal unfolding of music involves reactions and adjustments made on a physical level: "In any performance situation...performers must hold open multiple possibilities for "next steps" in a scenario, dependent upon what has just gone before and in anticipation of what may happen next. Musicians in performance react and adjust in real-time..." (Moran, 2011, p.6). As Harlow demonstrates, the audience holds open multiple

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possibilities as well. Attention is given through bodily action, active participation happens through the body; our sense-making processes are based in movement, which takes place in time.

Music can thus be a way of exploring time, and physical and social togetherness in time. For the participants in *Harmonia*, time is often a source of social exclusion, as they are not able to synchronize with others physically and mentally in most everyday activity. Our use of time (which is culturally structured) is often a source of exclusion for disabled people who cannot fit into the ways society uses time. Time is even used as a measure of ability: deviation from the standard 'pace' signals a problem, as is exemplified in diagnoses such as "developmental delay" (Swinton, 2016). But because time is culturally understood and structured, it has potential as a resource for connection and inclusion: "It does not make much difference what time *is* in and of itself; what matters is what time *does...*" (ibid., p.22). More specifically, it matters what *we do* with time.

When Harlow explores how her body moves (in new ways) in response to the music (and the choir's leading of it), she is exploring the way she both physically and socially 'fits' into the musical moment. This involves a measure of aesthetic empathy,[13] which is understood through music's movement in time. In the case of *Harmonia*, music's temporal properties afforded the choir materials with which to lead their audience, or to enact a certain kind of agency. Sharing musical time in this way can be seen as a practice of mutuality, and it is the very indeterminacy of the process (the back and forth of action and response) that contains the possibility of disruption. Following the choir's timing is a way of saying, *I will move at your pace, I will not expect you to conform to mine*. This mode of participation is an expansion of everyday interactional patterns between people who live with dementia and people who do not, and, as such, can disrupt expectations and everyday social ordering.

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[13] Brinck (2018), in a paper on aesthetic experience and empathy, links the embodied processes of aesthetic experience to the phenomenological perspective of Merleau-Ponty: "I can meet in things the actions of another and find in these actions a sense, because they are themes of possible activity for my own body" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964 in Brink, 2018, p.205).

Though I have focused on *Harmonia* in this section, several audience members from other choirs echoed the significance of joining choirs' timing. As Camille stated plainly after learning a dance taught by *Cantabile*: "You know, finally, we were doing something of theirs instead of always making them do our stuff."

The Interaction Ritual as an Exploration of Proximity

The previous sections examined audience responses along different modes of audiencing: still-and-silent participation and active participation. In this section I look at choir director and audience member data side by side, tracing reported actions and interactions, focusing on what choirs and audiences *do* together and how this is understood by them. I suggest that interaction ritual theory (Stige, 2010a) is a helpful lens through which to view the actions and interactions of the performance.[14] The interaction ritual is conceptual framework for understanding how social space is co-created and has wide applicability in musical contexts. Through this theoretical lens, the performance can be seen as a process of joint action between the choir and audience, and, specifically, a process of exploring the proximity between them.

Interaction rituals are negotiations of social space, a way of conceptualizing the ways in which individuals take on interacting roles which influence one another and produce a kind of social ecology. "According to Collins, interaction rituals are characterized by *mutual foci of attention* and *increased emotional energy among participants* and they build *community* and *group membership*" (Stige, 2010a, p.134, emphasis in original). When there is a shared focus of attention and bodily co-presence, participants in an interaction ritual may

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[14] Discussions of interaction rituals refer back to Durkheim (1912) and Goffman (1967), the latter of which theorized ritual as an activity constructing everyday social life. Randall Collins' (2004) work on interaction rituals was taken up by Stige (2010a) in a music therapy context and it is Stige's treatment of the concept that I find useful here.

experience a sense of heightened intersubjectivity, akin to Durkheim's (1912) "collective effervescence."

Interaction rituals are just that – rituals. They are not 'interventions' or 'treatments' that operate according to expectations of cause and effect. They are marked by exploration, and in the sections that follow I consider selected performances in terms of their participants' exploration of social space.

Allegro: Anticipating changes in proximity

Allegro illustrates some of the ways the social space of a concert is co-created by choir and audience through attention and varieties of participation. While this process was very often 'successful,' meaning that there was a high degree of shared emotional energy in the room, this was not always the case.

Audience member Anita and I discussed one of her most memorable concert moments. What came through strongly was the way she responded to the energy of the choir:

> **Erinn:** So they would be loud, it would be energetic, it sounds like? How would you describe the sound in those moments?
>
> **Anita:** Hmm, I would say alive...because...they're like, hyped up and they're swaying, and they're clapping and they're smiling from ear to ear. Like the joy was very evident. Yeah. So I would say they came alive, it came alive in that song...

I asked Anita what she noticed in those high energy moments. She noted that she started swaying in her chair, and, in her words, the energy of the choir made her become "more involved," by which she meant more responsive in terms of movement: "I remember

looking at people beside me and we were all feeling the same joy, and energy. So, we were all kind of doing it...and clapping along."

Anita describes the kind of 'bodily co-presence' and accompanying emotional energy that characterizes interaction rituals. Her response is configured by the choir (she is moving according to their rhythm, their energy) but in no way is it contrived by them. She is not directed how to act but rather moves responsively with the choir in a way that feels natural and expressive, and this is also encouraged by the participation of the audience members around her. It is as though she becomes part of one large moving organism – one that enfolds a variety of movements and responses, not simply a group of people moving in lock-step. As I stated above, important components of interaction rituals are mutual foci of attention and increased emotional energy. The emotional intensification in the concert is a product of Anita, and other audience members, taking their cues from the choir.

Anita follows the choir's energy through to the chorus, which she described as the climax of the song. I then asked her about how the choir sounded different at this moment, and she drew a comparison with another concert experience:

> **Anita:** I would say they get a little louder. And I think in my own mind and heart too, I love the chorus. So, and probably because it's an ABBA song, I would have loved to belt it out, right?...but I'm sure I was humming along to the chorus....you know it's coming, you know the words and there is a little bit of a crescendo building up to the chorus and then it comes. And then it's like, *Oh, that was great!*...
>
> [...]
>
> I went to see The Beach Boys. I went with my sister and her husband and we went to the Toronto Exhibition Fair...It was a big thing to do. And...my brother-in-law is quite conservative...[and] when we got there he said, *Okay girls.* He said, *No standing up*

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and singing or anything. We're just sitting calmly in our seats, right? And my sister and I both thought, *Yeah, that's what we're going to do.* Like, *Yeah, we're good, we're good.* Well, the first song we were *all* standing up and singing and so was he so there you go!

As in the Beach Boys concert, Anita feels compelled to respond at certain moments in an *Allegro* concert. Again, this is not a contrived, directed response, but one that seems to spring forth from her spontaneously. She has attended several concerts and it is these moments that Anita looks forward to. She repeatedly used the word "anticipation" to describe what she finds exciting about these performances. This comes through again when we discuss the difference between attending live music events versus watching events online (which she had done more of recently as Covid restrictions meant that live concerts had not resumed at the time of our interview):

> **Erinn:** What is that like, watching a performance on YouTube?

> **Anita:** I'm sitting by myself in a chair in my living room. I don't have...the crowd feeling, but I don't have the, probably, the same anticipation feeling, because it's just – I'm sitting in my chair...

Interesting here is how Anita links her experience of "anticipation" to her embodied experience in a live concert. When watching a concert online at home she doesn't move, she doesn't actively respond, and she is not tuned into the other audience members. The anticipation of having an unexpected response drawn out of her doesn't happen at the same embodied level – the performance becomes a presentation, a script, and the element of surprise, or disruption, is not present. Anticipation, for Anita, is the opening of a space for the choir to be more, to be other than the way she experiences the members day to day. This is a co-created series of actions. Anita feels herself being pulled along, accepting the increase in intensity in both choir and audience, until she just wants to break

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out into the chorus at the top of her lungs. Like in the Beach Boys concert, she doesn't intend to stand up and sing but she can't resist. It is both expected and unexpected. She knows the choir will lead her into an experience of musical excitement, but she doesn't know exactly how it will unfold and what she will do. She looks forward to this 'expected surprise' each time.

The hoped-for outcome of Anita's sense of anticipation is a kind of self-abandon, an experiential state where she feels led into a new place by the choir, where she engages in behaviour that is outside her everyday mode of being. Anita looks forward to being 'different' – in herself, but also in relationship to the choir members. Though separated in the social roles in their everyday lives (Anita works for the organization where the choir is housed and sees some of its members outside the concerts), Anita and the choir become repositioned in concerts. The choir delivers the same thing The Beach Boys do for her, and through that, the proximity between Anita and the choir changes.

The concept of performer-audience 'proximity' is pertinent to discussions of performance theory and disability. Ferris (2005) uses the term "aesthetic distance" in his study of a disabled theatre group and their performances to conceptualize the literal and figurative space between performers and audiences:

> The concept of aesthetic distance can illuminate the negotiations and implications involved in the management of physical space and interpersonal distance and show ways disabled people can manage their own performances to redefine the stare and present themselves as real people while not minimizing their experiences of oppression. (p.57)

Performers may present themselves at a distance by emphasizing their differences from an able-bodied audience, or reduce the distance between themselves and the audience by foregrounding what they hold in common. In the scene Anita describes, the choir gives her

an opportunity to consider their 'sameness' (a love of ABBA and a musically satisfying rendition of one of their songs), pulling her into the emotional energy of the song. The song does not describe disabled identities nor is difference highlighted in this moment – what is delivered is the same thing The Beach Boys deliver: an opportunity to move toward the performers in spontaneous, joyful participation.

Andrew, the director of *Allegro*, shared his perspective of the co-creation of high energy moments such as the one Anita described. Whereas Anita approaches the concerts anticipating spontaneous, celebratory musical experiences, Andrew, interestingly, is focused on minimizing the unexpected, even maintaining the distance between choir and audience at times:

> **Andrew:** ...I always say to the choir: my number one rule, or my number one job actually has nothing to do with music. My number one job is to keep you safe. My number one job is not picking songs or directing the choir. Number one is keeping everybody safe physically and emotionally and we've had dozens and dozens of times where we've had to take a situation that was either legitimately unsafe or could potentially become unsafe and figure it out. We had a concert...where a gentleman who had a voice, you know, like Bing Crosby...was singing "White Christmas." [*He proceeds to sing*] *"I'm dreaming of a motherfucking White Christmas."* And I...sort of turned around because I was on the side, he was singing a solo, and my eyes locked with his mom. She's sitting in the audience and I could see the life go out of his mom's eyes. And that was, you know, that was just Artie, and at the end of the day if people are so offended by the word – you know, I would be too, I don't think it's a word that people should be singing on stage or singing in a choral context like this – but his voice was so beautiful and his story was so beautiful...I would say 99% of the audience came away appreciating his voice as opposed to came away upset with the word.

This kind of unexpected, spontaneous moment is likely not the sort Anita had in mind. Though this is a somewhat dramatic example of an unexpected moment, it serves to illustrate how the line between choir and audience is managed (often by the choir director) in order to make way for ideal patterns of interaction, or a successful interaction ritual. The choir may want to lead their audience into unexpected territory, and the audience (such as Anita) may want to be led. But there are moments, such as the one described above, which may close off possibilities for understanding the other, which have the potential to emphasize difference to the point of alienation. Andrew is continuously making decisions about whose needs should be prioritized in a given moment to maintain an optimal level of proximity.

Looking at the perspectives of both Anita and Andrew, we can see that the varieties of participation Anita engages in are shaped by the choir and become part of the cocreation of social space. The 'increased emotional energy' is achieved in part through responses such as Anita's. Part of what she values about these performances is the emotional energy and sense of anticipation and the way that these processes position her differently in relation to the choir – they are the drivers of this experience, the leaders of the event. However, this proximity is managed by Andrew, who keeps an eye on the level of sameness/difference needed for the choir to stay in their leadership role. Andrew must integrate the various styles of participation and self-presentation in order that they may meaningfully "become part of the co-creation of a more inclusive social space" (Stige, 2010a, p.138).

Fantasia and *Drumroll*: Framing for a successful interaction ritual

Performances by *Fantasia* are truly unexpected. The flash mob format is structured to catch people off-guard, so there are no expectations or prejudgements made before the music begins. The audience is invited into an experience for which they are not prepared, and this is precisely how the choir can engage people on their own terms. The audience

engages with dementia without consciously engaging with dementia because they don't know who has it and who doesn't – those who stay and become 'the audience' are swept up in a musical experience where they are led by people with dementia, but they may not know it. Choir director Flora, from the piano, sees the range of audience response within the first few moments:

> **Flora:** They're...trying to assess – why is that person singing? Or, what the hell was that train whistle? You know, what on earth is going on here? So they're trying to make sense of the situation. And then they realize that there is something that's deliberate...it's not just random. So you can see that the sort of thing cohering in people's faces...and then you can see them deciding whether they're going to, as it were, participate, or whether they're going to spectate, or whether they're just going to vacate and get the hell out of it!

The choir invites the unsuspecting public into the music, but the onlookers do not automatically become an audience simply because they are invited. They need to choose to become an audience, and the choir needs to compel the audience to stay. Without a common set of expectations, how is mutual participation accomplished? I did not interview any audience participants associated with *Fantasia* (for obvious reasons!), but *Drumroll* offered a view into how multiple frames are negotiated in a performance when choir and audience have different expectations.

Dierdre, who attended one performance by *Drumroll* many years ago, shared her disappointment at the response of the audience. Dierdre had invited the choir to sing at a workshop on mental illness for lay leaders at her church (I detailed this event in Chapter 5) and was a host of the event. The participants at the event did not know that a performance was to happen. Dierdre intended the performance to be educational for the participants, though the ways in which this was expected to happen were not specified. I asked Dierdre what she thought about the responses of the audience:

Erinn: What were the other people in the audience doing? How were they responding to the humor?

Dierdre: Sometimes they smiled…Maybe there was some chuckles, some quiet chuckles. And I think that the other audience members weren't quite sure what the heck was going on [*she laughs*]. And that to me was interesting, like, *who are these people? why are they here?* This is not what we normally expect to get in this kind of, learning how to minister…we don't normally do theater. So I think they were a little bit bemused by what was happening and what and what their response *should* be, which I found interesting.

Erinn: Ah, yeah. How did you get a sense of that from them? Was it the way that they were sitting or their facial expressions or –

Dierdre: It was like these little tiny smiles. Kind of like this [*she demonstrates – a very small, somewhat tentative smile*].

Erinn: Mmm-hmm. Oh, that's interesting.

Dierdre: Kind of checking each other out to see if we were all responding correctly. I mean, to me that was funny, and the other part of that that I found, I guess, a little disappointing…I was thinking about this presentation more in terms of its educative role, and I was disappointed that I thought I heard comments like, *aren't they cute* and *aren't they sweet*. Which was not what this was about at all. It was not meant to be cute.

Erinn: Right, right. Yeah.

Dierdre: So what it reminded me was that when you're trying to get a message across it takes more than once to do it.

Dierdre's description reveals two things. First, Dierdre noticed effort on the part of the audience to be a 'good audience' – to behave in a way that would match the perceived expectations of the choir, to deliver what they thought the choir wanted. Dierdre saw the audience trying to figure out "what their response *should* be" and this indicated to her confusion about the nature of the interaction. How should they regard the performers? Were they primarily musicians/actors? Were they primarily people with chronic mental illnesses? What was their position in relation to the choir? What was being asked of them? Dierdre feared the message of the choir was missed due to the uncertainty regarding the frame. She also feared that the most comfortable position for many of the audience members to take was one of distance – focusing on their differences and adopting a patronizing stance (regarding the singers as "cute"). The audience had no context for the performance – they didn't know the choir members personally, they didn't choose the concert – it came to them. Like the "vacators" at *Fantasia*'s performances, it is possible that they either didn't understand the invitation or were not interested in accepting. Dierdre also shared that the interactions between choir and audience after the performance were awkward and distant, leading her to conclude that a common understanding of the performance had not been achieved, despite intentions to do so on both sides. Secondly, Dierdre's account of the audience's response demonstrates that the educative function of the performance (which she had hoped for) was not achieved through the simple presentation of musical and textual material. The music was (apparently) fine; the performance's failure to educate was due to the mismatch of social frames.

Though Debra, the director of *Drumroll*, did not speak about this performance specifically, she did address the way she and the choir respond to varying levels of attention and energy they detect from the audience. Debra spoke about feeling tension in the room between the

choir and audience when she sensed the audience was not sure how to respond, and the actions she and some choir members spontaneously took to bring the audience closer:

> **Debra:** Usually, I think there was a progression that happens from the time we start to when we go into the different kinds of things...I can see the roller coaster kind of thing. There are some songs that bring people into a quiet space and I feel it in the room, and then there are other songs that get people rip-roaring and stuff like that, and there are... [times when] everybody is quiet and listening. And then there are times when you can hear that they weren't expecting what you were going to say so you hear this burst of laughter and we finish...usually with a fairly quiet song, rather than often, you know concerts will end with a big bombastic, but we tend to finish with a quiet song often... and then sometimes there's a silence in the room and I always appreciate that when between the performance finishing and the audience response there's a silence...I think that's really, really important. So I'm often listening for that. And then people will burst into applause and give the 'Standing O' and some of our group will burst into jokes and grab the microphone and add more to it...I don't always want people to add but I can't stop them...

The "tension" Debra speaks of is part of the "rollercoaster" – part of the emotional movement the choir wishes to lead their audience through. This is not entirely scripted, however; it is a kind of trial-and-error process of trying out different things: *Do we need to get the audience clapping and moving with us? Use a joke to put them at ease? Create a serious moment that encourages reflection?* Debra listens for togetherness and separation (spontaneous jokes are sometimes a good idea, sometimes not), but she is also attuned to the energy and mood within the choir – are they grumpy, anxious, confident, etc.? She looks to the choir first to make sure they are cohesive and then encourages the choir to try different things to get the audience to 'come along' – to reduce the distance between them.

When there is not a shared frame, there is no script. If there is no script, there are no roles, and no understanding of the scene one acts in relation to. This means that without a shared frame, a successful interaction ritual cannot unfold. Without a script, there can be no mutual foci of attention, no shared structure linking choir and audience together that can result in a feeling of solidarity. Debra describes the work that needs to be done to establish a common frame: the tinkering with songs, gestures, and invitations that creates a musical scaffolding that can support both the choir and audience. The frame is created and defined in response to the audience.

Fantasia has little time to create a frame for their performances, and they do so through quickly focusing the audience on familiar songs, the familiar format of the flashmob, and by offering clear options for participation: listen, sing, and/or dance. A shared focus of attention and emotional quality is quickly established, producing, we might say, a tiny interaction ritual where a connection between strangers is made. *Drumroll* dances with the audience too, but in a figurative sense, and over a longer period of time, as they try different ways of inviting their audiences to come closer throughout the performance.

