

Music-Making Behind Bars: The Many Dimensions of Community Music in Prisons

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Abstract

Approaches to incarceration vary widely across the globe. As described within and throughout this book, approaches to and definitions of community music also differ in intricate ways. This chapter examines music-making in prisons, specifically led by people coming into U.S. and U.K. prison contexts, suggesting new insights into the values, applications, and meanings of community music. Contrasting approaches toward imprisonment exist not only across the globe, but also within particular countries. In the United States, for example, a wide range of practices within the contexts of imprisonment occur such as incarceration rates, lengths of sentences, use of capital punishment, voting rights for incarcerated people, and quality of legal representation, to name a few. Life behind bars restricts inmates' opportunities for self-expression. Research and practice in music-making in prisons is newly developing and suggests that community music approaches within prisons provides a means toward desistance, improved self-esteem, social support, and a sense of accomplishment. Furthermore, music-making within the complex power dynamics of prison contexts emphasizes the importance of the concepts of the welcome and hospitality within our understanding of community music.

Keywords: Community Music, Criminal Justice, Desistance, Incarceration, Music in Prisons, Possible Selves

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Introduction: Setting the Stage for Music-Making in Prisons

As the field of community music is growing and developing in recent years, so are instances of and publications about music-making in prisons. Scholars have begun to investigate what community music practices are occurring in prison contexts (i.e., Cohen, 2010; Cohen, 2012; Cohen, Duncan, & Anderson, 2013). Community music practitioners and artists have reported on their music-making activities within prisons (i.e., Anderson & Overy, 2010; Fierro, 2010; Palidofsky, 2011; Rodrigues et al., 2010; Roma, 2010; & Tiernan, 2010). A common theme in these publications is the role of music-making at a tool for individual self-expression and connections with a broader social community.

In order to discuss the relationships between community music and music-making in prisons, we start with a brief introduction to a massive topic: incarceration across the globe. Second, we look at research and theories within the desistance processes including the concept of possible selves, noting the differences in practice and research among different countries. Third, we examine the parallels and contrasts between community music and music-making in prisons, leading us to a discussion on the challenges of music-making in prisons. After a description of two vignettes, we conclude with considerations of how music-making in prisons enhances our understandings of community music.

Incarceration across the Globe

Deborah Drake (2012) indicates that five purposes of prisons are “rehabilitation, incapacitation, deterrence (from future offending), general prevention (deterrence from committing crime in the first place), and delivery of justice” (p. 2). However, she notes that no definitive evidence supports a claim that prisons fulfill these purposes. Dammer (2006) suggests that the only goals of sentencing that prisons achieve “are the ones that admit to failure: retribution and incapacitation” (p. 260). According to Roy Walmsley (2013) over 10.2 million people are incarcerated in penal institutions across the globe. If people in China who are in “detention centres” and people in North Korean prison camps are included in the figure, that number rises to 11 million people. Furthermore, according to Vivien Stern (1998), all prisons across the world incarcerate minorities facing discrimination in their respective outside societies as well as poor populations (p. 8). Drake (2012) argues that prisons obscure social problems. She argues that an unexamined assumption by people who are not in prison and who have no family or close friends in prison, is that all or most people in prison are dangerous or even “evil” (pp. 6-10). This “construction of dangerous others” (p. 6) created by such unexamined assumptions lead the general public to a false conclusion that prisons provide security from such danger. Drake and others (e.g., Alexander, 2010; Stevenson, 2014) point out that prisons have caused a great deal of problems including formerly incarcerated people’s inability to vote, difficulty in finding employment and housing, harms within interpersonal relationships, and low self-image.

Perceptions of crime and criminality differ greatly throughout the world. Immense variations exist regarding definitions of criminal behavior and the processes for dealing with crimes. Discrepancies in legal systems, punishment practices, and incarceration rates depend on a particular country’s government structure and its legal traditions. Some countries with a unitary form of government have a centralized structure of law enforcement such as England, France, Japan, China, Indonesia, Iran, Singapore, and the Philippines. Other countries based on a federal system such as the United States, Germany, Brazil, Canada, and Australia, have dual systems of criminal justice. In both Australia and the United States, territories and states are constitutionally authorized to establish respective systems of criminal justice along with laws and enforcements of those laws (Shahidullah, 2014).