Ensemble: Choice, agency, and tension in the interaction ritual

Ensemble held a performance during the period of data collection for this project. The performance took place not in a concert hall or theatre, but an office space of an NGO that provided services to the local community. The space had an open floor plan which meant the choir was not elevated or on a stage but stood in rows on the same level as the audience. Evelina, the choir director, described the room as "packed" – at least 100 people were in the audience. The public was invited to attend as were community and business leaders: the mayor, and the head of the organization that sponsored the choir were in attendance. As Evelina described it, there was a mixture of formal and informal elements. Community and program leaders gave speeches, art created by the women adorned the walls in a gallery-style presentation, and the event was divided into two halves, separated

by a more informal time of eating and drinking. The choir sang during both halves of the event to an audience that stood throughout.

Evelina described the performance as "beyond expectations." The room was buzzing with people and conversation which generated "a lot of excitement and high energies." Overall, Evelina felt that "the women were very pleased and excited" and the entire experience was "a big high for everyone – for us, for the choir, and also for the audience." At the same time, not everyone felt this synergy. Evelina identified one choir member who had a different experience:

> **Evelina:** I think that most of the women were nervous...but I think, nervous in a good way, I mean they didn't freak out...One of them...definitely wasn't in her safe zone. I mean, she felt too much and too much frightened. And when we...came to where we stand...she ran away. And when we started singing, yeah, she was really nervous...and before [the event started]...she was really nervous and everyone, you know, talked to her and tried to make her feel better. And then she said, *Stop touching me! Stop touching me!*...Because I think she was overwhelmed...and also during the performance she...moved from place to place...she didn't know where to go...she moved from place to place, from one side to another, from the back to the front...but she didn't give up.
>
> [...] So she said to me afterwards, *It was too close*...the audience was too close and she was overwhelm[ed].

Though we cannot know exactly what the woman meant by "too close" from Evelina's account, it is safe to say that it was the physical and social arrangement of the event that led to her feeling overwhelmed. In the terms of interaction ritual theory, the singer did not experience 'bodily co-presence' with the other participants. Perhaps she could not feel comfortable in her body when that close to the audience, and if physically unsettled, she

likely could not find the place from which to 'own' her performance. We do not know precisely what her experience was through the account of another, but we can see in this scene a choir member who found the social space inhospitable.

Evelina continued to describe the performance in terms of its intensifying emotional energy. The applause at the end of the performance was loud and enthusiastic, and this led the choir into spontaneous drumming and dancing:

> **Evelina:** And then we all...dance. And it's, like, an Arabic rhythm. And...the women dance together in a circle, like in rehearsals. So, the same thing happen[ed] here. It was very surprising. It was spontaneous totally, but I think it came from the women. I mean, one of the Arab women...[was] playing the doumbek...the audience...clapped so hard and...so the conductor suggested we do another song like normally you during concerts.

> **Erinn:** An encore!

> **Evelina:** Yeah, so we did another song...and then after we finished that it was, you know, it was already out of context because we did an extra song and... when you do an extra song you do it...spontaneously and...more freestyle, and I think that that led to the moment that we started to just drum and all of us...dance...the women really danced then, like, free and like, really with the shoulders and with the whole body, and it was a really happy moment, I think. And I think also, that's what made people feel that it's uplifting because you see how we're dancing. And how much we're having fun together...So, you know, I think the performance was just a pic[ture]...it was a small pic[ture] to our small community...that we have once a week. I mean, it was a reflection of us.

Here Evelina describes a scene of 'ritual intensification'. According to Collins, rhythmic engagement and entrainment produces emotional energy and a sense of heightened intersubjectivity in ritual participants. Such episodes can facilitate the moving of one participation style to another. Here, the choir is encouraged by the enthusiastic response of the audience, resulting in a bit of a musical (and social) risk: the choir sings, drums, and dances in a way they had not prepared for an audience, but is, rather, part of their rehearsal ritual – a ritual that is normally closed to outsiders. Evelina described how the physical configuration of choir and audience changed at this point: during the formal part of the event the audience faced the choir on three sides, but during the spontaneous drumming and dancing the audience had surrounded the choir, like so:
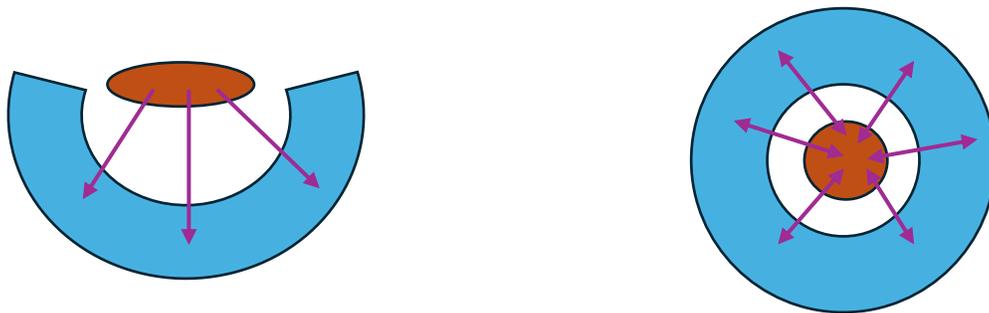
Figure15: Ensemble *and audience during performance and during post-performance improvisation*

As the choir continued to improvise, the audience affirmed this through their actions. Many of them joined in more actively, dancing with the group and/or clapping rhythmically and vocalizing. Whereas before the audience signalled their support through silent and still attention, in this part of the event they did so by following the choir into something unexpected.

> **Evelina:** It was like...they felt comfortable to bring what they bring only when we're...the small group, you know, so they brought it, they felt 'home.'

> **Erinn:** Wow. Wow.

Evelina: Yeah, I was very surprised about that.

Erinn: I'm just thinking about that. How they created a 'home.'

Evelina: I was very surprised. When we do it normally in rehearsals, then...we meet every week, it's a safe place, it's a comfortable place, only us. So...when it happens in front of a lot of strangers...I think it's surprising and then even more uplifting, you know, because they could share their...happiness, and...I think it's just an opportunity for them to show that they are more than poor people, that they are more than poor women and they are more than homeless. I mean...they know their singing, they have inner happiness also...so I think it was an opportunity to bring that side...they really don't have anything to show that every day. I mean, most of the time people see them as – and they see themselves also as – poor women, as the women, they didn't have a luck in their life. So, and then bringing...how do you say? [*she uses a Hebrew word and then looks up its translation*]...Okay, you don't have an English word for that, but: 'joy of life.' Joy of life. Yeah. In Hebrew we have a word for that. But, joy of life.

[...]
... when I looked around, I saw people with us. I mean, they were with us, it was, like, mixed together but we are the center...it felt like, it's *our* dancing, or it's *our* happy moment, but it did feel like they are joining us in there. Clapping with us and happy...

The physical re-positioning of choir and audience (from facing each other to facing the same way) made way for different kinds of musical interaction through which they could explore their proximity to one another – through the musical give and take that improvisation requires. However, this moment – one of spontaneous interaction with the audience – likely would not have happened without the preceding formal performance. The

formal performance was a building of a kind of platform, position, or frame that separated them from their audience, that highlighted difference, that asked for attention. The formal performance was the space in which their ownership of the event was established.

'Ownership', an important theme in Chapter 5, warrants some revisiting here. In the previous chapter I noted that participant discussions of ownership referred to something beyond the ownership of an object (song) or a personal quality (confidence). Ownership, instead, appeared to refer to the ownership of the choir's position in the event, a kind of leadership. Collins' notion of the 'stratification' of interaction rituals is relevant here. In any kind of interaction ritual, some participants will have more power than others. Some will be at the centre of attention, and some will be on the fringes. The performance is framed so that the choir will be able to direct the audience's attention, and in doing so, they become leaders of the event, which is a claiming of a kind of power. What is interesting about *Ensemble'*s performance is what they did with their leadership role. They did not use it to separate or elevate themselves further, but rather to extend the stage, so to speak – they invited the audience into their 'home', as Evelina put it. [15] In doing so, they welcomed their audience into the unique musical patterns of relating they created together in their rehearsal process, patterns that called for greater proximity, but also spontaneity, risk, and vulnerability. Ownership of the musical event was not the end but a means to reshape relational patterns. The moment of greatest choir-audience proximity and connection occurred when the choir left the choir-audience positioning and slipped into 'rehearsal mode.' In this configuration they were able to invite the audience closer, both literally through physical positioning, and relationally, through inviting them to respond directly through musical participation. Ownership enabled them to invite their audience into alternative forms of interaction.

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[15] In Goffmanian (1959) terms, we could say that the audience was invited "backstage." In his dramaturgical analysis of social interaction, Goffman defines "frontstage" behaviours as those which people engage in when they are with others (or have an 'audience'); "backstage" behaviours are those things people do when no one is watching.

Elora, who was in the audience, confirmed the feelings of collective excitement generated by the improvisational drumming and dancing:

> **Elora:** I think… spontaneously, one of them started to play the drums…and then the others just joined her, and started to dance, spontaneous…clap[ping] their hands with her, and they created this circle and just start to dance with themselves with lots of joy and trust. Such a beautiful moment to see it from outside – how they feel comfortable with each other…it looked like a strong group that they are in. Give lots of force to each other…It was moving, just to see it, and I remember I wanted to join them. I think part of the audience did.

> **Erinn:** Did you join them at all? What did you do while watching?

> **Elora:** It took me a few minutes to like, check it and look, and when I wanted to [dance]…it finished. And also, like, I was wondering if maybe they want their moments to be alone.

Elora was drawn into the emotional energy of this moment, drawn into the choir's "strength," as she says. Her experience of the choir was different at this stage: they seemed "more confident" to her, and she was clear that this pulled her in closer to the performers: "…the force of that group, and to see their joy and excitement, I felt like I wanted to take a part of it and to join them in some way." Interestingly, it was at this stage that expectations for audience behaviour changed. While the audience stayed in their still-and-silent roles during the formal performance, there were no 'rules' for the audience in the improvisation. Elora grappled with this – the feeling of being 'part of' what was unfolding, and the feeling of not knowing quite how to 'fit in':

Elora: I just felt that I want to join and become closer to it...I didn't do anything with it, but I remember the feeling that maybe I'll come to a rehearsal or two. It felt like there are lots of...vitality or something like that, that I think maybe surprised me.

Elora, captivated by the choir's "vitality", felt a strong desire to dance with the choir, but ultimately decided not to join in. What is instructive here is her reported process of deciding and the tensions such an invitation to participate presents. Though she wanted to join in the dance, it seems as though she did not know how to be close with them, and she wasn't quite sure what kind of proximity they wanted from the audience ("maybe they want their moments to be alone"). Perhaps it was more comfortable for her to stay in the 'audience-as-supporter' role. Perhaps she was unsure of the rules of engagement – how would she relate to these women when their roles/positions had been unsettled? There seemed to be an element of risk in joining in; the connection that she felt had been established could have been broken. In the tension produced by the offer to participate, Elora goes through a process of managing her own proximity to the choir, working through how she understands herself in relation to them in this unexpected, role-shifting event.

Evelina and Elora's accounts demonstrate something of how choir-audience proximity is negotiated in performance – how people who are part of a common event find their ways of fitting in – or not. Sometimes, as was the case for the pacing singer and Elora, the fit is not quite arrived at. Sometimes, people fall to the edges of the group in a ritual intensification process when their roles and positions shift. The formal performance was "too close" for a choir member; the informal musicking was "too close" for an audience member. These examples demonstrate that the interaction ritual is not a script to be followed but a space within which choices are made and agency is exerted. Accepting the invitation to move into a different participation style comes with risk: potentially, a loss of position, or a loss of control.

Nocturne: Protecting distance

Choir director Naomi spoke about finding the right fit with the audience when planning concerts. *Nocturne* (a choir for people with aphasia in Hungary) aimed to present themselves 'formally' – arranging themselves in a choir formation, separated from the audience – but informally enough to directly address the audience and directly solicit active participation from them. Naomi emphasized that the interaction with the audience was central to the success of a performance; she wanted the audience to see "that they [the choir] are in a different role. They were not the ones, you know, lying in the beds, but they are the ones standing on the stage. Providing something, a nice experience, sharing something." During the concert she is focused on the exchange between choir and audience, which is often seen most clearly during moments of audience participation, both elicited and spontaneous. She noted that when this happens, the choir is more "open" after the concert – they move around and talk to people more freely.

> **Naomi:** I'm always looking for eye contact from the members...I see the audience but... I'm never watching the audience. I'm always watching the group and I'm always trying to find eye contact and smile and, you know, I just enjoy the moment that we're [in] together. So I'm kind of, I'm trying, facilitating...looking for sharing this mutual, I don't know, joy...

Naomi looks for ways to facilitate the sharing of mutual joy, which would seem to be found in increased proximity between choir and audience, marked by increased participation by the audience. Audience member Nikolett shared a different experience of this process, however.
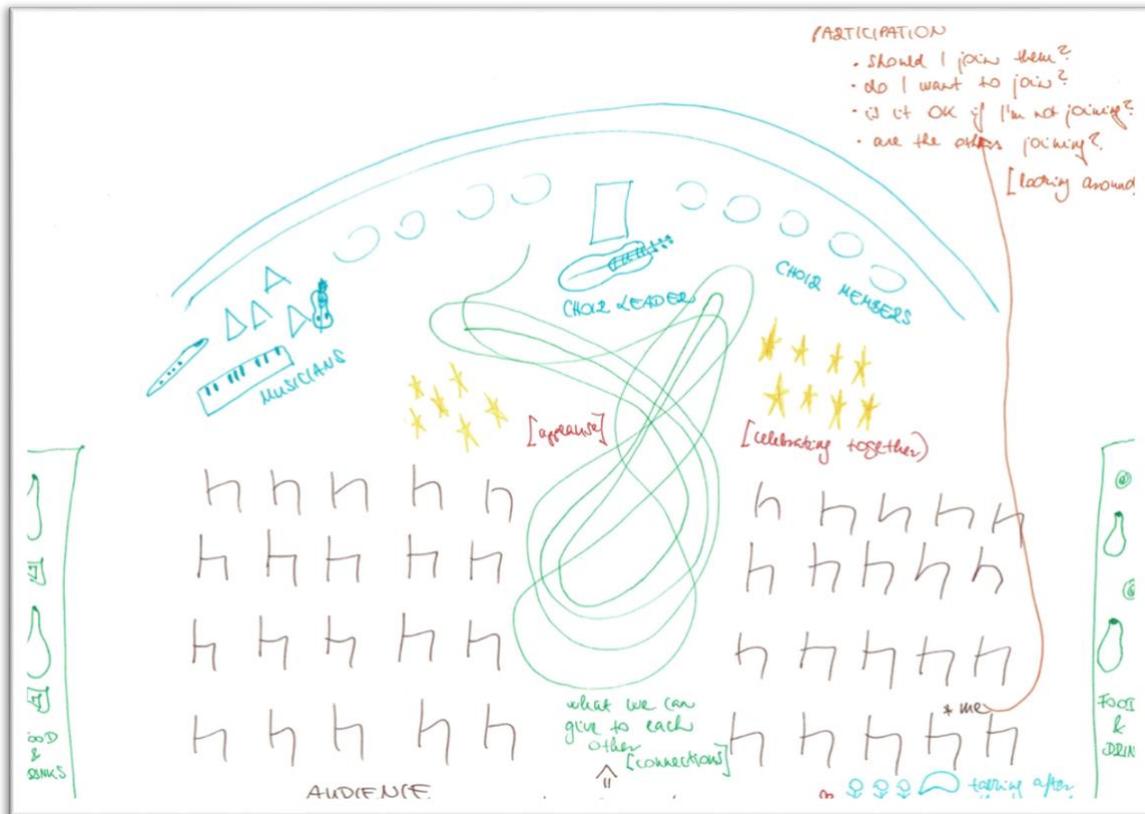
Figure 16: Nikolett's concert map. Nikolett's map shows the flow of positive emotional energy between the choir and audience, as well as her own feeling of separation.

Nikolett, who attended one performance by *Nocturne*, recalled a moment when the choir invited the audience to participate in a particular song. It was interesting that this memory, which marked a moment of tension or ambivalence for Nikolett, came readily to mind when she described the concert as otherwise celebratory and uplifting. She described the choir as "shy" when they began but became "braver" as the performance went on and eventually "showed more of themselves." Nikolett noticed this shift in the way they moved – they seemed freer, more natural, and increased the eye contact they made with the audience. Nikolett was enjoying watching the performers and their different presentation styles when the audience was invited to sing along:

> **Erinn:** Was that unexpected? When you were invited to sing along, was that a surprise?

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Nikolett: I think not really [a surprise], because we all knew these songs and so it was like you're already singing the songs in in your head...it was rather they were letting us to join and letting us to sing loudly and not just follow the lines in ourselves, so it was not unexpected. But for me it was not easy to join them because – I don't know why. Yeah, because I did not know them personally. So it was not easy for me to connect. Maybe if I had someone close to me, or my mother or my grandmother or I don't know, anyone...there it could have been easier to join them. So yeah, I think I still felt a bit like an outsider at this moment.

We talked further about the moment of not joining in. At the time she had felt conflicted, wanting to join in the singing but not feeling comfortable enough to do it. She felt, in her words, "separated," even though it was clear to her that she was being invited to participate. The invitation that was extended to her was not something she could accept, at least not in any kind of uncomplicated way. Her internal conversation went something like, *"Should I join them? Do I want to join? Is it okay if I'm not joining? Are the others joining?"* I asked her if she joined in at any point:

Nikolett: I think a bit...yeah...at least pretending and then a bit joining. But...constantly detecting the others...Yeah, and what I thought they were expecting of me. So...I wanted to give them that what they were expecting of me, but yeah, I wanted to know exactly what would be the best thing to do...

Erinn: What did you hope they experienced from that moment?

Nikolett: Yeah. I wanted them to feel that we as audience members are enjoying their performance and that...we are happy seeing them singing and...also wanted to give them the feeling that they can give something to us... because it was in my mind also because of Naomi, because she was talking a lot about this...that their aim

together that they want to give the choir members the experience that they can give something and they can be the ones who are giving...not just being the ones who needs help and understanding and all of the things, but to change these roles...And I was thinking about it, whether it was honest and how it can be honest. Because I think, for me, it was difficult to really relate to them without having a family member or someone there. And so, not just to fake it that I'm enjoying the performance but finding the ways how it can be honest. Because otherwise if I don't know that it's an aphasia choir, I would not attend the performance of a choir singing the same songs or just a random Christmas party, so yeah, so it was really important to me to find these personal connections and I did not have a lot of it.

Nikolett's honest response illustrates some of the tensions inherent in the invitation. Though she came to the performance intending to be of support to the choir, she could not do this out of obligation. It appears she felt that participating out of obligation might be to make the gaze 'symmetrical' – she would be participating out of a sense of who she took them to be (the weaker, needier group), collapsing them into an identity category. She did not know how to accept their invitation authentically; she did not know how to 'fit' into the interaction the choir initiated. Preserving the distance between herself and the choir (by not singing along) was perhaps a more authentic mode of relating. Participating asymmetrically may mean protecting and preserving a kind of distance at times. It leaves the identity of the other open-ended.

Cantabile: Invitation, ecstasy, and restraint

Carole attended a performance by *Cantabile* (a choir for refugees in the US) that was part of a holiday festival. The setting for the performance was a bit unusual: the choir performed in a church that was selling cookies as a fundraiser for local organizations supporting immigrants. Audience members were both people associated with the church and members of the public who came in from the street on their way to a tree lighting. Carole,

who was a member of the church and had been involved with the cookie fundraiser in previous years, noted that the choir created a festive mood – more so than other groups the church had hosted. She described an unexpected moment where she and some of the others in attendance were invited to dance by the choir:

> **Carole:** …I mean, I had not planned be out on the floor dancing, that was not a part of my evening, but…one of the women…just hooked eyes [with me] and did one of these [*gestures with her index finger moving in a 'come here' motion*] and I felt I had no choice! And it was wonderful.

Carole emphasized the change in mood and energy in the room when the choir began to sing. I asked her what was going through her mind when she was called up to dance:

> **Carole:** There was that eye connection that happened. So I had no choice but to walk out there, it was not of my own free will! It was magnetic. And what I thought was, I'm about to make a fool of myself, because their moves were so good! I was self-conscious. But I got over that…I mean, there was that eye connection and the smiles, the encouragement, the – it just put me at ease. I still looked like a fool, I'm sure, but it was wonderful…

Here Carole paints a powerful scene of an invitation accepted. Interestingly, she describes her actions in the terms of a loss of agency: "magnetic", "I had no choice." While Carole did indeed make a decision to dance and to get closer to the choir, it is perhaps the unexpected shifting of roles that produced her response. While she had expected to be in the 'host' role in the event (as she had been in past years), this was not the script the choir followed. As the choir took over the space – physically, through movement, and also in terms of affect, through their joyful and energetic presentation style – they offered forms of participation for their audience that were unexpected and for which some, like Carole, had no 'script'. In this moment, she left her role as host of the event, and followed the choir in

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their timing and rhythm, into the physical, emotional, and social space they were creating. Carole had expected to host the choir, but this relationship was inverted. She continued:

> **Carole:** ...And they created an audience that was joyful...it just created this very festive feeling. Because of their actions, because of their behavior, because of how they related to the audience, it created that for the audience. It was just *energy* in the room.

The ingredients of an interaction ritual are clearly described by Carole: there is bodily co-presence, a mutual focus of attention, and a shared mood. This ritual intensifies as the choir increases their proximity to the audience, inviting them to dance, and as the audience responds, sometimes with forms of participation that are new and unexpected. Carole describes an experience of a new social space, one characterized for her by spontaneity and vulnerability. In this space, she felt powerfully attuned to the choir:

> **Carole:** There was a lot of facial expression and eye contact and I mean, I had really felt a connection to this woman who got me out there. Even before that, I was just fascinated by her face and watching her movements and she was an older woman...there was eye contact with the audience...they were they were watching us in a similar way to how we were watching them.

Here Carole further describes an experience of mutuality and attunement (Schütz,1964), which she experiences as inseparably musical and social. She watches them and is watched. The feeling of being folded into the choir's music, movements, and affect, draws her closer to them and leads to a series of actions that surprises her. Not only does she dance, but she then called her friend Carl in the middle of the performance and held up her phone so he could experience it along with her, but also in hopes that he would come down to the church to participate in it. Belk (2010) writes that the act of sharing is a self-expanding act. In this case, the sharing of music – its offering and reception – is not only a

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gesture of inclusion, but it moves some (like Carole) to become a 'welcomer' herself, or in Belk's words, to "extend the aggregate self". Carole also noted that the audience lingered after the performance much longer than anyone expected. Audience members appeared to want to extend the interaction with the choir, and despite the language barriers, choir and audience continued to mingle well after the music had finished. Carole remembered lamenting the fact that she had to leave soon after and thinking about when she could see them again: "I want to see them again! Not just to hear the music, which I do, but I felt there was a connection there." This is an interaction ritual that can be built upon the next time she sees the choir.

The powerful connection that Carole described, the increase in proximity that results in a very exuberant musical and social experience, does not just happen. Looking now at the perspective of Cecily, the director of *Cantabile*, we can see that interactive moments such as dancing together 'spontaneously' are the result of careful and consistent monitoring, decision-making, adjusting, and sometimes, intervening. Cecily also described a scene involving choir and audience dancing together (I was not able to determine whether it was the exact performance described by Carole or a similar event). When they perform their 'signature song', Cecily said, "they actually, like...almost physically pull people [from] the audience to start dancing with them."

> **Cecily:** ...But when we did "Ekpe"...it kind of...almost got out of control to be honest, like this whole room of women...everyone's like getting up dancing, and it's a pretty diverse group...Black women and...Latina women and white women and they're all...dancing this dance and singing. And...everybody's getting so excited, and it's like this huge...magical moment, and then...it doesn't help that one of the women, like, she pulls out this whistle and my husband's like, *no whistle!* [*waves hands frantically*]...I'm always like, *please, tone down the whistle,* but then she'll just whip it out! And so, oh my God, so she's, like, inciting a riot with this whistle, and...one of the women, actually from my church, she...falls down and I'm like freaking out

because I thought...one of the women in the group is very charismatic and I thought she was like doing some sort of...'faith drop' or something, like having the woman drop into her arms and I'm just like, *Nooooo!!!* But you know, she's like, *no no no Cecily, she fell and I was helping her up*, and I...asked the woman from my church, *she didn't touch you or anything, right?* She's like, *no, no, I just fell and she picked me up...*

So other than that little part, which was very terrifying, you know, it was like I said, almost out of control. People were just so into it...'cause it's an easy little dance to learn and I think they're like, *oh my gosh...we can imitate this easily and be part of this song and kind of feel like we're connected somehow even though...we don't really know the song that well or much about that culture*...And so I think that that's how we're very different than...your traditional choir...[we] can create this sense of community...They just bring so much passion I think – that's what gets people excited. And honestly...one woman still sends me ten dollars a month, you know, just because like they were so impacted by that performance...

What might be experienced as a joyful and exciting connection by an audience member like Carole is the product of the constant attention to the proximity between choir and audience by the director. Cecily paints a picture of the chaos of performances – the line between ecstasy and chaos is thin and not always recognized by the choir. She is constantly patrolling the boundary, making sure the optimal level of proximity is maintained. A successful concert depends on the choir inviting the audience to come closer and dance with them – this is an important basis of their connection – but without maintaining some level of separation the performance will lose focus and coherence, and may even result in chaos.

If we look at this scene through the lens of interaction ritual theory, we can see the elements of a process of ritual intensification described by Cecily, Carole, and Carl.

According to their accounts, the music was rhythmic, energetic and joyful, providing a structure, or scaffolding for certain forms of interaction. Carole, in saying that "they [the choir] created an audience that was joyful", notes an intensified emotional energy in the room, and within this social space she is able to explore participatory discrepancies – moving out of her usual participation style by dancing. Cecily, through the actions she takes to integrate these different participation styles, aims for the music to support an optimal level of proximity – where choir and audience have participatory spaciousness, where they feel a sense of ownership over their contributions, but where they also fit in with the group. This is accomplished through a series of invitations and restraints.

Prelude: Skillfully extending the stage

Prelude, a children's choir in South Africa, gives us a picture of a successful interaction ritual. Audience member Phillip describes a feeling of being folded into the choir's participatory musical offering; choir director Patrice describes the work that goes into creating a disruptive, hospitable environment.

Phillip noted that while music-making was a part of everyday life for the children and their families, formal performances were not. The families who attended the concert would have felt themselves in an unfamiliar setting and would have been uncertain what to expect and how to behave. Though participatory music making was a fixture of their everyday lives, watching their children on a stage was a new experience. Therefore, they did not arrive with a particular frame or a script directing their behaviour. Phillip saw that the audience was "reserved" when they entered the performance space, but that before long they were participating actively:

> **Erinn:** Do you recall a point where the energy in the room just, you know, kind of lifted or changed? Because you said at the beginning they were reserved, but then that...changed and they got up and danced.

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Phillip: Yes. Definitely. Yes...I think they did deliberately choose some of the songs that they knew the audience could relate to. So it was very familiar songs that, you know, they spiced up and changed, but the beat was familiar to the audience. And I think as soon as they recognized the beat, you know, and even though it was different instruments that [it] was played on, they could join in the singing and the dancing. So you literally had audience members in the aisles, singing, dancing, clapping, and you know, essentially that's an extended choir. It became an extended choir! [*laughs*] Everybody was somehow part of the performance. Yeah.

Erinn: Yeah. And that would have been natural for them to do in a different kind of musical context, right? A natural way of engaging?

Phillip: Yes, I think so. But I think what makes this unique is the fact that it's a, you know, it's not as informal as in the home setting because this is a special venue that was booked – people got invitations to it. And you know, there was a whole stage set up and...so that would be new for many of the audience members, you know, just the order that was created around the event and the fact that it was a performance. So that would have been totally, totally new. Yeah.

Phillip noted that the songs chosen were familiar, but the specific musical realization of the songs and the way they were presented were out of the everyday for the audience. We could say that the choir framed the performance in a way that allowed for their ownership yet made room for the audience to contribute their knowledge and experiences of music making. In other words, the familiar – the children, the music – was reconfigured (a new "order" was created), or was made unfamiliar so that the audience could encounter their children differently, and encounter members of the community differently as well. This was an accomplishment of the framing of the event.

Patrice confirmed this strategic framing of the performance. On the one hand, performances were given to showcase the abilities of the children, yet on the other hand, the aim of performances was to engage the community in collective music making. Both presentational and participatory aspects of performance (Turino, 2008) were resourced, and both attention and active participation from the audience were sought. To accomplish this, the choir was separated from the audience (in the configuration that Phillip described – one unfamiliar to the audience), but songs were chosen that the audience would have familiarity with. She described the response of the audience:

> **Patrice:** ...I have a very good sense of what the audience, how they participated, because...I didn't always just remain...with...my back to the audience...I think it has to do with...kind of moving away from a very traditional kind of Western idea of a choir, with the conductor standing in the front and, but also, because there was such a strong sense of ownership from the children, this was their group...they don't always need an adult to be holding it together for them. So, you know, stepping away, stepping to the side was quite intentional...they could do it on their own and I think that was part of the process. So I would often see how the audience responded.
>
> And so...definitely no one is just sitting. So when people are moved by the music, they would get up and they would dance and they would sing. They would leave their seats...and they would...be kind of participating, clapping along, singing along if they knew the songs...and I think what's quite interesting though is when the audience is so responsive, you very quickly get a sense whether this is a song that resonates with them or not. Because if it isn't, then they would just remain seated. And I think also that definitely influenced our song choice as the years progressed, because...part of why we were doing this...having this performance was for parents and family members to get a sense of how their children, what their children were capable of...because of the struggles and the challenges in this community...this

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was a moment...that brought hope and joy and kind of, you know, creativity in action. So we did music in ways that we knew would resonate with the audience and that they would respond to. Because it was really this bigger collective musicking that...was the intention of the performances. But...also, it's not as if we planned it. That's also just how music happens in these communities, you know, that's how it is there. It isn't this notion of some sit and others perform...music is made by whoever's in the vicinity and people can join in, participate alongside.

Here Patrice emphasizes the "ownership" of the children. What is interesting is what this sense of ownership is used for, or, what it is *not* used for. The children do not 'own the stage' so that they can deliver their best musical performance – not ultimately. They 'own the stage' in order to share it with the audience, to extend the opportunities for participation to the entire auditorium. Without 'owning' the stage (as might be the case if everyone gathered to sing together without the children leading), there would be nothing to share, or, at least, there would not be a clear line of sharing from the children to the rest of the community. The children's unique contributions may be obscured or dominated by other contributions. Here ownership is viewed not as an end but as a means – the choir claims ownership of the musical event in order to invite the audience into what they uniquely have to share, and also to make room for the audience to respond.

Phillip recalled clearly the emotional energy of the event, even recreating 'bodily-copresence' and 'rhythmic entrainment' in the interview. As he recounted his experience he became very animated and focused – his eyes widened and he swayed from side to side as though he was back in the moment. On his concert map he emphasized the collective movement with the words "synchronized" and "body moves body."[16]

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[16] Phillip's concert map was presented in Chapter 5, though I have included it here for reference.
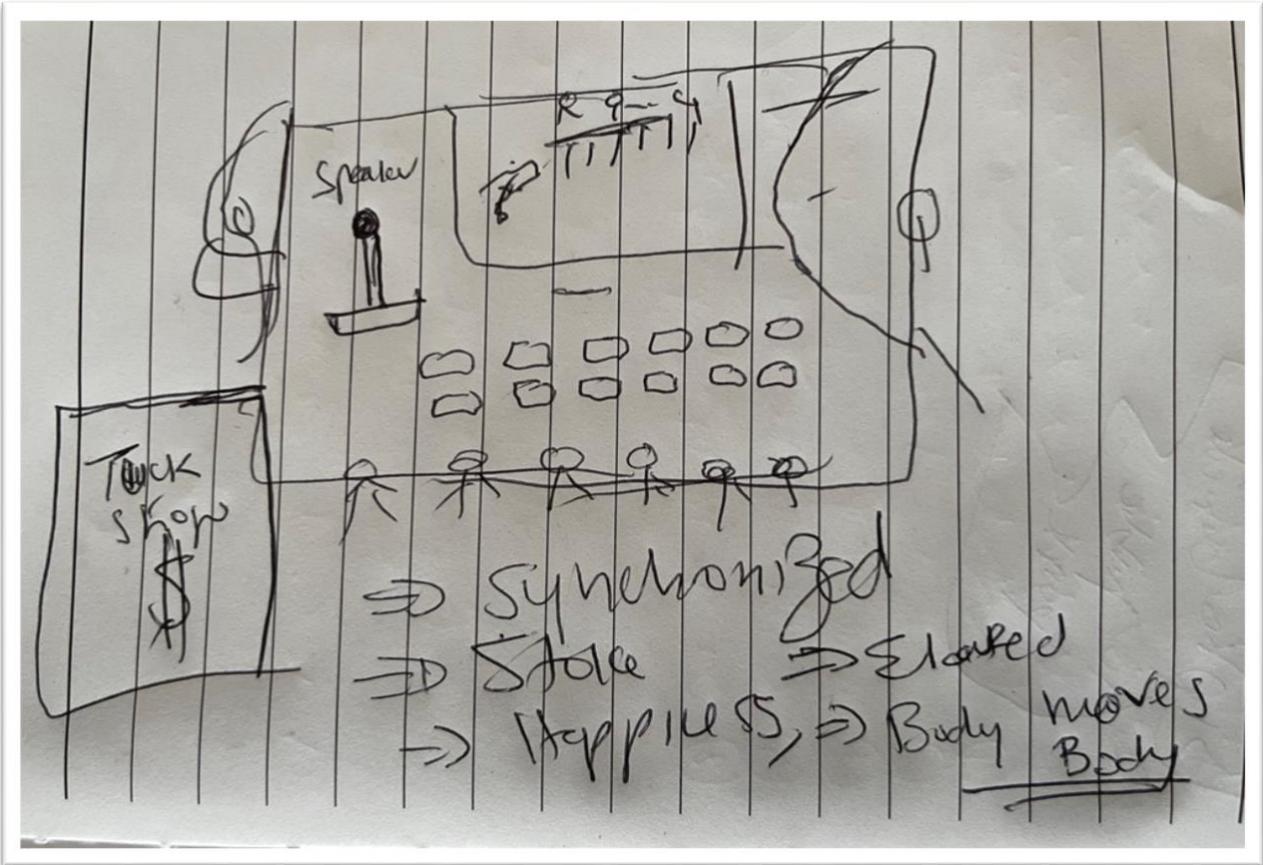
Figure 17: Phillip's concert map

For Phillip, the power of the moment was found in its synchronicity. This produced the ritual outcomes Collins describes: a feeling of group solidarity and heightened emotional energy, particularly the feelings of confidence and elation:

> **Phillip:** ...So that I think for me...the fact that felt very synchronized. And then I think joy – I mean pure joy on the stage...what do they call this thing that the surfers say they experience when they ride this high wave – is it "stoke?" I think people that do surfing say, you know, if you get it right and you've surfed the right wave then the feeling they describe is called "stoke"...and that's the high that I could see with the band and the choir... I mean it's just like they've, they've reached the crest...it was the ultimate in terms of enjoyment and fulfillment and happiness. Really...it was beautiful.

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Phillip's statement on his concert map – "body moves body" – combined with his description of mutual musical participation provides a picture of an ecstatic moment, and a perfect description of the intensification of an interaction ritual – where bodily copresence and shared mood intensify and people move out of their participation styles into different and perhaps unexpected ones. As the audience responded with movement, Phillip noticed that the choir became more animated themselves. He refers to the audience's response as "validation", yet this word does not quite seem to capture what is happening between choir and audience. Rather, we might see the audience's response as an acceptance of an invitation extended. They do not just register their approval from a distance, they move closer to become part of the musical flow led by the choir. What the audience validates is not the children's musical skills ultimately, but the children's ownership of the event.

What must not be overlooked here is that the children are the 'bodies' who are leading. The audience is therefore not just invited to sing and dance, they are invited to recognize the choir as their leaders, their musical guides. Not only is this a shift of positioning because their children are younger and less 'powerful', but the choir's racial makeup means that they are accepting the leadership of people of racial and ethnic groups they may not regularly interact with. The "extended choir" Phillip refers to represents a powerful moment of cross-cultural engagement with members of different identity groups taking part in a dynamic movement of offering and responding to one another's musical actions. Even though participatory forms of music-making are common here, this moment represents an upsetting of a social order in that racial and ethnic differences were temporarily minimized, and "a whole new community was formed." From Phillip's vantage point, choir and audience had found the fit where each was making room for the other, and the participation of one group magnified and encouraged the other group in a reciprocal flow.

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Like Phillip, Patrice stressed the importance of high-energy moments in the performances, where an energy loop seemed to form in the room, intensifying participation in both choir and audience, extending songs much longer than they had ever rehearsed them. I asked Patrice for a specific example of a high energy moment where the choir and audience became interactive and she was "relinquishing control" (as she had stated before) and fading into the group. How did she decide what moment to step away?

Patrice: It's hard to just pick one...but I can think of one specific song that, that was actually quite interesting because...it isn't a traditional South African song, but it comes from another part of Africa...the words were adapted to Xhosa, but the words are really simple. So I think even the audience members who didn't know the song could pick up on it quickly, and it's very repetitive...this was at the end of the performance and the audience is now already, been participating and engaging, but this is kind of all leading up kind of leading up to this climax. Yeah, I also see that, you know, the children, I think also in a way there's quite a lot of improvisation that happens in that moment. So as the audience are responding, you know, the children would repeat another part of the line and then the audience joins in and there were also drummers and marimbas playing. And I think also that it's the sense of this musical bubble that everyone in the hall is part of. So, some might be on the stage performing. Some might be in the audience, but actively singing and dancing and participating and other people would still remain seated but I can't imagine, you know, I think everyone is affected and moved by the music in some way. And I think more than just the music, it's also more of what the music represents and the sense of connection because also, you know, this has been a hall filled with people who don't generally, wouldn't generally be seated in a hall together...