Incarceration practices also vary tremendously. Three countries with some of the lower incarceration rates compared to other countries in the world, Germany (79 per 100,000), Norway (72 per 100,000), and Japan (51 per 100,000) (Wagner, Sakala, & Begley, 2014), use progressive rehabilitation programs. For example, community reintegration programs in German prisons include home leave, half-open release, and conjugal visits. At the discretion of prison authorities, inmates can return home during their sentence. The half-open release program allows inmates who have completed half of their sentence to earn the benefit of leaving the institution during the day for work or school (Dammer, 2006, p. 269).

Recently, in the United States, with the highest incarceration rate in the world at an average of 716 people incarcerated per 100,000 in the population, the largest lawsuit against the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, *Bacote v. Federal Bureau of Prisons*, was filed and won in order to change illegal and unconstitutional procedures occurring in the Administrative Maximum Facility in Florence, Colorado including mistreatment of inmates with mental illness (A. Cohen, 2012). In Europe, England and Wales have the highest rate of incarceration with 143 people incarcerated per 100,000. A recent report into the provision for people with learning disabilities within the criminal justice system found that there was a failure to support people with disabilities as obliged under the Equality Act 2010 (HM Inspectorate of Probation & HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2015). This omission was mainly attributed to a lack of identification, but the report also found evidence of an unwillingness to comply with National Offender Management Service instructions and the Equality Act 2010. Furthermore, where identification had been made, there was “little or no information about how the disability might impact reoffending, and sentence plans did not take into account how a person might be prevented from engaging in the plan due to learning disabilities” (p. 11).

Issues within prison contexts that complicate community music practices include policies, limitations, confinement, regulations, and security protocols. These complicated issues require community musicians in prisons to rethink activities and consider carefully what, if any, musical instruments are used, what lyrics are sung, how participants’ can create musical content, and how interactions occur among participants. These practices expand our collective understandings of the concepts of community music. We suggest that necessary community music concepts for music-making practices in prisons are the welcome and creating a sense of hospitality for all involved.

Limitations of the Chapter

We acknowledge multiple approaches to incarceration exist across the globe, and admit that it is impossible to provide an exhaustive summary of community music inside prisons. Instead, we focus our discussion on music-making behind bars within select contexts, developing insight on our understanding of community music by exploring dimensions of community music in prisons.

What are the interactions and relationships between community music and music in prisons? To consider these associations, we explore the theoretical underpinnings of rehabilitation in terms of desistance theory, with a particular focus on the construction of possible selves as part of the change processes, and relate these concepts to the theoretical underpinnings of community music. We discuss the challenges of the freedoms of community music within incarceration through two vignettes - one long term weekly program and one short term intensive program - to explore the dimensions of community music in prisons. In conclusion, we reflect on how these dimensions enhance our understanding of community music.

The Desistance Process

McCulloch and McNeill (2008) explain that desistance

resides somewhere in the interfaces between developing personal maturity, changing social bonds associated with certain life transitions, and the individual subjective narrative constructions which offenders build around these key events and changes. (p. 158)

The Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 (<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/offenderrehabilitation.html>) came into force in the UK in 2015. The Act accompanies the Ministry of Justice's Transforming Rehabilitation program. A key element of the new Parliamentary Act is a change in the way probation services are organized and service providers contracted. According to the Ministry of Justice, the reforms include monetary compensation to Community Rehabilitation Companies for providing successful innovation resulting in reoffending reductions, an emphasis on desistance processes. The desistance processes are understood to be the means toward abstaining from re-offending (Maruna, 2000), with a sense of a continuum between desisting or not desisting from criminal behavior.

This transformation of rehabilitation programming has to some extent been driven by an emergence of interest in desistance in criminology research over the past forty years, and the coming together of criminological research and "offender management policy" (Farrell & Maruna, 2004).

The desistance processes involve the development of attributes that help people to move away from a criminal identity and develop a positive identity that aids in reentry. Rehabilitation in desistance-focused regimes involves developing interventions that initiate and sustain the desistance processes (McNeill, 2004). McNeill et al. (2011) acknowledge that learning plays a key role in identity change, and there is a growing body of empirical evidence demonstrating effective interventions encompassing arts and education in prisons (Farrall & Maruna, 2004). Furthermore, a body of research is emerging that focuses specifically on arts interventions and

their potential for supporting transformative processes (Clennon, 2013; McNeill et al., 2011; Tett et al., 2012).

Drawing together the research on arts interventions within criminal justice settings and desistance theory, McNeill et al. (2011) present six central themes within desistance theory (with examples) that are key to the effectiveness of interventions in their contribution to the desistance process. These themes are:

- Identity and diversity
- Motivation and hope
- Relationships with professionals and personal supporters
- Development of personal as well as social strengths
- Respect and self-determination
- Development of social capital

These themes have been investigated in relation to how they manifest in musical learning processes, and research suggests that parallels occur between these themes and musical learning in prison music projects (Henley, 2015a; Henley, Cohen, & Mota, 2014).

In investigating the ways in which two prison music programs, one in the U.S. and one in the U.K., provide key events that help participants construct new narratives, Henley and Cohen (2014) identified hope and the relationships formed with professionals as being significant in terms of the way incarcerated people engage in transforming their personal narratives. These personal narratives can be described using the concept of possible selves.

Possible Selves

Markus and Nurius (1987) define possible selves as representations of “individuals’ ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become and what they are afraid of becoming” (p. 170). The construction of possible selves involves drawing on self-knowledge of past selves and current selves in order to provide a vision of a self that one would like to become in the future. Often these visions are vivid and people report being able to actually *feel* what it would be like to be that future self. More than just an image of a future self though, possible selves often include strategies and plans for achieving the particular possible self; in order to become this person, I need to achieve x, y, and z. Markus and Ruvolo (1989) argue that possible selves form the representation of “the individual herself or himself approaching and realizing the goal” (p. 211). Thus constructing a possible self involves the development of a personal narrative that supports the achievement of the future self. In other words, possible selves are “the cognitive bridges between the present and the future” (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p. 159).

It is important to note that the concept of possible selves can represent both positive and feared potential identities, and the balance between these two may be significant in rehabilitation. Discussing implications of possible selves for youth delinquency, Oyserman and Markus (1990) explain that “the cessation of delinquency requires the creation both of positive expected selves and of a balancing set of feared selves that might be actualized if delinquent activity is continued or reinitiated” (p. 155). Oyserman and Saltz (1993) found that in a comparative study of delinquent and non-delinquent youth, the non-delinquent youth appeared to be able to balance their possible selves more easily, leading to the assertion that the ability to balance hoped-for and feared possible selves in the same domain is linked to positive behaviors. However, Meek (2011) remains cautious of applying these findings to incarcerated populations, pointing out that research has contested the idea that balancing possible selves can predict behaviors. Yet recognition of feared possible selves may be an important part of personal narratives constructed within the rehabilitation processes.

Frazier and Hooker (2006) suggest that when “older adults have hoped-for or feared health-related selves that they feel capable of achieving in the future, they are more likely to be engaged in health-promoting behaviour” (p. 46). The salient point is that these adults feel capable of achieving their possible selves, whether hoped-for or feared. Therefore it is not necessarily the balance that is important, but the existence of the possible selves that drive achievement; that they may act as self-regulators. Oyserman et al., (2004) explore the ways that possible selves might act as a *road map* in achieving a particular goal. Focusing explicitly on the plausibility of possible selves as self-regulators for young students, they conclude that possible selves are more useful in self-regulatory behavior in the shorter term than the longer term. However, Frazier and Hooker (2006) suggest that continuity in possible selves is important and their evolution over time may contribute to the emergent nature of change processes, a crucial balance serves as a motivational force particularly in older adulthood when feared possible selves become more likely. They serve as conceptual bridges “between the self-concept and motivation” (Markus & Nurius, 1987, p. 170).