Erinn: Tell me, when do you begin to fade into the group? How do you know? What's your signal or what gives you the feeling or the cue that you can kind of step back?

Patrice: Okay. So I first want to say that, again in this context, it almost feels as if the the intention is always to step away...because I am not necessarily needed as the conductor...so...there would be a moment of silence as we get ready...it would be already late in the performance and everyone is really hyped up. So, to make sure that I can get their attention and that they just focus and kind of center for a moment. So I would do that by making sure they making eye contact with me and I would do little funny faces or, you know, just to get them comfortable and focused and then the music would start and...if it's a song that the choir's really comfortable with, that would be what I need to do, is just to get it going. And then I'll be able, you know, then I can move to the side and almost become a participant, you know, and in a way kind of standing between the audience and the choir. I'm trying to think if there's anything else. I mean, I'm just thinking about how often, it's in a way, almost a really, oh, I'm getting all emotional. Sorry! [*she cries, seems surprised at her reaction, reaches for a tissue*]

Patrice seems very surprised at the emotion that has taken over. She tries to begin again, then cries again, and needs some time to be able to speak again. She is clearly surprised, thrown off, by her sudden emotional response. I let her know she can take her time. She continues:

Patrice: OK...You know, being aware of what a privilege it is, in a way, to be in musical spaces where this kind of musicking happens...you know, it is quite an emotional experience...for everyone involved...I have tears now, but I also remember audience members, you know, kind of being all emotional. I also wonder if it has to do with this moment of collective music, musicking, being, in a way, in such contrast to everyday existence in this space. Where there's often, because of the, because of the violence being very gang-related, you know, there's often a sense of disorganization and fragmentation and you know, alliances on different sides. And that, then being in this moment, musical moment with people from different

contexts and different backgrounds and different parts of the community and different gang alliances, was…yeah, I think was an emotional experience as well…

Patrice suggests here that an ideal choir-audience dynamic is accomplished through establishing experiences of both sameness and difference – for both choir and audience. This is done through extending the stage (she steps back, the children move closer, the audience moves closer, the boundary between is diminished) but not losing control of it (she will intervene if the audience tries to extend a song beyond what the choir wants to do, though this rarely happens). At all times, the choir needs to be in the position of 'ownership', because it is in this position that musical mutuality – without possessiveness – can happen. This is not something that 'just' happens – it is not as though music 'just' provides a structure in which people can meet. It was the way music was worked with, directed, pulled back, sequenced, and arranged that produced these moments of mutuality. And it is not that music opened up a meeting place and participants naturally communed with one another there. What happens is that people are making constant overtures of invitation, acceptance, and non-acceptance. There are patterns of social tension and resolution – a flow of opportunities to change (mind, heart, position), to accept, and to offer throughout the concert and when people figure out how to be and do and move together it is exciting. As Phillip says, it makes people "stoked."

Patrice's tears might be dismissed as sentimental, or as representing the overly idealistic view of performances such as this that is proffered time and time again. But Patrice's tears are not the result of a belief that simply 'singing in harmony' will heal social divides. As she explains, she cries because this moment was hard-won; the result of careful decision-making on her part, hard work (musical and social) by the choir, and the willingness of the audience to go where the choir led. She knows how fragile this is, how fleeting these moments are. In these ecstatic musical moments, it seems to become apparent that they understand this precarity and are all holding reality and a hoped-for future together.

Prelude illustrates what a successful interaction ritual looks like: there is a feeling of group solidarity and increased emotional energy. Individuals participate in a variety of ways, though there is a widespread sense that everyone is 'owning' their participation – individuals appear confident to take initiative. Another feature of successful interaction rituals, according to Collins (2004), is the act of "emblematizing": creating symbols that members feel represent them. Patrice stated that songs from concerts often lived on:

> **Patrice:** ...I think what's interesting is how some of the songs that the choir sang almost became – and because of the audience's responsiveness – it kind of became part of the cultural musical landscape of the community in many ways. So, some of the songs...kind of exceeded the one performance and we would be in schools and hear the song from other children who obviously heard it at the concert. So it kind of became part of the musical repertoire of the of the community, which is really, which was always a very exciting thing to see. And I think it's, you know, this idea of this musical moment kind of thing traveling.

> **Erinn:** Yes! The ripple effect!

> **Patrice:** Becoming...kind of absorbed by the community.

> [...]

> **Patrice:** So we would, you know...two years later, we would be in a [different] school in the same community...and it would be different children that weren't in the choir at that time, but they [would] know the song...and they [would] sing it in the same way that the choir did at that time...and it's so specific that they couldn't have heard it anywhere else. So then you would know...[that] children [were] singing it at home or singing at school...others would learn it, peers and friends and families would learn it.

Songs lived on not only as musical material but as social material as well. The song as emblem links community members together and provides a touchstone of identity. As it is carried to new people and sung in new environments it can enfold others into the relationships created in its first performance: "The song is an embodiment of the sharing and the learning together – and the mutual recognition that this allows and requires." (Urie et al., 20 p.89).

As I stated at the beginning of this section: interaction rituals are just that – rituals. They are not 'interventions' or 'treatments' that operate according to expectations of cause and effect. Interaction ritual theory shows us that the performance is not a single 'presentation' that will result in increased self-esteem after 'making one's voice heard.' As both Patrice and Phillip suggest, performances are profound experiences for the community because they are so out-of-the-everyday, they are countercultural, and their benefits can be reaped only with repeated performances. Earlier in the interview, Patrice stated that in choir rehearsals "you could kind of embody a sense of the other through making and performing and singing and dancing these songs." With repeated performances the choir's 'rhythms' could become as natural as the audience's. But it is a choice to enter that kind of musical engagement, over and over again, and it requires thinking of performing as a practice, or discipline – not an intervention or activity.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter I have demonstrated that audiences participate along a continuum: from giving the choir their attention in the form of still-and-silent listening to participating actively with the choir. All these forms of participation are embodied and generate a kind of communicative interaction, or give-and-take between choir and audience. This can be called mutuality, and it can be unexpected and reshape – even disrupt – everyday social

positioning. The concept of the 'interaction ritual' is a helpful theoretical framework to understand the different forms of participation in the concert and the way choir and audience interacts. Through it we can see how the performance is constituted by a series of participants' movements toward and away from each other – an exploration of 'fitting in' with each other – marked by gestures of invitation, acceptance, and/or rejection.

Chapter 7: Discussion

In the preceding chapters I have presented a picture of the co-construction of therapeutically-oriented choral performances: how performances are structured and arranged by choirs and their directors toward the kind of engagement they want from their audiences; how audiences deploy strategies in order to make sense of the performance; how these strategies are very often directed toward understanding the performers as people who give; and how choirs and audiences interact in performances, based on that understanding, in ways that can reshape relational patterns.

The questions I set out to ask at the outset of this project can be paraphrased as: *What do audiences do and why does it matter?* However, these questions are bound up with an understanding of what the choir does as well. Having looked at the range of choir and audience actions and the manner in which they are linked to accounts of experience, I now explore these findings in relation to the goals of health and wellbeing, or the musical-social agenda guiding these choirs.

In this final chapter I explore my findings through the lens of the concept of 'hospitality'. In Chapter 4 I introduced notions of hospitality through the work of Levinas on 'witnessing.' In this final chapter I follow the logic of Levinas' 'witnessing' concept through to a wider notion of hospitality. I suggest that the lens of hospitality, previously explored in CoMT by Ansdell (2014) and in community music by Higgins (2008, 2012) helps us understand more clearly the connection between musical performance and the social dimensions of health and justice. I explore the implications of using this conceptual lens for therapeutically-oriented performances, in CoMT and other musical practices such as community music and music education. Finally, I review the project's limitations and offer a critique of the study.

Audiencing and the Interactional Space

The findings of this project confirm that audiences are active and dynamic. This is a conclusion of previous research, as reviewed in Chapter 2. However, this project brings into focus the audience's co-construction of the performers through sense-making processes, and in doing so, foregrounds the interactive processes between performers and audiences. I propose that the interactive processes described can be characterized and summarized as follows:

Choir: Invitation	Audience: Witnessing
Establishing ownership	Sensemaking
Repositioning	Exploring proximity

In the following section I shall expand on these actions and their meaning for the interactional space between choir and audience.

Invitation: Sharing music

Choir directors often described successful performances in terms of 'ownership'. As I suggested in Chapter 5, ownership referred to something beyond the 'authorship' of a song; ownership was linked more closely to a sense of the choir 'owning' the space and their position within it. This was accomplished, in part, through framing. Framing the performance was an important step in establishing a sense of ownership of the performance, as this allowed the choirs to furnish the event in a way in which they would feel comfortable – and also set the terms of interaction with their audiences. Framing was an action of agency, of self-definition, of 'participating in their own representation' (Frank, 2004). In Levinasian terms, the performance was framed in order for the choir to "dwell," to create a space in which they were able to define and enjoy themselves. Evelina summarized this idea concisely: the choir made the performance their "home".

What did choirs do with the spaces they owned? At no point did the data suggest that choirs desired to conceal their disabilities or differences by giving a 'normalized' performance; that is, a performance focused on the presentation of conventional musical skills. Ownership of the event did not appear to be used to simply project an impression of themselves conveying independence, achievement, or self-sufficiency. Rather, performance environments were arranged in order to (again, in Levinasian terms) "offer" themselves. Music performed exposed them; it opened a space for response from the audience. Paradoxically, the qualities choirs displayed in performance: ownership, achievement, leadership, were arrived at through putting themselves into question – their agency used to relinquish control. Choirs invited their audiences into an interactional space in which they foregrounded not simply musical competence but their capacity to give. The *action* of giving cannot be separated from the *object* given. The object exists in order to have something to give, and it is this action that arranges the social space in these events.

The aim of the invitation is a repositioning of choir and audience, or, put very simply, the aim is to invite the audience into an interactional space that is different than what is experienced in everyday life. We might say the choir 'artificially' repositions themselves in relation to the audience through the presentational format of performance. This format enables them to be witnessed in a manner contrary to how they are witnessed by the public in everyday life. However, this is not where the repositioning ends – it is where it begins. The unfolding of a performance is a careful process of calibrating both choir and audience attention and connection – a "taking care of the audience", in the words of Odette. In doing so, they offer an alternative script to their audiences: *you are invited to join me in my world, and I will lead you through it*. This is a repositioning: a reshaping, redefining, or disrupting everyday patterns of interaction.

Witnessing: The action of audiencing

The performance enables the audience to engage in a particular kind of listening and watching – in Levinasian terms, they are enabled to be there *for* the choir. The audience, separated from the choir, offers both physical and social space to the choir in this configuration, but the audience also engages in sensemaking actions which, at times, lead them to change their mode of participation. They engage in interpretive work, drawing together sensory particles seen and heard while mapping them onto other things experienced and remembered, which changes their perspective on the choir and their music. The processes of audiencing are thus emergent and collective – they look to each other to determine if what they feel moved to do fits with the choir's presentation and with the responses of other audience members (such as Harlow and Anita in Chapter 6, for example).

Audiences begin in a receptive role, but not in the sense of receiving a message or a product transmitted. Audiences receive an invitation into new interactional patterns, patterns in which they are not the givers – of support, of services, of treatment, of knowledge. Through this invitation, audiences may gain a deepened sense of performers' agency and moral capacity (Frank, 2004). They may gain new knowledge about the choir which may alter the possibilities for relationship. Audiences may become reidentified in their relationship to the choir, and this can be seen in their post-performance talk and action. When Barbara posts on Facebook and Blair immediately texts her friend following the *Bravo* concert, they are recognizing and enacting a change in their own positionality, which has implications for how they identify themselves.

Presentational performance, participatory performance

At this point I will consider the actions of witnessing in more detail. What I have proposed – that witnessing involves both attention and interaction, distance and proximity – implies that there is a dichotomy of actions the audience engages in, but also that the audience

moves between these modes of activity. Findings show that there is a continuum of audience action – from still-and-silent listening to fully participatory singing, playing, and/or dancing, but that no matter their mode of listening, audiences are always *doing* something. Audiences are not fully still or fully singing/playing but adjust their participation in relation to what is being offered to them and asked of them. The moment-to-moment decisions and movements toward and away from the choir are movements along that continuum.

This continuum of participation challenges Turino's (2008) presentational vs participatory performance dichotomy and the understanding of audience behaviour this dichotomy presents. Turino distinguishes two main types of performances formats, and his dichotomy is presented as follows:

> Briefly defined, *participatory performance* is a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role. *Presentational performance*, in contrast, refers to situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing. (p.26)

These types of performances are also characterized by different values, contexts of reception, and musical structures. Participatory performance values inclusivity, spontaneity, and uses open forms (facilitating maximum participation by all those present), while presentational performance values individual artistic freedom, clarity/transparent textures, and uses closed forms (pieces with organized beginnings and endings, if not altogether notated). Though Turino did not use these terms, we might think of the presentational field as supporting a 'transactional' exchange between performer and audience, where music is delivered and received and the focus is on the music-as-object.

The participatory field might be thought of as supporting a 'relational' exchange, where music mediates the connection between people and the focus is on the social experience between participants.

However, neither side of this dichotomous characterization accounts for the varieties of audience (and performer) response in this project. Mitchell (2019), in a study reviewing the therapeutic benefits of musical performance in a CoMT setting, draws on Turino's distinction and problematizes it. Describing a performance that was, at first glance, *presentational* (involving performers playing closed-form songs to a silent audience), she arrives at the conclusion that it was the *participatory* features that led to the performance's therapeutic benefits; its success lay primarily in its ability to support and encourage participation, not in its adherence to a set of aesthetic standards. What Mitchell's research demonstrates is not that therapeutic performance is necessarily or always participatory, but rather that both presentational and participatory elements may be part of a performance:

> At the Coffee House, performers experience the affordances of the participatory field, including togetherness and inclusivity. Due to the event's sequential format, performers also experience witness and validation for their individual contributions. This opportunity for each individual to experience the spotlight is more akin to presentational performance settings, however, it is the participatory ethos that makes these moments in the spotlight possible. (p.103-104)

The process-oriented nature of participatory performance, and the priority given to sociality over the quality of the sound per se would seem to fit many of the performances in this project. At the same time, the performances in the project fit the presentational model: for the most part, performers were separated from their audiences and songs were mainly presented as closed forms. Yet, as these findings show, participation is multiple, variable,

and sometimes hidden. We can claim the following statements on participation in relation to the choirs in this project:

- Choirs do not expect everyone to participate actively (i.e., sing and dance) at all times; they open spaces for participation at certain times (e.g., *Allegro, Bravo, Drumroll, Ensemble, Grace Note, Lyra, Octave*).
- Heightened active participation is a response to a heightened musical-social moment, whether the performance is mainly presentational or participatory (e.g., *Cantabile, Fantasia, Harmonia, Kalimba, Prelude*).
- Unexpected and/or spontaneous participation in presentational performances can be welcome, and even solicited at times (e.g., *Cantabile, Ensemble, Harmonia, Octave*).
- The audience can affect the sound, form, and trajectory of a presentational performance (e.g., *Drumroll, Ensemble, Grace Note, Prelude*).
- The negotiation of presentation and participation is monitored and calibrated by the choir director (e.g., *Allegro, Cantabile, Drumroll, Octave, Prelude*).

Turino's dichotomy, when seen as a continuum, is helpful for understanding modes of engagement for both choir and audience. We can see the presentational in the participatory (e.g., *Prelude* leading their audience from the stage) and the participatory in the presentational (e.g., *Bravo* inviting the audience to sing specific parts at specific times). We can also see how participants move between these poles in relation to the social aim of the performance.

Dave Camlin (2014, 2015) explores the tension between aesthetic and praxial dimensions in community music performance. Drawing on Turino but rejecting his dichotomous characterization of participatory and presentational music, Camlin states that these two dimensions exist in a kind of creative tension. Presentational and participatory music can be helpfully thought of as "...different ends of a continuum of musical practice that exert a

tensile force on each other from opposing directions" (2014, p.106). It is the social aim of the performance that exerts a third force and guides movement along this continuum. As was demonstrated by several of the choirs in this project, the musical-social agenda of performances, or the way that performances were framed, enabled different forms of participation at different times. The framing of performances drew collective attention toward ideal ways of 'fitting in' together, whether that took the form of dancing along to the rhythms the choir set (Harlow, Chapter 6), sitting still while letting a singer's rendition inspire reflection on one's assumptions about her (Angela, Chapter 5), or somewhere in between.

When the aim of the performance is to bring people closer together, this cannot be prescribed through a format (either presentational or participatory) that guarantees this end. If the aim is to bring people closer together, it is done in real (musical) time, through the micro-movements toward and away from one another, through the diversified participation of the interaction ritual. It is accomplished through invitations given, received, and reciprocated. Maintaining creative tension between these two poles in the performance opens up possibilities for both performer and audience participation and response and widens the interactional space within which transformation can happen.

At this point it might be asked, however, if the social goal of a performance is increased proximity between choir and audience – where there is a heightened emotional synchronicity and a back-and-forth flow of communication – why bother with a presentational format at all? Are the goods that these events offer to be found in anything but mutual musical participation? Why not involve everyone in a group improvisation or a singalong instead of bothering with the stage?

Mutuality in the musical relationship

To many music therapists, the idea that musical coactivity involves a back-and-forth flow of communication, gesture, and response is not new – this kind of interaction is often termed 'mutuality' and its cultivation is often a clinical aim. Foubert et al. (2020) defined mutuality in music therapy as "the emergence of a *polyphonic flow* founded on the forces that constantly make us balance between independence and dependence, nearness and distance" (p.2, emphasis in original), a definition which emphasizes the need to have a sense of oneself as autonomous and distinct, yet able to accept the presence, influence, and demands of another. Mutuality is developed through joint improvisation in clinical settings (Hadar & Amir, 2021) as a way to repair distorted interactional patterns involving people, for example, in mental health treatment (Foubert et al., 2020) and in parent-child relationships (Pasiali, 2012, Trondalen, 1997).

Mutuality is a concept related to intersubjectivity, defined as the sharing of subjective states, or the sense that two or more people share a mutual awareness and understanding of a situation. This has been an important concept in improvisational approaches, particularly in Nordoff-Robbins music therapy (Birnbaum, 2014). Ansdell (2014) describes this relational space as a place where "something quickens when a person hears themselves being heard – and when they sense that they are being included in something outside themselves" (p.176). Terming this relational space the "musical between"[17], he emphasizes music's ability to provide experiences of interdependence: when musical partners accept and include what the other is offering, this musical interaction "...preserves the autonomy of each partner whilst actively preparing something that could be shared" (ibid.). When people 'meet' in music, and share this kind of mutuality, they can feel accepted and affirmed, which has the potential to be a healing experience. This may happen between clients, or between client and therapist. In approaches where there is

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[17] Ansdell draws on the work of philosopher-theologian Martin Buber (1947) and his concept of the *Between*, a mutual relational space.

increased recognition of the expertise of the client-participant, such as CoMT, mutuality may be found more often in therapist-participant relationships (Skånland & Trondalen, 2024; Stige et al., 2010). Thus, music therapy has long acknowledged that mutual relationships often occur in music, even between those separated by role, position, or status. It is not hard, then, to see the same relational dynamics at play in performance.

How does the affirmation and acceptance one may feel in these musical interactions help? How might we talk about experiences of musical mutuality and interactional flow as related to health and wellbeing? One suggestion is that these experiences can be powerful generators of *social capital*[18], setting up an individual for increased agency in social encounters and networks outside music. Social capital, a concept with many variations, generally involves "the idea that relationships and social networks are a valuable asset" (Dolfsma et al., 2008, p.315). Music therapist Simon Procter (2011), drawing on political scientist Robert Putnam's definition of the term, characterizes social capital as involving: "...connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p.19, in Procter, 2011, p.245). The generation of social capital requires a "cycle of risk and reciprocation" (Procter, 2011, p.252), and it is precisely this movement that distinguishes moments of mutuality in musicking relationships:

> A group of people working together towards a musical and social occasion constitutes a classic opportunity for the generation of social capital. Putnam's concept of networks and norms facilitating risk-taking and leading to increased trust is audibly and visibly happening here. (Procter, 2011, p.251-252)

> Within a detailed index of a session, it is possible to identify how and when group members take risks, how they experience reciprocation, and how this leads to a

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[18] The role of social capital theory in CoMT theory was reviewed in Chapter 1.

kairotic experience of altered time and altered roles and relationships within the group. (ibid., p.254)

Mutuality also links to the idea of *communitas*, also invoked in music therapy discourse (Ruud, 1997; Aigen, 2002). Communitas (Turner, 1979), an experiential state characterized by equality/lack of hierarchy, mutuality, and spontaneity, has provided music therapy with a conceptual framework to understand the sense of interactional flow and the feeling of equality with one's musical partners in clinical settings. Communitas is a social barrier-crossing experiential state – people report feeling that divisions (ability, age, ethnicity, gender) fall away. Akin to mutuality, communitas involves intimacy between people, and a sense that there is a free and authentic communicative exchange, one that involves risk, reciprocity, and altered patterns of relating.

Communitas, a concept that arose from the field of ritual studies, was developed to explain the transformative power of rituals. Music therapists have picked up on the ecstatic and utopian elements of the ritual comparison, but it should be remembered that rituals are marked by *exploration* – the trying out of different ways of being and relating, and not the simple execution of an ecstatic script. As we have seen from the work on interaction rituals, ritual engagement is not only a place for intimate communion with another, but for confrontation, ambivalence, conflict, and even exclusion. Participants such as Elora, Nikolett, and Patrice (all presented in Chapter 6) in this study make clear: if a performance is an interaction ritual, engagement in it is by no means uncomplicated. Even when a performance is described as celebratory and joyful, it is a product of individual and collaborative decisions and actions, and not all of them are easy, straightforward, or generous. When we take a microscope to the interaction ritual, we may see that it is constituted by people who are pulling it in different directions.

The reciprocity involved in states of mutuality and communitas is central to aims of interpersonal and communicative repair that music therapy often seeks to address. And as

we have seen, this is arrived at through the giving of attention, the moving together in musical time, and the mutual offering and acceptance of musical materials, structured and led by the choir. Could we then see performer-audience interaction as a simple enfolding of the audience into an interactional flow already established by the performers?

Reciprocity is a central component of the interactional space described here, but perhaps it is also the central problem. Returning to (Ansdell's discussion of) Levinas, "the primary reality of intersubjective relationship is not being *with* another, but the more fundamental and asymmetrical obligation of being *for* another" (Ansdell, 2014, p.158). The response to the other must not come with the expectation of reciprocity; to do so would be to 'possess' the other, or deny the possibility that they may be more than our experience of them. How, then, do we engage with someone we can't fully know? The back-and-forth, reciprocal relations of mutuality carry a risk: we may end up treating the other in relation to ourselves, regarding them, in our experience of them, as 'just like us.' When we expect the other to respond to us reciprocally, we are expecting them to respond as though they are the same as we are. And when we respond to them in the way we think they want to be responded to, we are reducing them in some way – we are making them 'knowable.' To be *for* but not to possess, to move *toward* but maintain the distance that allows for difference – this is the ethical stance in relation to the other, according to Levinas. This is what it means to witness.

But this seems to put us in a bind: as the data show, the audience reports higher levels of emotional engagement when they get closer, when they move with the choir, when they feel a communicative exchange with those who are different from them. This is how people are able to move into more equitable patterns of relating. Our embodied forms of musicking and audiencing produce knowledge about one another. They alter our positions – physically and socially – and it is these expanded ways of being with others that lead to desired outcomes such as increased agency and social capital. If this is how we form bonds with

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others, and social bonds lead to increased social possibilities, why would we want to put any restraints on these processes?

Something concepts such as mutuality and communitas do not sufficiently account for is the social – and power – differences between performers and audiences in this study. While these concepts do address the overcoming of inequalities in a broad sense, the findings of this study demand that we look closer at this process. Levinas criticized notions of mutuality because they emphasized reciprocity (the problems with which are discussed above). Findings from this study pull the complex issue of reciprocity into relief. On one level, choirs did solicit active responses from their audiences, they desired active engagement, they invited the reciprocal flow that characterizes mutuality and communitas. At the same time, this was only possible through their distance, through their ownership of the event. The separation put in place (by both choir and audience) enabled the non-possessive gaze of the audience and enabled the moments of surprise that drew the audience in. Distance and proximity, difference and similarity were all invited (or solicited) at various times.

What we have, then, is a problem with a purely enactivist approach when it comes to the ethical dimensions of audiencing. While we do know and relate to the other through our embodied experience and proximity to the other, this is also limiting: we cannot escape the realities that condition our social positions and colour our gaze. The tension between Levinas and the enactivist position is explored by philosopher Geoffrey Dierckxsens (2020). Dierckxsens states that, from an enactivist perspective, we understand the needs of others through our embodied interactions with them, known as participatory sensemaking. Within these relations, however, it becomes clear that some parties are more vulnerable than others. 'Being for' the other is more than 'knowing how' to care for them, as this would negate their very unknowable-ness. Yet to be for the other requires our embodied subjectivity – we cannot be for the other without encountering the other in the natural and cultural world. It is only from our embodied existence that we can encounter the other.

There is no justice without the initial responsibility for the other, which preserves the other as unknowable – yet there is no justice without categorizing the other, which makes the other knowable.

We cannot categorize the other simply as vulnerable, yet this vulnerability needs to be acknowledged. "Levinas reminds us that ethics is not only...a *practical* task but also an *impossible* challenge..." (p.105). Here is the paradox, and the response: the dialectical movement offered by the performance. The audience moves toward the choir, understands something about them, finds common ground with them through joining in their timing, participating actively (all necessary), but the audience can never take over or begin to lead: to do so would be to close off, to possess. The audience must also remain at a distance; they must hold open the possibility that the choir is more than their vulnerabilities, more than they are experienced as at that moment. "Levinas reminds us, in other words, that ethics starts off, not with participation, but with an impossible task, to which participation can only be an incomplete response" (p.105). Yet the precise distance cannot be determined beforehand. A respectful distance, one in which the audience is able to see the choir and able to be there for what the choir offers, is contextual and emergent.

As Dierckxsens argues, Levinas wants us to resist reducing the other to our own limited sensemaking processes through the act of witnessing, but this can only be accomplished through our concrete actions in a world constituted by power relations of inequality. We are thus embedded in an environment that makes possible and limits our 'responsibility for the other'. What the audience witnesses in the concert is not only the choir, but the gap between the choir and audience. What the choir invites the audience to experience may not be their disabilities or differences, but the condition of separation they live within. This is a condition that implicates the audience. The audience is invited to respond to this separation, and this is the basis for construing their participation as ethical.

If not with a simple notion of mutuality or reciprocity, how can we characterize the interactional space between choir and audience?

Hospitality as a framework for interaction

The concepts of mutuality and communitas present a relatively uncomplicated reciprocity: they emphasize unity, cooperation, and delight. However, the data in this project shine a light on the actions and decisions that happen before such states are reached. One way to look at and think about this interactional space is through the lens of 'hospitality'. Hospitality is a complex concept, bringing up questions around ownership and power. To offer hospitality is to welcome, or host. To host is to make room for another, to care for another, but it is also to lay claim to a space, an environment, or an object. One cannot host without defining the boundaries of the space and in some sense owning what there is to give. The welcoming party sets the terms of the interaction and (perhaps implicitly) claims to own the space the guest is welcomed into. Discussions of hospitality often refer back to Derrida, who pointed out this tension. If we want to extend an unconditional welcome to another, our very ownership of the terms of the interaction puts limitations on the guest and it can therefore never be a truly unconditional welcome. If we give up ownership, we effectively turn over our house to the guest, and then have nothing to offer them. They become the owner of the house and we become the guest.

Hospitality thus highlights the challenges and contradictions of reciprocity, and the problem of togetherness. It is through the lens of hospitality that we can come to understand the choirs' and audiences' exploration of proximity to one another. The more togetherness is pursued, the clearer dislocation and alienation can become.

Lee Higgins (2008, 2012) has provided a thorough examination of the importance of hospitality in community music as well as the challenges this concept presents. Noting that the term "community" has multiple and contested meanings, he draws on Derrida's

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elaboration of the term to emphasize both its centrality and impossibility. Hospitality suggests unconditionality – the unconditional welcome that makes participatory music possible – yet unconditionality is impossible while maintaining one's role as host. But the unconditional takes place in a real context – a time, a place, with real people. Thus, "the unconditional is therefore always entwined with what is conditional" (p.140). Unconditionality is situated, but points to and holds open an unforeseeable future: "In short, unconditional hospitality embraces a future that will surprise and shatter predetermined horizons" (Higgins, 2012, p.140). What we see in the concert then is not uniformity (or a uniform message delivered to an audience) but the welcome of difference and disruption: "The implication behind thinking of the word *community* as a hospitable welcome becomes a refusal of any interpretation of community that privileges "gathering" over "dislocation"" (p.141). Unconditional hospitality is not turning over the house to the guest, it is hospitality that doesn't require or expect reciprocity.

Higgins primarily writes of the host-guest relationship in terms of the community musician-community music participant relationship, where the facilitator hosts the participants entering the music event and encourages their unique participation. The call to value 'dislocation' is aimed first at the music facilitator, but there is no reason it cannot be extended to any of the musicking partners. Indeed, hospitality has been invoked in a variety of music studies to capture the complexities of the interactional space between musicking partners (Doffman, 2018; Reynolds, 2008; West & Cremata, 2016). Even though the extension of hospitality presents "the possibility of social transformation through music" (Doffman, 2018, p.85), it "does not solve the problem of togetherness" (ibid., p.81). Because it reveals the challenges of reciprocity and dislocation, it highlights the problem of togetherness; it brings it into the foreground.

The musical event, when viewed as an act of hospitality, is not about preserving and displaying identity as much as it is 'putting it into question' (Reynolds, 2008). When we welcome the guest, the self is interrupted. We open ourselves to their influence. The goal of

hospitality is to become closer to the other through giving gifts which allow the other to flourish, but this always comes with risk – to our position, to our ownership, to our certainty: "...we must embrace hospitality as an interruption – an interruption of the self." (Westmoreland, 2008, p.9).

Hospitality and rituals of proximity

Looking again at this project's findings, we can see how the interaction ritual is an exploration not just of proximity, but of hospitality. Both choir and audience extended hospitality to the other.

In Chapter 4 I outlined the ways in which choirs 'set the stage', or framed their performances in such a way to both comfortably present themselves and offer an invitation to their audiences. In furnishing the performance environment this way, the choir cultivates the means with which to "dwell", in Levinasian terms. To dwell is to create an environment which sustains oneself and from which one can act, or engage the world. When choir director Evelina referred to her choir spontaneously drumming and dancing at the end of the performance, she described it as the choir "creating a home". This was a space they defined and created, a space in which they could gather what they 'needed'. They had clear ownership of this space. Other, more formal performance spaces such as *Octave*'s concert hall stage, were similarly furnished for dwelling. The stage represented a protected space.

From the place of dwelling, the choir issues an invitation. This is the invitation to listen, attend, participate. The invitation to receive from the choir the music they have prepared for the occasion, and the musical personae they present. This carries inherent risk – the risk of rejection, apathy, derision – and puts the choir into a vulnerable position, or, to paraphrase Reynolds (2008), a position where they allow their identities to be put into question. When the choir invites a response from their audience, they are practicing

hospitality. When members of *Allegro*, *Nocturne*, or *Lyra* invite audience attention, they open themselves to misinterpretation, to misunderstanding, to having hierarchies based on disability reinforced. When the members of *Drumroll*, *Cantabile*, or *Harmonia* invite their audiences to sing, dance, and play along, they put themselves in a position where they are open to the unexpected response – participation that doesn't conform to preconceived expectations, for example.

But the choir does not simply invite the audience to evaluate them, or define them, or take over the encounter. And as the data show, this is not what audiences do. In reaching out toward their audience, choirs extend themselves (through their musical personae); they issue a 'call to be generous' (Frank, 2004), meaning, they ask their audiences to affirm their 'unknowableness.' Choirs simultaneously establish ownership of the performance environment and put themselves into question while at the same time asking their audiences for generosity, or to accept their own uncertainty about the performers. There is a currency of generosity running through the performance, as choirs step into their performer personae (which offer alternative self-presentations) and audiences are asked to consider performers as more than they would have otherwise. "Generosity in how ill and disabled people are represented opens possibilities for their participation, and their participation expands the scope of society's generosity" (Frank, 2004, p.68). The performance offers forms of agency that can change the way the choir is viewed by the audience, potentially enabling more forms of agency.

Yet this posture the choir asks of the audience – the suspension of assumptions about who the choir members are – if it is taken, happens within a set of power relations. It is not just the choir, but the distance, or inequality, between choir and audience that exerts the call for generosity. "Yet, from a Levinasian perspective, an intrinsic vulnerability or fragility resides in the relation between the patients and health care professionals, that is, a vulnerability that does not completely coincide with the patient's impairment, but a fragility that is proper to the relation itself" (Frank, 2004, p.105). The recognition of that distance

reveals the crisis, the crisis of witnessing. This puts the audience in an ethical decision-making position. They must decide whether to accept the invitation the choir extends. They must decide whether to remain witnesses to the face or turn away. What they do has consequences for the power relations within the interactional space.

To preserve the non-possessive gaze, which is to say to release one's ideas about who the choir members are, audiences accept direction from the choir (listening in a way the choir prepares them for, or joining in when space is made for them) but cannot anticipate what the choir might ask of them. To respond in a way that one thinks the choir wants (i.e., clapping on the beat in a high energy song not because you feel moved to but because you think it would make the choir happy) is to act in relation to a representation of the choir, and not one's embodied engagement in the moment. It would be replacing the face with a representation of the face.

Because of this, increased proximity, or closing the gap of inequality, could paradoxically happen through increased distance. For example, when Elora and Nikolett (in Chapter 6) chose not to participate in the choirs' invitation to sing and/or dance with them, neither could find the 'fit', or the mode of audiencing that felt natural and immediate. Participating from a place of perceived obligation would be to return 'possession' to the gaze – they would be participating based on their ideas about who the choir was (a representation of the choir) rather than allowing themselves to be drawn into an interaction without a predetermined ending. In doing this, Elora and Nikolett offered hospitality to the choir. They allowed the interaction to remain open-ended. They released their power to define, categorise, or patronise. Managing proximity, or the back-and-forth movement in relation to the choir, is the action of non-possession. It is the hospitality that seeks to understand the other without possessing the other.

It is important to make clear that hospitality is not something that happens unidirectionally. As demonstrated above, choirs offered hospitality to their audiences, but audiences in turn

became hosts to the choirs. Hospitality is a constant negotiation of asymmetry, a constant moving between host and guest roles through the temporal flow of musical participation. These are not static roles to be held onto; they are constantly in flux, a dynamic movement of self-giving and other-receiving. Hospitality does not simply assimilate the guest into an environment; the guest influences the environment, and in successful interactions the host feels welcomed by the guest. Urie et al. (2019) state that "…a guest does not integrate a host, nor a host a guest. We integrate each other or not at all" (p.98).

Hospitality and health

The concept of hospitality helps us see the concert as an encounter where social divides can be bridged through a dynamic movement of giving and receiving, guided by the choir's and audience's need for a re-configured positioning in relation to each other. In short, hospitality shows us how we might repair a fragmented social ecology. If a crucial feature of both individual and social health is social connectedness (Stige & Aarø, 2012), providing opportunities to strengthen giving-receiving relations between diverse members of society strengthens the social ecology as a whole. Socially vulnerable people are able to exercise their capacity to give because they are positioned to give; this is a movement toward belonging. In an ecology things don't flow one way; there is reciprocal but undetermined movement between parts because of the autonomy (or otherness) of each part. Bridging is the repairing of the fragmented social ecology. Hospitality can be "defined as a way of marking the boundaries between inside and outside, familiar and alien" (Lynch et al., 2011), and the performance can redraw the boundaries around who belongs.

Hospitality has been explored in music therapy by Ansdell (2014) in an improvisational context. When people improvise together, they accept and include one another's musical contributions, and this can be thought of as a kind of hospitable musicking. Space is made in music for the other to bring what she has, and it is received if the music (as a joint endeavour) is to continue. The role of the music therapist in CoMT can be to host, or to

clear the space (physical and social) for people to make music together. Alternatively, it can be to enable others to host each other musically. Music may offer resources with which people can act as hosts or guests when this is difficult or not possible in everyday life (Stige et al., 2010).

In sum, the concept of hospitality can bring to light the essential ethical situation at the core of musical-social process. Extending hospitality, in the pursuit of togetherness, inevitably invites ambiguity, open-endedness, and vulnerability. Yet it is the ambiguity within the relational dimensions of musical performance that allows for sharing, for acceptance, and ultimately, for belonging – all ingredients of health and wellbeing for an individual and for a community. When we extend hospitality we anticipate the best in the other and in our relations with them – by refusing to write the end of the story.

Implications for Practice and Research

> Medicine, therapeutic work generally, and education are especially at risk of committing symbolic violence, because professionals in these fields speak with an authority deriving from both their expertise and their claim to be acting in the client's best interest...[t]he professional finds it too easy to see the client's need or lack, move to some solution or remedy for that, and miss the face. (Frank, 2004, p.116)

Sociologist Arthur Frank, quoted above, advocates for a 'renewal of generosity' in healthcare through a renewed commitment to the face-to-face encounter between caregivers and those they care for. In the effort to treat, fix, and/or educate, professionals can easily lose sight of the person they are working with – and music therapists and educators working within healthcare and educational frameworks are no less disposed to reducing people to their perceived deficiencies. In a performance setting, music professionals may pass on this reductive view of performers to the audience. When the

performance is framed as an occasion to display a certain competency or project a message defined outside the performance, when the action and responsibility for action is centred on the performers alone, everyone may "miss the face." When the performance is framed as an encounter offering exploration and indeterminacy, the non-possessive gaze can be preserved.