Possible selves have been used in investigating the role of music educators’ retention of male singers (Freer, 2009), examining the motivation of adolescent students’ participation in music activities (Campbell, 2009), exploring identity formation (Dunkel & Anthis, 2001), gender differences in identity (Anthis, Dunkel, & Anderson, 2004), the use of identity in learning (Henley, in press a; 2009), and developing identity and transformative processes (Henley, 2015b). The themes of likelihood, expectation, and hope are central to the concept of possible selves in these studies. Meek’s (2011) research explores the identities of young fathers in prisons, and whilst she found no balance between feared and expected selves there was a relationship between hoped for and expected selves. Hope is a key concept in desistance theory and Burnett and Maruna (2004) highlight the importance of hope as a resource for people at the beginning of the desistance process. A challenge lies in how incarcerated people can maintain

hope within a social environment where professional relationships can be difficult and where hope can be suffocated?

McNeill et al. (2011) recognize that personal supporters can help people who are incarcerated feel hopeful. The relationships formed with music facilitators in prisons have been found to be important in terms of the way participants develop both social and personal agency (Henley, 2015; Richmiller, 1992), and Weaver and McNeill (2010) acknowledge that relationships with people outside of the immediate prison environment provide the context for the development of a new social identity. Fundamentally, research has indicated that participation in music programs support incarcerated people to “feel normal” (e.g., Cohen, 2007; Henley et al., 2012). Feeling normal has been highlighted as crucial to the change process (Farrall & Calverley, 2005), and the way that the music facilitator welcomes the participant into the musical domain, actively modelling both positive musical and positive social behaviors helps to bring a sense of normal self to the participant (Henley, 2015a). Additionally, Anthony Storr (1992) advocates that music-making brings people together in collective and communal experiences within all societies.

Parallels and Contrasts between Community Music and Music-Making in Prisons: Issues of Power Dynamics

In Lee Higgins’s (2012) description of community music, he encourages facilitators to aim toward “unconditional hospitality” (p. 147) to welcome all participants into the particular music-making experience. This concept of the welcome involves leading and enabling the group and/or individuals to explore their own musical journeys. Facilitation in community music requires open dialogue between leader and group, among the group participants, allowing openness to the possibility of the unexpected (p. 148). Through intentions of encouraging participants’ imaginations and creative play, community music leaders exhibit what Higgins calls “safety *without* safety” (p. 150, emphasis in original). Musical freedom is supported through care, not only care from the leader, but care within the participants. An important part of hospitality and the welcome is the leader’s process of inspiring kindness and consideration among all participants, providing a deeper level of safety for musical self-expression. These concepts within community music--hospitality, welcome, and empowering musical freedom--are vital for music-making in prisons; however, these practices run contrary to the power structures and security rules within incarceration. Considering Higgins’s (2012) definition of community music as “an active intervention between a music leader or facilitator and participants” (p. 3), other aspects to consider in community music within prison contexts are various power structures that influence facilitators and participants to engage in music-making; some of these dynamics are for the greater good of all involved, some for a particular good which might be harmful toward others.

Indeed, some past practices of music-making in prisons were motivated by authority figures and were done for propaganda purposes. In the 1940s, for example, the Nazis allowed and encouraged prisoners in the Theresienstadt concentration camp to develop cultural practices including concerts, painting classes, and theater performances. These activities were incorporated into a propaganda film titled “The Fuhrer Gives the Jews a City” in 1944, to placate outside concerns about the treatment of Jews by the Nazis (Moreno, 2006).

More recently, Mangaoang (2013) reported on the “Philippine Thriller Video” YouTube sensation that showed 1500 inmates of the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Centre dancing to Michael Jackson’s popular song “Thriller.” She argued that the dance performance, which went viral after it was posted in 2007, operated as a means of distraction serving the state more than the processes of rehabilitation. Both of these examples highlight power issues stemming from authority figures.

Lily Hirsch (2012) described a controversial 2002 VH1 television series titled “Music behind Bars.” This series was a documentary that highlighted music programs in U.S. prisons. The opening episode featured bands at Pennsylvania’s Graterford Prison. Victims of the performing musicians were outraged and one pursued a lawsuit against the parent network of VH1 in response to an episode that highlighted the victim’s killer (p. 86). This example indicates the need for victims’ perspectives to be taken into consideration with respect to music-making in prisons.