At the level of practice, what might this mean? If music therapists, music educators, and community musicians approach performance as an occasion for performers and the public to practice hospitality, this would lead them to position their audiences as co-creators in a musical-social process (rather than inviting audiences in as onlookers or cheerleaders, for example). This means giving careful attention to performance aims, which should in turn impact the processes of preparation, the structuring of performances, and the managing of performance processes. It is not enough to present a musical program and expect social divisions to be healed. "Singing in harmony" does not automatically produce harmonious relationships, nor does it necessarily produce genuine social justice.

Implications for CoMT and socially-engaged performance

As I stated in the first two chapters of this document, performance has been closely linked to outcomes of both health and social justice in CoMT and community music. Public performance has been construed as naturally leading to outcomes of confidence, empowerment, and social integration in many cases. The audience, presented as central to this process, nevertheless has played an unspecified role in the literature and discourse. The findings of this project challenge several disciplinary and professional assumptions about the role and activity of the audience in these events: that the audience is (and should be) separate from the performers, the audience is interchangeable, the audience receives a musical message transmitted from the performers, and the audience is there to provide support – to name a few. In the following section I consider how these challenges may

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affect performance practices within the broad landscape of CoMT and other socially-engaged musical practices.

On self-expression and "voice"

In Chapters 1 and 2 I reviewed the literature on performance in music therapy and noted that theorizing about the therapeutic benefits of performance often centred on the presentation of the client's "authentic voice," or referred broadly to "self-expression" in some way. The music performed was characterized as a vehicle for the client's story or inner emotional state. This was closely linked to the transmission theory of musical communication, where music is viewed as an object, its 'meaning' contained within its structure, and is transmitted from the performer to a listener/receiver. Findings from this project suggest otherwise. As we have seen, the performer's 'voice' is something that emerges in the event, in interaction, and is influenced by the audience in the process of the performance. *Cantabile* did not present a 'definitive' voice to their first audience; on the contrary, their unique voice came into being during their first encounter with an audience (see Chapter 4). Similarly, *Ensemble*, *Harmonia*, and *Prelude* altered their performances in response to audience involvement, demonstrating that the 'voice' performers have to share is not fully defined within, but comes into being in the encounter with other voices. Weingarten (2000), exploring the notion of 'witnessing' for therapeutic practice, notes that voice is not so much an "individual's *achievement* of self-knowledge, but, rather, a *possibility* that depends on the willingness of the listeners that make up the person's community" (p.392, emphasis added). The voice is defined and articulated in interaction, in a particular, situated context.

The audience, therefore, does not play a bystander role – the audience is essential to the assembly of voice. In other words, "[v]oice depends on witnessing. This focus turned my attention away from voice itself to the contexts within which voice is produced…" (ibid.). Music therapists, then, would be well-advised to focus on creating environments within

which it is possible to listen. A singular focus on the performing voice – as constituted outside the performance event – limits the responsiveness, flexibility, and agency within that voice. This is not to say that the performing voice(s) cannot be treated as a source of meaning or nurtured outside the performance event in particular ways. It is also not to say that the performing voice has no content, character, or distinctiveness outside the performance. It is to say that the voice does not exist in totality outside of its social context, outside of interaction. The voice is realized in place and time, through the encounter with other voices. In the language of participatory sensemaking, we could say that, in the production of voice, we are "…continually both producing [ourselves] out of the materials of the world, and well as distinguishing [ourselves] from it" (De Jaegher, 2021, p.855).

This understanding of voice has implications for understanding the mechanisms by which performances may "raise awareness" of a social issue, something that was important for several of the choirs in this project. Choirs drew attention to social issues in a variety of ways (as I discussed in Chapter 4), but the most intentional way most choirs did this was through their repertoire choices, and particularly through their song lyrics. Findings showed that lyrics were an important framing element, but did not necessarily generate the experiences of emotional intensification and intimacy that were key ingredients in reported powerful moments. Intersubjective experiences were produced by the kind of participation the audience was invited into. Raising awareness was not done through dispensing information but through the reconfigured patterns of relating in music. This means that we cannot assume the audience will come to a different perspective on the basis of song lyrics, or the transmission of a message, alone. In contrast, my findings revealed that shifts in awareness states were triggered by embodied responses to the performance, embodied responses that were personal yet collectively produced.

On audience support

The picture of audiencing I am proposing impacts how we think of the audience's role in the performance. As I reviewed in Chapter 2, literature on performance in music therapy frequently makes reference to the importance of audience support, even though what constitutes support is not specified. If we have assumed that support equals a broad approval, encouragement, and/or affirmation, the findings of this project challenge this characterization and complexify the audience's role. A feature of CoMT theory is the embeddedness of the individual in a multi-layered social-cultural environment; change that occurs on one level affects other levels as well. One implication of the findings of this project is the de-centering of the client/performer as the focus of 'change'. Implicit in the relational process of performance I am proposing – the hospitable exchange between choir and audience – is the ethical nature of the audience's action. An audience member might enter the performance with an intention to be supportive, say, in terms of 'making room' for the performer to be as she is, but support must be chosen moment-to-moment as the performance unfolds. If the audience member chooses to be there *for* the performer (the non-possessive gaze), she may be called to be there for the singer in ways that may change her. Like Nikolett, she might realize her own discomfort/lack of fit with the performers. Like Dierdre, she may not immediately like the sound of the music she hears. The decision that often must be made, if the audience member is committed to witnessing the performers, is to change.

Support, then, is something chosen moment-to-moment; it is something performed with the choir. The audience member does not bring support into the performance with her. Support is what is done together: it is the outcome of a successful performance, not a precondition of a successful performance. A one-way flow of support implies that the supportive party has the power to dispense support, the power to support from a distance. But audiences become witnesses, and witnesses become participants. Audiences become the receivers of support themselves when they reposition themselves in the performance. Support is what the choir and audience *do* together.

On the platform

In the music therapy literature reviewed in Chapter 2, the performance stage was frequently referred to as a literal and metaphorical 'platform', where performers could claim the public's attention and be heard, often from an elevated position. Music therapy, including, at times, CoMT, has regarded the performance platform as a place to showcase achievement, skill, and ability, which produces confidence and self-esteem, and this is for good reason. Many socially marginalized people need spaces in which to draw attention to their abilities and strengths, so often overlooked or minimized in everyday social life. And as this project has emphasized, the performance stage affords witnessing. But these findings also show another view of the platform – what it can potentially be used for.

The problem with treating the performance stage as a platform to separate oneself from others is that it may quickly become a site of display, and the performance can become a test of performers' worthiness for inclusion in society. Urie et al. (2019), writing on a songwriting and performance project for formerly incarcerated people, warn that performances should not be displays of fitness of the individual to be accepted by society – they should be seen as opportunities to enable welcome.[19] When the performance stage is limited to a platform from which to showcase abilities, the public may be encouraged to equate ability and strength with value and their worthiness to be integrated into society. The performance is then used to centre neoliberal values such as independence and self-determination – values that return the burden of change and accommodation onto the performers. In contrast, the findings from this project suggest that performance is more powerfully a place to celebrate performers' and audiences' connectedness and how they are able to offer one another something unique. Strengths may be displayed, previously unnoticed qualities of people may be presented, but this goes beyond a tallying of

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[19] The concerns of Urie et al. (2019) in an incarceration context regarding "fitness" seem to parallel the concerns with "normalization" in disability studies. Are performances opportunities to pass as "normal" or opportunities to redefine "normal"?

strengths/needs or abilities/disabilities. The platform is used to present a musical persona – who very often claims the platform in order to break it down. *Prelude* did not use their ownership of the concert stage to emphasize the division between themselves and their audience; they claimed the stage in order to extend it to outsiders.

Music therapists (and other music professionals) must ask themselves: what is the aim of the performance? To reinforce the social hierarchies of everyday social life or to reshape them? If reshaping is the goal, how is that done? Using the stage as a tool to intensify separation, or as a place to dwell and from which to offer invitation?

On performance and ritual

Chapter 6 presented performer-audience interaction through the lens of interaction ritual theory. Taking another, broader look at the nature of ritual, we can see how the aims of health and wellbeing can be facilitated through the ritual dimensions of the performance. A feature of many formal rituals, like a musical performance, is its out-of-the-everyday location. It is important that so many of the performances described in this project took place in settings outside the typical places where members of the choirs and audiences might have met in their everyday lives. This offered the possibility to suspend the habitual interactional patterns of everyday life and create an 'artificial' alternative social arrangement. Urie et al. (2019) refer to the musical spaces in their project as "temporary autonomous zones" (as defined by Bey, 2003), spaces where normal routines were suspended and participants were better able to encounter the 'other', thus facilitating hospitable interactions. However, the suspension of everyday routine does not itself cause social repair; temporary autonomous zones are "...single physical places where multiple and contradictory sites and spaces are constituted and reconstituted – as sites and spaces of control and change, of cooperation and resistance, of reflection and of projection/performance – exist in tension, challenging one another" (p.88). The suspension of the everyday offered by the ritual does not naturally lead into experiences of intimacy

and belonging – it includes multiplicity, contradiction, and tension. Entering these zones requires the willingness to step outside the comfortable patterns of everyday life, which may be unsettling before – and *if* – they are ever reshaped in a mutually fulfilling way.

What this means is that ritual rewards are found in the ritual's circularity. We cannot view a single performance as an intervention that will address a specific social aim. The performance is an out-of-the-everyday space that participants need to keep re-entering for the reconfigured relational patterns to become 'normal'. Choirs can then go back to rehearsals with the experience of being creators and sharers, people who have experienced a reciprocal cycle of care. Audiences go back into their everyday lives having been hosted by those who do not normally have the opportunity to give. This flipping of social positions, when regularly experienced in the performance ritual, can more readily be available in other, everyday contexts by performance participants. With each re-entry into the ritual space of the performance, reshaped relational patterns can be deepened.

Performances and rituals take place in sociocultural-political contexts, and the institution of therapeutically-oriented concerts like the ones in this project could have rippling effects on the culture within which they happen. For example, when I walk into a performance, I do so allowing the experience to break into my certainty about who the performers are, to a certain degree. When I enter this space over and over again, this becomes easier. I learn how to be there for an 'other', meaning I learn to let go of my power to define other, marginalized members of my community. I learn how to receive the performers in all their difference and similarity. I am therefore choosing to take steps to repair a fragmented social ecology. If the aim of performances is inclusion and ultimately belonging, this is not the responsibility of the socially vulnerable person. Belonging requires a community to change, and spaces within which to practice changing.

Therapy or justice?

Music therapy also exists and is practiced in sociopolitical contexts, contexts which shape notions of health and illness and enable (or disable) access to care. CoMT theory has been explicit in relating its aims to sociopolitical concerns, noting that the personal and socio-political cannot be separated, yet the political dimension of CoMT has been less documented in the literature than other dimensions (Stige & Aarø, 2012). CoMT as a form of social activism has been "...related to the idea that working with the relatively disadvantaged and also to the metaphor of attending to unheard voices" (Stige & Aarø, 2012, p.160). CoMT has often focused on 'attending to unheard voices' at the micro-level, and this is a unique strength of the profession and discipline. CoMT provides tools to examine the interactional space between performers and audience at the micro-level, tools that can highlight issues of social inequality and raise questions about how these issues come to bear on health and wellbeing. However, a micro-level of analysis does not in itself show the pathway to social change. Understanding how one develops agency through choir participation does not necessarily mean that individual agency will naturally bring about social justice.

The field of community music, however, has embraced discourses of justice and social change since its inception. Higgins & Willingham (2017), in their introductory text to the field, open the chapter on "Mindfulness, Activism, and Justice" with the following quotation:

> Justice is the prophetic invitation to do what needs to be done to enable the poor, the disadvantaged and the neglected, to participate in the resources and wealth of the community. Injustice is the outcome of having skewed neighbourly processes so that some are put at un unbearable disadvantage. (Brueggeman, 2001 in Higgins & Willingham, 2017, p.91)

These words focus the chapter on the possibilities music holds to change society – and places responsibility for that change not on the disadvantaged themselves, but on society itself. Macro-level impact is often the aim of community music projects and engagement with the public is seen as a natural (sometimes essential) aspect of the work.

Are the choirs in this project oriented toward health and wellbeing or toward justice? Are they oriented toward developing singers' agency or dismantling social barriers to flourishing? Bringing CoMT and community music perspectives together show us that this is a false choice, but also that the tension between macro and micro levels of analysis can be fruitful. The task is not to find the level at which music 'works', but to find the pathways and linkages between these different levels where music can be of most help in a given context. Ansdell (2014) proposed that a 'meso-level' of analysis answers the dilemma of a focus that is too individualistic or too general and abstract. Referring to a CoMT performance group called *Musical Minds*, he writes:

> ...the meso-level describes how this group's musicking makes and sustains links at several levels – firstly, at ground level between the singers themselves, and then between the singers and their local support structure. Their public concerts in turn help to forge links between the group and the surrounding area, its people and their potential support and resources. On yet a further level, the raised profile that their performances bring might function as a form of activism to help the group and their supporters link upwards to those who make decisions on the resources and policies that influence the singers' wellbeing on a more structural level. (p.226)

CoMT and community music are led by similar concerns and our different perspectives can inform, challenge, and elevate each other (Peters et al., 2021). Maintaining a tension between macro and micro-levels of change, or of justice and health, supports an ecological practice wherein the appropriate musical resources, as well as forms of

practitioner expertise, can be located and mobilized. The balancing of professional expertise in these events needs careful empirical analysis to tease out its complexity.

This project's findings highlight the significance of power dynamics within any therapeutic or educational activity, not just performance. As the quote from Arthur Frank at the beginning of this section reminds us, those who provide care tend to focus on the problem and forget about the face. Much current scholarship has been devoted to the ways in which modern methods of treatment and education have (often inadvertently) acted as a disempowering force, reducing people to their perceived deficiencies. I want to emphasize that the conclusions I am reaching point to audiencing as not simply a way to participate in the care of socially vulnerable people. Audiencing is stepping into an encounter in which one must choose how to regard the other. This is not an act of care that can be reduced to a therapeutic framework; this is a profoundly ethical act.

Role and expertise of the choir director

The characterization of audiencing I am proposing has implications for the role of the choir director. What do these findings tell us about the kind of expertise needed to facilitate performances? The word "conductor" is from the Latin "conducere", meaning "to bring together (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This may be a helpful image. The conductor is a kind of conduit or mediator, one who makes it possible for choir and audience to encounter each other in a way that enables hospitality. In order to do this, the choir director must understand what both the choir and audience need in order to be there for one another. This requires an expansive form of attention and support, which choir director Isaac referred to when he spoke about his need to be "allied" with both the choir and the audience in order to bring them together.

The conductor negotiates the structure of the concert. In a socially stratified event, leadership is necessary to ensure the audience doesn't overpower the choir. Choir director

Patrice referred to this in Chapter 6 when she described how she steps away from a traditional conductor position to allow the children to lead the audience – but waits in the wings to step in and re-establish the children's leadership role if the audience starts to run away with the song. Patrice's role, like the role of other choir directors in this project, is to keep things 'asymmetrical': to maintain the distance needed between choir and audience for them to come together hospitably. If this balance isn't maintained, choir and audience run the risk of falling into cycles of obligatory reciprocity, where participants respond to a representation of the other rather than the face of the other.[20]

A term used most commonly in conflict transformation settings, the 'mediator' is a third party, one who 'clears a space' for opposing sides to listen to each other deeply, who structures communicative encounters so that all voices may be heard, and who facilitates a closer degree of proximity between groups. The music therapist's role does not stop at facilitating access to music and performance but facilitating hospitality – structuring an encounter so that performer and audience may make room for each other. This role involves more than finding a supportive audience for a presentation of accomplishments, but to "...see, understand, and mobilize relational spaces" (Lederach, 2005, p.94). From out of this "mediative capacity" (ibid.), the music therapist may create conditions for connections between people to be established, revealed, or repaired.

Protecting asymmetry requires a delicate balance: choir directors need to be clear about the desired outcomes of the performance for the choir in order to create conditions for them to unfold, and they must be aware of risks in order to preserve safety. At the same time, to preserve the performance event as a place of hospitable encounter, the choir director must also structure the performance for uncertainty. Community musicians Yun & Willingham (2013), in their description of a choral improvisation concert, note that the

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[20] The role of the choir director is similar to the role of the music therapist in Stige's (2010a) discussion of interaction rituals in CoMT. Stige discusses the music therapist's role in the negotiation of a situationally stratified musical event involving varying levels of energy and degrees of focus.

choir director "…essentially facilitates a continuously changing musical space that maximizes an interchoir dialogue of constant creative flow" (p.243). Their task as choir directors was not to ensure that the expected rolled out; the task was to create conditions for the unexpected to emerge and be worked with. Urie et al. (2019), in their discussion of the hospitable space of the music workshop, draw parallels with (previously-mentioned) Bey's (2003) "temporary autonomous zones" and Foucault's "heterotopia" – spaces where the rules of everyday life are suspended and tension and disruption are welcomed. The authors are clear: this kind of improvisatory attitude, or openness to the emergent requires *more* leadership, not less. The concert structure is not a script to be executed, it is a script to be used as a scaffolding for interaction. As we have seen through the words of choir directors and audience members in this project, a concert is not just presented – it is managed moment to moment. Though the audience is not mentioned in these articles, by the authors' descriptions, there is a mediating role the conductor takes between singers that could be applied to the space between choir and audience as well.

Therapeutically-oriented performances are led by music therapists, music educators, and community musicians, among others. Is the expertise needed to facilitate these performances found in one discipline? Differences in ontologies of music, pedagogical strategies, and sociocultural awareness separate different health musicking practitioners more than professional designations and trainings. Community musician Jennie Henley (2018) states that it is not primarily musical content but pedagogy that produces transformative experiences; that is, the mechanisms of *how* music is taught and worked with is more important than the specific songs learned. A therapeutically-oriented concert requires the skilled facilitation of social interaction, not simply the presentation of music. When the focus of the performance is on "showcasing music" or "showcasing skills", this locates the transformation in the acquisition of musical skills/knowledge and not on what people *do* with that knowledge in a social milieu.

Implications for future research

As stated in Chapter 2, research on CoMT and community music performance has not systemically investigated audience engagement, and research in audience and reception studies has not investigated the impact of audience engagement on the performers. This one-sided approach to research is rooted in cultural assumptions about the task of the performer and audience member, and indeed, the value and possibilities of performance itself. This project, through bringing the interactional space between performers and audiences into focus, offers possibilities for re-thinking the sociality of musical performance, which in turn offers possibilities for re-writing the cultural scripts we use to make sense of these experiences.

To continue the investigation of the sociality of performance, methods are needed to get underneath the cultural scripts that we use to narrate cultural experiences and events. Ethnographic methods have been promoted by those theorizing CoMT (Stige & Aarø, 2012) because of their capacity for accommodating multiple data forms and linking observed action with participants' narrative accounts. Ethnographically-informed methods (such as the interviewing technique I used in the second study) offer grounded, action-centred data. To investigate performances in terms of their social dimensions, methods are needed that can account for a range of (if not all) actors in these events; this would mean involving multiple stakeholders in research designs. Perspectives of the performers, organizational staff, family members, to name a few examples, would thicken the data needed to examine the social exchange in performance and how that may be put in conversation with discourses of health and wellbeing. In general, more triangulation of perspectives is needed in performance research to understand the complex relational dynamics of the musical performance event.

Methods that study performance experiences *in situ* (rather than or in addition to interviewing people after the fact) could capture audience movements, reactions, and flow

of attention. This could be done through the use of videorecording, or enlisting assistants to embed themselves in the audience and take note of audience action and response. Longitudinal studies offer another way forward as they could trace, for example, the development of a performance group's relationship to the public over time, through engagement with different audiences. Paul Atkinson's *Everyday Arias* (2006) provides an intriguing model for how to investigate a cultural phenomenon (in this case, an opera company) by examining its processes of social organization, through long-term embeddedness with the phenomenon as a participant observer.

Finally, this project sits at the intersection of professional identities in music, health, and justice, raising questions about musical leadership and the development of expertise. One of the implications of the project for both practice and future research is that there is much to be gained from adopting an interdisciplinary perspective. For example: how might music therapists, music educators, and community musicians bring unique skills to similar performance projects? What forms of expertise are called for and are mobilized in therapeutically-oriented performances? CoMT theory has, if not always explicitly, asserted that traditional therapeutic discourse does not fully explain the value and power of music – rather, the inverse is true: it is music that shows us what health looks like. Opening up and venturing into interdisciplinary territory in practice and research will help us to become the musicians that the people we work with need us to be.

Critical reflections on the study

One of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on this project was that it presented new opportunities for designing methods and recruiting participants. Prior to the pandemic I had thought the best (and only realistic) way to study audiences was to become an audience member myself, embed myself in a performance, and talk to willing audience members following the event. As I indicated in the previous section, this is an approach that is crucially needed. And yet, the pandemic made evident that this was not the time for

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that approach – and not just because of its practical impossibilities. It was the wrong time because it was the wrong place to start an inquiry on audiences. With no other studies of audience engagement in CoMT or community music performance to draw on, a sample of participants from one or two performances would not offer the range of perspectives needed to begin putting a picture of the phenomenon together. A wide sample, as diverse as I could find, would be the place to start my inquiry on audiences. The widespread use of Zoom at the start of the pandemic made clear what had not occurred to me up until that point: the sample I needed was out there, and the means to reach them was available to me.

Of course, locating and recruiting the audience participants was neither simple nor straightforward. As I detailed in Chapter 3, I mainly relied on choir directors to help me recruit audience participants, and even though several of the audience members who participated did not know the choir directors personally, this posed a dilemma: how could I be sure the sample I ended up with was not a biased one, tilted toward the enthusiastic audience member who was invested in giving a positive review, whether out of concern for the choir director, because of legitimate personal enjoyment at the concert, or some other motivation? I knew when I began that I would not get the bored, apathetic, or grumpy audience member. I would likely not recruit the skeptical, the oblivious, or the unreceptive – if those audience members even existed. I left my recruitment process open to those participants, though I anticipated that the people who would be most likely to respond to the invitation were those that had a meaningful experience at a performance.

It could therefore be levelled that the participant sample in this project disproportionately represents those audience members who loved the performance, and this would be a legitimate critique. However, this point of view rests on the assumption that one cannot adequately 'know' what one loves. Moreover, if the charge is that participants were predisposed to love the concert (due to a variety of motivations) and for that reason they did not experience the performance objectively, this too misses the point. The aim of the

project was not to investigate audience members' evaluations of performances, nor to determine if the performances were worth enjoying. One of the aims of the project was to probe the motivations and predispositions that *all* participants brought into the performances with them, and how that contributed to the construction of experience.

Most audience participants were not entirely familiar with the participants in the choirs but attended performances with a spirit of goodwill, and this was certainly to be expected, as they chose to attend. Those audience members who did not choose, who happened upon a performance (such as in *Fantasia*'s flashmobs) could obviously not be located for the project. I contend that the audience members who came with a spirit of goodwill are a source of knowledge about the phenomenon that is just as, and possibly more, instructive than the perspective of the disinterested or dispassionate. The research tradition known as 'gentle empiricism' (Ansdell & Pavlicevic, 2010), which stems from the work of Goethe, tells us that when we look at thing in a context of love or reverence, certain features come to the foreground. We arrange its features in a particular way (Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 2007). Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2010), in their discussion of Goethe, explain: "His aim is to remain open to finding something to observe and to remain vigilant to what the world approaches him with and how it teaches him to observe itself" (p.132). Within the research tradition of gentle empiricism, the reverential gaze is not an obstacle to interpreting experience but the opening of oneself to allow the phenomenon to reveal itself.

My participants were gentle empiricists themselves. In interviews, so many of them told a story of how they allowed the performances to teach them how to listen and how to learn about the people singing. Loving something is not an obstacle to learning about it, it is a precondition for a certain kind of knowledge. This is also a feature of participatory sensemaking: "We know the world by virtue of being swept up in it" (DeJaeger, 2021, p 858), a feature that was confirmed by audience member Barbara: "I was just swept away with the words."

To be clear, I am not claiming that these are the only perspectives that matter. Future research should look for every type of audience member to be found, as doing so will only deepen our understanding of performance events. But I maintain that it is essential to consider what the 'reverential gaze' offers, where it leads, and acknowledge that loving engagement in the performance provides or produces a certain kind of knowledge, a certain kind of pathway, and an important one.

Concluding Thoughts

A performance is a social encounter. This in itself is not a surprising conclusion. What is new is the way the interactional space between performers and audiences has been presented. By describing their experiences through a different frame – by changing the script, so to speak – audience members and choir directors were able to access another story. They constructed a picture of performances that was much richer, much livelier, and much more fraught than I could have anticipated. Choirs arranged and rearranged spaces, materials, processes, and themselves in order to own, and then share their music. Choirs owned in order to give, they separated in order to bring together, and they created a boundaried space (or dwelling) in order to invite others in. Each act of self-presentation harboured within it an act of self-giving. Self-giving was 'therapeutic' in that it opened an ethical space of engagement.

Audiencing is a response to this invitation, and within the space of response there is potential for harm, for care, and also for repair. The performance, as a site of invitation, (non)acceptance, and reciprocity, is itself a kind of resistance. It is a place where the totalizing of socially vulnerable people can be resisted, where people can be witnessed and interacted with as aesthetic and ethical agents. Performances can be places where marginalized people can develop the human capacity to give to others, to participate in

relationships of reciprocity and exchange – opportunities not usually afforded them in everyday life.

Quite simply, performances enable people to give. It has been said that the impulse behind every creative act is one of self-giving and that the value of the artistic gift is located in what it *does* – how it binds people together. Perhaps through the hospitable act of sharing music in performance we can explore the potentials and limits of our belonging. In performance we can live out what it could mean to belong – without possession - to one another.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Choirs and Participants, Secondary Study

Choir	Description	Choir Director	Audience	Led by	Location
Allegro	A large choir for disabled adults	Andrew	Anita (A.01) Audra (A.02) Angela (A.03) Austin (A.4) Alistair (A.5)	MT	Canada
Bravo	A large choir made up of incarcerated and community members	Brigid	Barbara (B.01) Blair (B.02)	ME/CM	USA
Cantabile	A small choir of refugees and asylum seekers	Cecily	Camille (C.1) Carl (C.2) Carole (C.02.1)	MT	USA
Drumroll	A small choir ("troupe") for people living with chronic mental illnesses and poverty	Debra	Dottie (D.1) Dierdre (D.2)	MT	Canada
Ensemble	A small choir for homeless women	Evelina	Elora (E.1)	MT student (lead director: ME)	Israel
Fantasia	A small choir for people with dementia	Flora		ME	UK
Grace Note	A small choir for incarcerated women	Georgia	Gwyneth (G.1) Gabrielle (G.2) Grace (G.3)	ME/CM	UK
Harmonia	A mid-size choir for people with dementia	Heidi	Harlow (H.1)	MT	Australia

	Secondary group: an instrumental/vocal ensemble for musicians who are also asylum seekers				
Intermezzo	A large choir for senior citizens *Secondary group: a small choir for immigrants, refugees, and native Norwegians*	Isaac		MT	Norway
Jubilate	A mid-size intergenerational choir for people with dementia and teens/young adults	Jillian		ME	Canada
Kalimba	A large community choir situated in a hospice organization	Kendrick	Kathleen (K.01) Kristen (K.02)	MT	UK
Lyra	1: A small choir for disabled adults 2: A small choir for adults with learning disabilities *Secondary group: a small choir for Holocaust survivors*	Leah	Lilith (L.1) Lailie (L.2)	MT	Israel
Melodia	A large, multi-generational, inter-ability community choir	Margot		ME	Canada
Nocturne	A small choir for people with aphasia	Naomi	Nikolett (N.1)	MT student	Hungary
Octave	A mid-size choir for stroke survivors	Odette	Otto (O.O) Olivia (O.O.1)	MT	Australia
Prelude	A multi-ethnic, multi-racial children's choir in an under-resourced community	Patrice	Phillip (P.1)	MT	South Africa

MT = music therapist
ME = music educator
CM = community musician

Decimal + number = the audience member was referred by the choir director
Decimal + 0 + number = the audience member was *not* referred by the choir director

Appendix 2. Examples of Coding Strategies Used for Data Analysis

Categorization of Initial Codes: Audience Data

Musical Engagement			Sensemaking		Narrative Accounts
Sensory Triggers	Actions/Embodied Responses/Thoughts	Emotions	Positioning	Actions	Speech acts Cultural stories
- Seeing inmates connect with family members - Noticing individuality of performers - Rich harmony -'Dissonance' – fully committed, absorbed singing	- Feeling of bringing something into being - Creating/thinking about backstory for performers - Joy of performers was "contagious" – feeling drawn into their joy - "Swept away by the words" - Feelings of intimacy and connection with R when he dedicated his song to her	- Euphoria - Surprise - Joy - Peace	- Seeing human development, flourishing in others - People coming together around a shared goal - Human identity supplanting inmate identity - Moved by shared expressions of loss, brokenness, suffering	- Posts on Facebook; tells of how "marvelous", special the concert was	- Story of community triumph - Story of transcendence, peak experience, out-of-the-everyday - Story of restoration, redemption

Categorization of Initial Codes: Choir Director Data

Actions		Ideas About	Narrative Accounts	
Structuring	Managing	Contextualizing	Role of Audience	Speech acts/ Cultural stories
- Lyrics are key: showcasing positive messages of healing and peace - rehearsal structure: facilitating interaction,	- concerts open a space to connect in a positive way; positive things can be	- intention is to connect incarcerated and free people	- audience's role is to affirm, support, be moved, then act	- activist presentation

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managing proximity, grounding the rehearsal in someone's writing - changing the prison environment for concerts - witnessing proximity: incarcerated and free on stage together	experienced and witnessed - 'platform' broken down by vulnerability in singer - opening space for the performance of vulnerability, confession, reconciliation - focus on managing everything smoothly	- writing exchange: reflecting together on purpose, deepening relationships	- audience witnesses the exchange between incarcerated singer and family	

Example of data excerpts used to triangulate data (*Cantabile*)

The following data excerpts describe moments when the Cantabile invited the audience to dance. While I cannot be sure that both Carole and Cecily are talking about the same performance, I can confirm that they are both talking about a song (and type of musical engagement with the audience) that takes place at most of their performances.

Carole	There was that eye connection that happened. So I had no choice but to walk out there, it was not of my own free will! It was magnetic. And what I thought was, "I'm about to make a fool of myself!" Because their moves were so good, I was self-conscious. But I got over that…I mean there was that eye connection and the smiles, the encouragement, it just put me at ease. I still looked like a fool, I'm sure, but it was it was wonderful!
Cecily	…it kind of also it kind of almost got out of control to be honest, like all this whole room of women…everyone's like getting up dancing and is a pretty diverse group and so, you know…Black women and…Latina women and white women and they're all like dancing this dance and singing and you know, everybody's getting so excited and it's like this huge…kind of like this magical moment, and then, and it doesn't help that one of the women, like she pulls out this whistle and my husband's like, *no whistle!* [*waves hands frantically*] but like I'm always like, *please, tone down the whistle,* but then she'll just whip it out! And so, oh my God, so she's like inciting a riot with this whistle… …[it] was very terrifying…it was like I said, almost out of control…people were just like so into it…'cause it's like an easy little dance to learn and I think they're like, oh my gosh, we're like, we can imitate this easily and be part of this song and kind of feel like we're connected somehow…

Appendix 3. Information Sheet (Audience), Preliminary Study

INFORMATION SHEET

When Music is Shared:
Exploring Performer & Audience Experiences in Music Therapy Performance

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Erinn Epp, and I am the director of the ▮▮▮▮▮ Choir. I have been a credentialed music therapist for over 15 years and this is my 8th year with the ▮▮▮▮▮ Choir. I am also a PhD student at the University of London and I am conducting a research study entitled, "When Music is Shared: Exploring Performer & Audience Experiences in Music Therapy Performance".

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of both performers and audience members at ▮▮▮▮▮ Choir concerts, and to explore the relationship between them. One of the things I aim to understand through this research is whether audience experiences 'match up' with choir members' experiences. An understanding of how our performances are received will help inform future choir activities and concerts.

Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF YOU?

You are being asked to share your experience of attending an ▮ACTion▮ Choir concert. If you decide to participate you will be asked to meet with me for an individual interview lasting

between 30 and 60 minutes. I will meet you at a place and time that is convenient for you. I will ask you questions about your experience at the ACTion Choir concert. I will audiotape the interview and transcribe it.

You can decline to answer any of the questions. You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time.

BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, I hope that the findings of this study may help enhance the performance experience for people with disabilities, and help the public understand the value of musical performances by people with disabilities for their communities. It is possible that you find that your experience at ▆▆▆▆ Choir concerts is enhanced.

RISKS

There are no known risks to participation in this study. Sometimes, in an interview, people may choose to share information that is personal and evokes strong feelings. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may stop participating at any time if you choose. If any aspects of this research project concern you, you may contact the executive director ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆▆

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your participation in this study will be anonymous. Every effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- I will use pseudonyms for all participants, organizations, and locations. Pseudonyms will be used on all research notes and documents. All notes and documents will be kept for three years after the research is completed and then destroyed.
- I will keep notes, interview transcripts, audiotapes, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in my personal possession.
- I will keep all electronic data password protected.

HOW WILL MY INTERVIEW RESPONSES BE USED?

Data from interviews will be discussed in professional settings. I will share data with my academic advisors and other students. When any information is shared, pseudonyms will be used and all identifying information will be removed. It is hoped that the results of this

study will be published and presented at professional music therapy conferences. If so, interview data will be anonymous and all identifying information will be removed.

All interview data will be destroyed three years after the study is complete.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study you may contact me at the above address. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with me, please contact:

████████████████████████████████
████████████████
████████████

████████████

OR

Dr. Gary Ansdell   gary.ansdell@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Dr. Mercedes Pavlicevic   mercedes.pavlicevic@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy
2 Lissenden Gardens
London, UK
NW5 1PQ

Phone: 011 + 44 + 20 7267 4496

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with me or with ████. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Appendix 4. Informed Consent (Audience), Preliminary Study

<u>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</u>

When Music is Shared:
Exploring Performer & Audience Experiences in Music Therapy
Performance

I have read and I understand the provided information.   YES   NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions.   YES   NO

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that
I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason
and without cost.   YES   NO

I consent to an interview with the researcher.   YES   NO

I consent to having my interview audiotaped.   YES   NO

I understand that my participation will be anonymous.   YES   NO

I consent to the results of this study being published.   YES   NO

I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.   YES   NO

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

<u>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET</u>

Erinn is doing a project on choir concerts. She wants to learn how we can make choir concerts the best possible experience for everyone!

Erinn wants to find out what it's like for you to sing in an ████ Choir concert. She also wants to find out what our concerts are like for the audience.

She would like to videotape 4 of our choir rehearsals and our concert this spring.

Erinn would also like to hear what choir is like for you. Would you be willing to talk with her about your experience in choir? She will record the conversation so that she can listen again later.

If you agree to be part of Erinn's project, you might learn something new about choir and about performing for an audience. If you don't want to be in the project, that is alright. You can keep on singing in choir just as you always have.

If you agree to be part of the project but then later decide you don't want to anymore, that is OK. You can stop anytime.

Erinn will keep the things you say in your conversation with her private. She will need to talk about her project with her professors and other students, but when she does she will not include your name. Erinn would like to publish her project when it is all done, so that other people can learn about what choir is like, but she will do that without using your name. That way you can have privacy.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Please circle ✔ (yes) or ✗ (no) for each:

Is it OK for Erinn to videotape our choir rehearsals?   ✔   ✗

Is it OK for Erinn to videotape our Spring Concert?   ✔   ✗

Would you like to talk with Erinn about choir?   ✔   ✗

Name (printed): _____   Date: _____

Name (signed): _____

Witness (printed): _____   Date: _____

Witness (signed): _____

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

When Music is Shared:
Exploring Performer & Audience Experiences in Music Therapy Performance

RESEARCHER

Erinn Epp, MA, MT-BC
Nordoff-Robbins, Goldsmiths, University of London
725 Benjamin Ave.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616)970-8253
erinn.epp@nordoff-robbins.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

My name is Erinn Epp, and I am the director of the ▮▮▮▮▮ Choir. I have been a credentialed music therapist for over 15 years and this is my 8th year with the ▮▮▮▮▮ Choir. I am also a PhD student at the University of London and I am conducting a research study entitled, "When Music is Shared: Exploring Performer & Audience Experiences in Music Therapy."

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of both performers and audience members at ▮▮▮▮▮ Choir concerts, and to explore the relationship between them. One of the things I aim to understand through this research is the impact of performances by people with disabilities on their communities.

I would very much like _____ to take part in this research project.

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF YOUR FAMILY MEMBER?

I am asking permission for two things: 1) to videotape 4 choir rehearsals (March 23 – April 27) and our Spring Concert (May 4), and 2) to interview your family member about his/her experience in choir. I will audiotape the interview and transcribe it. All information I collect (including audio and video footage) will be kept confidential. All participants can be assured of their privacy at all times.

Since you know _____ well, and since he/she may not be in a position to decide whether or not he/she would like to take part in this project, I need your help. I would like to know whether, in your opinion, he/she would want to be involved.

If you think that _____ would have no objection to taking part, I will ask you to read and sign the attached consent form for Parents/Guardians. Please let me know if you have any concerns or you think that _____ should be withdrawn at any time during the project.

If you decide that _____ would not wish to take part, this will in no way affect his/her participation in the ████ Choir.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study you may contact me at the above address. If problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with me, please contact:

OR

Dr. Gary Ansdell   gary.ansdell@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Dr. Mercedes Pavlicevic   mercedes.pavlicevic@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy
2 Lissenden Gardens
London, UK
NW5 1PQ

Phone: 011 + 44 + 20 7267 4496

Appendix 8. Informed Consent (Parents/Guardians), Preliminary Study

<u>CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS</u>

Please read and circle your answer:

I _____ [YOUR NAME], have been consulted
about _____'s participation in this research project.   YES   NO

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project and
understand what is involved.   YES   NO

I have read and understood the attached Parent/Guardian Information Sheet
and the Information Sheet for Choir Members.   YES   NO

Based on my knowledge of _____, he/she would
have no objection to:

    1) the videotaping of 4 choir rehearsals and Spring Concert   YES   NO

    2) an audiotaped interview with Erinn about his/her experience
       in choir   YES   NO

I understand that I can request that my family member be withdrawn from
the study at any time, without giving any reason and without his/her
participation in the choir being affected.   YES   NO

I understand that the findings of this research project may be published.   YES   NO

I understand that in all aspects of this project, my family member's
participation will be anonymous and all information will be kept confidential. YES NO

Please read and sign the following:

I have read and understood the information about the project and I am happy for the
person named below to taking part in the study.

☐   YES   ☐   NO

Name of choir member:_____

Name of parent/guardian:_____

Relationship to choir member:_____

Signature of parent/guardian:_____

Date:_____

Appendix 9. Data Collection Tools, Preliminary Study

When Music is Shared:
Exploring Performer & Audience Experiences in Music Therapy Performance

1. Participant observation
   - I, as choir director, will participate in 4 one-hour ▮▮▮▮ Choir rehearsals (23 March; 13, 20, 27 April 2017)
   - I, as choir director, will participate in the Spring Concert (4 May 2017)
   - All 4 rehearsals and the Spring Concert will be videotaped; stationary video camera, facing choir
   - I will write observation notes immediately following rehearsals and concert; these will include thick description of participants and setting, actions and interactions (verbal and nonverbal) in chronological order; I will conduct member checks when clarification is needed

2. Performer group interview
   - Conducted by me as researcher during a regularly-scheduled rehearsal (will be videotaped)

   1) What are choir rehearsals like for you?
      a. What do you like/not like about choir rehearsals?
   2) What are you thinking/how are you feeling about our upcoming concert?
   3) What do you like about singing for people?
   4) What do you want the audience to take away from the concert?

3. Performer individual semi-structured interview
   - Conducted by me as researcher post-concert (within approximately 6 weeks)
   - Interview participants will be self-selected

   1) What was this concert like for you?
      a. How did you feel singing for an audience?
      b. How was singing for an audience different than rehearsals?
      c. Why is it important to you to perform for others?
   2) What do you think this concert was like for the audience?
      a. What were the people in the audience doing?
      b. What do you imagine they were thinking/feeling during the concert?

      c. What do you want the audience to be thinking/feeling after one of our concerts?

4. <u>"Vox Pop" example interview questions (immediately following concert)</u>
   - Brief, informal interviews that will be videotaped
   - Conducted by an ▉ staff member who will approach both performers and audience members after the concert while people are mingling
   - I will verbally give the audience information about participation at the end of the concert; people may indicate their wish not to participate by making a pre-specified gesture if/when approached

   1) What was a highlight of the concert for you?
   2) In a word, describe the feeling you're leaving here with today.
   3) Tell me about your experience here today…

5. <u>Audience written questionnaire (immediately following concert)</u>
   - to be handed out by an ▉ staff member to all audience members as they enter the performance space, and collected by an ▉ staff member upon leaving

   1) When did you first come to an ▉ Choir concert? How many have you attended in the last two years?
   2) What are two or three words that describe your experience here today?
   3) What part of this concert was a highlight for you?
   4) If this was not your first ▉ Choir concert, how has your experience of attending these concerts changed over the years?
   5) Have there been concerts you haven't enjoyed/felt uneasy about?
   6) What do you think the concert was like for the performers?
   7) How would you describe the experience of attending an ▉ Choir concert to someone who has never gone?
   8) Would you be interested in being contacted for an interview? If so, please give your name and phone number and/or email address:_____

6. <u>Audience semi-structured individual interview</u>
   - Conducted by me as researcher post-concert (within approximately 6 weeks)
   - Interview participants will be selected based on their responses to the written questionnaire in terms of: 1) the clarity, thoughtfulness, and relevance of their written responses, and 2) their indication that they would like to be interviewed

1) Tell me about your experience attending this concert.
2) What did you expect in attending this concert? What surprised you?
3) How do you benefit by attending ██████ Choir concerts?
4) How was being in the audience at this concert different than being in the audience at other (non-██████ Choir) concerts?
5) What do you think the concert was like for the performers?

7. <u>Reflexive journal</u>
   - I will write weekly notes, open-ended and unstructured
   - I will record thoughts, feelings, and insights related to observations but kept separate from descriptive notes
   - Purpose is to reflect on assumptions, biases, questions, and concerns that arise in research process

<u>INFORMATION SHEET</u>

"Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events

RESEARCHER

Erinn Epp, MA, MT-BC
Nordoff-Robbins/Goldsmiths, University of London
725 Benjamin Ave.
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616)970-8253
erinn.epp@nordoff-robbins.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

My name is Erinn Epp, and I am a credentialed music therapist. I have over 10 years of experience directing community choirs with special populations, and I am conducting a research study called, "Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events. I would like to invite you to participate in this research project.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature of audience activity and engagement in a choir performance – specifically, in Community Music Therapy performances or similar kinds of musical-social events. I am interested in finding out if and how the sharing of music in performance creates new social possibilities between performers and their audiences. To do this, I want to find out what audiences do in performances and what they experience.

Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF YOU?

You are being asked to share your experience of directing and performing with a choir. This will happen in an interview lasting approximately 30-60 minutes. It can be conducted in person or on a video conferencing platform (such as Zoom) and will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you. With your permission I will record the interview and transcribe it.

Part of the interview might include drawing and/or writing down remembered aspects of performances. I will ask you to have a pen and paper handy to do this.
Reviewing past events by watching or listening to recordings often helps people remember their thoughts, feelings, and actions during the event. I will ask if you have any video or audio recordings of past concerts (recorded live or online) and if there is a particular song or moment you would like to share with me. If so, we will watch/listen together in the interview and I will ask you questions about it. This is optional, and the interview can proceed without sharing any recordings if you wish.

Participation in the project is your choice. You can decline to answer any of the questions, and you can choose to stop participating in the study at any time.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING?

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, I hope that the findings of this study will add to knowledge about how the sharing of music in performance creates new social possibilities between performers and their audiences.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

There are no known risks to participation in this study. Sometimes, in an interview, people may choose to share information that is personal and evokes strong feelings. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may stop participating at any time if you choose. If any aspects of this research project concern you, you may contact my academic supervisor: Dr. Gary Ansdell at gary.ansdell@nordoff-robbins.org.uk

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

Your participation in this study will be anonymous. Every effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality, including the following:

- I will use pseudonyms for all participants, organizations, and locations. Pseudonyms will be used on all research notes and documents. All notes and documents will be kept for three years after the research is completed and then destroyed.

- I will keep notes, interview transcripts, audio/videotapes, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in my personal possession.
- I will keep all electronic data password protected.

HOW WILL MY INTERVIEW RESPONSES BE USED?

Data from interviews will be discussed in professional settings. I will share data with my academic advisors and other students. When any information is shared, pseudonyms will be used and all identifying information will be removed. It is hoped that the results of this study will be published and presented at professional music therapy conferences. If so, interview data will be anonymous and all identifying information will be removed.

All interview data will be destroyed three years after the study is complete.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study you may contact me at the above address. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with me, please contact:

Dr. Gary Ansdell   gary.ansdell@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Dr. Tia DeNora   tia.denora@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy
2 Lissenden Gardens
London, UK
NW5 1PQ

Phone: 011 + 44 + 20 7267 4496

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Appendix 11. Informed Consent (Choir Directors), Secondary Study

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

"Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events

I have read and I understand the provided information.	YES	NO
I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	YES	NO
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost.	YES	NO
I consent to an interview with the researcher.	YES	NO
I consent to having my interview audiorecorded.	YES	NO
I consent to having my interview videorecorded.	YES	NO
I consent to sending (by email) the researcher drawings and/or writings that come out of the interview process.	YES	NO
I consent to showing the researcher a video or audio excerpt of a performance given by my choir.	YES	NO
I understand that my participation will be anonymous.	YES	NO
I consent to the results of this study being published.	YES	NO
I voluntarily agree to take part in this study in the ways I have specified above.	YES	NO

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 12. Information Sheet (Audience), Secondary Study

<u>INFORMATION SHEET</u>

"Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events

RESEARCHER

Erinn Epp, MA, MT-BC

Nordoff-Robbins/Goldsmiths, University of London

725 Benjamin Ave.

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

(616)970-8253

erinn.epp@nordoff-robbins.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

My name is Erinn Epp, and I am a credentialed music therapist. I have over 10 years of experience directing community choirs with special populations, and I am conducting a research study called, "Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events. I would like to invite you to participate in this research project.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature of audience activity and engagement in a choir performance – specifically, in Community Music Therapy performances or similar kinds of musical-social events. I am interested in finding out if and how the sharing of music in performance creates new social possibilities between performers and their audiences. To do this, I want to find out what audiences do in performances and what they experience.

Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF YOU?

You are being asked to share your experience of attending performances given by a particular choir in an interview. This interview can be done individually or in a small focus group – you can choose which you'd prefer.

An individual interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes. It can be conducted in person or on a video conferencing platform (such as Zoom) and will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you. With your permission I will record the interview and transcribe it.

Part of the interview might include drawing and/or writing down remembered aspects of a performance. I will ask you to have a pen and paper handy to do this.

Focus groups will consist of 4-6 people who have attended one or more concerts given by the same choir. I will ask the group questions about their experiences attending concerts, and we will proceed in an informal, conversational manner. Focus groups will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be held on a video conferencing platform (such as Zoom). They will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all participants. With the permission of each person in the focus group I will record the interview and transcribe it.

Participation in the project is your choice. You can decline to answer any of the questions, and you can choose to stop participating in the study at any time.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING?

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, I hope that the findings of this study will add to knowledge about how the sharing of music in performance creates new social possibilities between performers and their audiences.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

There are no known risks to participation in this study. Sometimes, in an interview, people may choose to share information that is personal and evokes strong feelings. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may stop participating at any time if you choose. If any aspects of this research project concern you, you may contact my academic supervisor: Dr. Gary Ansdell at gary.ansdell@nordoff-robbins.org.uk

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

Your participation in this study will be anonymous. Every effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality, including the following:

- I will use pseudonyms for all participants, organizations, and locations. Pseudonyms will be used on all research notes and documents. All notes and

documents will be kept for three years after the research is completed and then destroyed.

- I will keep notes, interview transcripts, audio/videorecordings, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in my personal possession.
- I will keep all electronic data password protected.

HOW WILL MY INTERVIEW RESPONSES BE USED?

Data from interviews will be discussed in professional settings. I will share data with my academic advisors and other students. When any information is shared, pseudonyms will be used and all identifying information will be removed. It is hoped that the results of this study will be published and presented at professional music therapy conferences. If so, interview data will be anonymous and all identifying information will be removed.

All interview data will be destroyed three years after the study is complete.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study you may contact me at the above address. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with me, please contact:

Dr. Gary Ansdell   gary.ansdell@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Dr. Tia DeNora   tia.denora@nordoff-robbins.org.uk
Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy
2 Lissenden Gardens
London, UK
NW5 1PQ

Phone: 011 + 44 + 20 7267 4496

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Appendix 13. Informed Consent (Audience), Secondary Study

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**"Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in
Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events**

I have read and I understand the provided information.	YES	NO
I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	YES	NO
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost.	YES	NO

I consent to:
participating in an interview with the researcher (only).	YES	NO
participating in a focus group (only).	YES	NO
participating in either an interview or a focus group.	YES	NO

I consent to having my interview audiorecorded.	YES	NO
I consent to having my interview videorecorded.	YES	NO
I consent to sending (by email) the researcher drawings and/or writings that come out of the interview process.	YES	NO
I understand that my participation will be anonymous.	YES	NO
I consent to the results of this study being published.	YES	NO
I voluntarily agree to take part in this study in the ways I have specified above.	YES	NO

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 14. Consent to Refer Participants

<u>CONSENT TO REFER PARTICIPANTS</u>

"Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events

Thank you for participating in this research study. Would you be willing to pass along the names and contact information of other 1) choir directors who lead therapeutically-oriented choirs, or 2) audience members who have attended performances given by such choirs?

There is no obligation for you to pass along this information. I will be letting potential participants whom you refer know that you were the source of the referral. You have the right to request that you are given time to notify the potential participants prior to me contacting them.

I am willing to refer potential participants for this study. YES NO

I understand there is no obligation to provide this information. YES NO

I understand that potential participants will be notified that I was the source of the referral. YES NO

I would like to notify potential participants prior to the researcher contacting them. YES NO

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix 15. Data Collection Tools, Secondary Study

"Audiencing": Investigating Audience Activity and Engagement in Community Music Therapy Performance and other Musical-Social Events

List of Data Collection Tools
1. Choir Director Interview (semi-structured)
   - Video Elicitation Interview
2. Audience Individual Interview (semi-structured)
   - Memory Maps
3. Audience Focus Group Interview (semi-structured)
4. Reflexive Journal

All interviews will be conducted by me.

1. <u>Choir Director Interview (semi-structured)</u>

I will be asking participants about their general experiences in concerts to begin with, and from there questions may focus on particular concerts when they are brought up by the participants themselves.

A. Concert Preparation:

- Describe the process of preparing the choir for a concert.
- How do you personally prepare for a concert?
- What kinds of considerations were involved when choosing music for performances? How was music chosen/rejected?
- How are concerts advertised? Who is your target audience?
- What is the dress code/uniform for performances? How was it chosen?
- Do you see any differences in performer mood/energy/behaviour/communication on performance day compared to rehearsals?
- Do you 'spotlight' any individuals within the choir – through solos or specific roles in the concert? How is this decided?

B. During the Concert:

- How is the physical environment set up for a concert? Lighting, seating, performer arrangement and proximity to audience, etc.
- What does the audience do before the concert starts?
- Where is your attention drawn during a performance? What are you focused on?
- Where is the choir's attention drawn during a performance?
- What do you notice about the choir's response to the audience?
- What have you noticed about audience response in past performances?
- What kind of audience participation do you expect/encourage/appreciate? What kind of audience participation do or the choir you not appreciate?
- Do you address the audience directly at any time during a concert? What do you say?
- Describe a memorable moment from a past concert.
- Describe a memorable moment involving audience response from a past concert.

C. After the Concert:

- What happens immediately after a concert? What does the choir do/say? What does the audience do/say? What do you do/say?
- Do you hear from audience members in the days or weeks after a concert? Do you meet with the choir?
- With whom do you speak about the choir after a performance? How is the choir talked about?
- How does the outcome of a performance inform what you choose to do for the next performance (repertoire, venue)?

D. Other Questions

- As director, what do you want from the audience? What do you think the choir wants? How do you know when you have 'gotten' it?
- Do you record performances? Why? For whom? How are they used?
- Do you try to minimize or conceal anything in a performance (erratic behaviour, musical 'mistakes')? What, how and why?
- Do you try to highlight or showcase anything in a performance? What, how, and why?
- How are unexpected audience responses dealt with?
- How are emotional and social risks managed in a performance?
- How has the choir's engagement with an audience changed during COVID19? How has this been experienced by the choir?

E. Video Elicitation

When arranging interviews with choir directors, I will invite them to share video excerpts from past concerts and to have these excerpts ready during the interview, where we will view them together through the screen-sharing option on Zoom. It will be explained that it can be helpful, when recounting an experience, to view the event and share memories and reactions during the process of watching. Sharing video is optional and any excerpts shown will be chosen by the participant. Any video shown must be publicly available, meaning that the choir has already consented to being recorded and the recording is available on the choir's website, through video sharing platforms such as YouTube, or on other formats such as DVD. This is to ensure that the choir has consented to the unrestricted viewing of their performances.

- Describe your actions, thoughts, and feelings in this moment using the present tense.
- What were you thinking and feeling during this moment?
- What did you notice about the choir and about the audience?

2. **Audience Individual Interview (semi-structured)**

I will ask participants about their general experiences in concerts to begin with, and from there questions may focus on particular concerts when they are brought up by the participants themselves.

A. Concert Preparation:

- What are/were your reasons for attending concerts given by this choir?
- How far in advance do you get tickets/decide to go?
- With whom do you go to choir concerts? Is this different than other concerts you go to?
- How do you usually prepare to go? What do you wear? How do you get there? What, if anything, is different about concert days?
- Do you know anyone in the choir?
- How many performances have you attended?

B. During the Concert:

- What do you expect when you arrive at a concert?
- Where do you wait before the concert begins?

- How do you decide where to sit? Who do you sit with?
- Describe a memorable concert experience.
    i. What did you notice during this moment? Where was your attention drawn?
    ii. Describe the sound of the music you heard. What stood out?
    iii. Describe what you saw. What stood out?
    iv. Describe the way you listened. What were you listening for?
    v. What did you do? How did you sit/move? Did you applaud? How? What was your facial expression like? How did it change? Did you look at anyone in particular? Did you make eye contact with anyone? Who and when?
    vi. What did you think/feel?
    vii. What reactions did you show freely? What reactions did you try to conceal?
- What have you noticed about the way the choir reacts to the audience?
- What have you noticed about other audience members? Who attends these concerts?
- What has been surprising about concerts? What has been expected?

C. After the Concert:

- What do you do immediately after a concert? Who do you talk with? What do you talk about?
- Where do you go after a concert? What do you do?
- Do you remember what music you have listened to after a concert?
- Whom do you talk to about choir concerts? How do you talk about it? How does the subject come up?
- What do you think concerts are like for the performers?

D. Other Questions:

- If you have attended more than one concert, how has your experience changed over time? How was this concert different than other concerts?
- How was this concert different than other kinds of concerts you go to?
- What do you think the choir wants, needs, and/or expects from the audience?
- How has your engagement with the choir changed during COVID19? Have you 'attended' virtual concerts? How is your experience different during these events?

E. Memory Maps:

- These will be used in conjunction with individual audience interviews

- Participants will be asked to sketch a 'map' representing their experience and memories of the concert. Maps may take the form of a conventional map, picture, diagram, or flowchart.
- The participant will then be asked to describe what has been drawn, and questions will focus on specific features of the map or the relationships/linkages between items on the map

3. **Audience Focus Group Interview (semi-structured)**

Focus groups, held on Zoom, will consist of 4-6 people who have attended concerts given by the same choir. I will conduct focus groups in a semi-structured manner, moving from general questions about concert experiences to more specific questions about particular events and/or topics that emerge during the discussion. My aim is to moderate the group in an informal, conversational manner. Participants will be reminded to keep the content of the focus group confidential. Questions will be taken from the individual interview schedule. Additional questions include:

- Who do you think is in the audience? How did they get there?
- How do you interact with other audience members?
- How does the audience interact with the choir?
- Do you adjust your response (i.e., applause, cheering) based on the responses of other audience members?
- How do you talk about the concert with others before and after the event?

4. **Reflexive Journal**
- I will write weekly notes, open-ended and unstructured
- I will record thoughts, feelings, and insights related to data collection and analysis but kept separate from data
- Purpose is to reflect on assumptions, biases, questions, and concerns that arise in research process