A wide number of related factors impact whether incarcerated populations participate in music-making, and if so, what types of music-making. At the Oakdale prison, for example, when some guitar strings went missing, the inmates did not have access to their guitars for about a year. Security issues override inmates’ access to particular instruments, and some prison security personnel grant access to musical materials and allow participation in programs as a form of behavior control (i.e., Fierro, 2010).

Another factor related to power issues is based on the relationships among participants, including who leads a music program. In order for trust to be established leading toward hospitality within a community music ensemble, a key component is the development of communal responsibility. Higgins (2012) notes that “the interaction between facilitator and the individual participant is paramount to its success” and he suggests that because demarcation between a leader and members is necessary, the relationships within a community music settings are unequal (p. 165). When an inmate leads a community music setting in a prison, participants and leader must consistently navigate the process of developing and sustaining trust. In a choir setting, members occasionally sing solos, recite introductions, or compose songs that the choir sings. Such special features among choir members may result in unwelcome power dynamics as an inside prison choir member noted: “Encouraging someone to step up and perform may be forcing them [sic]

out of a shell of shyness or self pity. It may also, in his mind, validate his belief that he is better than those around him” (Cohen, 2012, p. 52).

Such examples highlight how complex the issues of power are within music-making in prisons. Next we explore these ideas through a broader discussion of the challenges of community music in U.S. and U.K. prison contexts.

Challenges of Community Music in Prison Contexts

Community music practices in prison contexts are ripe with challenges related to institutional issues, research methodologies, purposes, and procedures. Furthermore, the practical differences between community music ideals and the realities of life behind bars complicate these challenges in deeper levels.

Institutional Issues

Structurally, prisons emphasize surveillance and punishment. Security is a primary goal in prison contexts (Drake, 2012). Many prisons are based on the Panopticon or “all seeing eye” model where every inmate can be observed. Whether a prison’s physical structure is the same or different than the Panopticon model, video cameras give security officers the ability to watch inmates for supervision purposes. Erving Goffman (1961) describes how within “total institutions,” activities are tightly scheduled with strict daily routines. Such schedules may limit space for and scheduling of community music activities in prisons. When music activities are scheduled as an intensive intervention or program, prison schedules may also disrupt the continuity of the activity for participants. During research investigating the Good Vibrations program, participants were taken out of music activities to attend various appointments with no prior notice to either the participant or leader. Lack of continuity can become a source of frustration for participants (Henley, 2015a). In the Oakdale Choir, inside singers were transferred to different facilities prior to the concert, some of whom had solos or had composed an original song the choir performed at the concert. In addition to procedural issues within prison contexts, multiple philosophical frameworks from the perspectives of the institution, society, victims’ perspectives, the community music leaders, and the incarcerated participants complicate the practices enormously.

Cormac Behan (2006) strongly suggests the necessity for prison educators to be mindful of what philosophical ideas inform our practices and to encourage critical thinking and support for the needs of the incarcerated learners. He argues (a) that a need exists for prison educators and students to “become reflective agents for change within the educational sphere, the penal system and throughout wider society” (p. 145) and (b) that prison educators need “to recover the

humanity of the individual who has caused suffering, those they have hurt, and those who work in such abominable places” (p. 146).

Without vital human interactions, an acknowledgement of the humanity in others is lost. When this happens, the welcome and hospitality fundamental to community music is also lost. These dimensions of “working with” people and not “working on” people is also emphasized by Higgins (2012), and represents a tension between community music and music in prisons. Challenges may arise in working *with* people within an institutional environment where architecture, policies, and security measures emphasize working *on* people. Nevertheless, research methodologies examining music-making in prison contexts also need to support the human interaction aspects of music-making, a reason to incorporate qualitative research paradigms.

Research Approaches

When researching music-making in prisons, it is impossible to tease out the possible sole effects of music-making participation, as inmates are involved in other educational and leisure activities. These factors make the process of crafting effective research questions and designing strong research designs difficult.

Another challenge in prison research are the difficulties in terms of collecting longitudinal data. Many researches have suggested links between music and rehabilitation, but without long term data it is difficult to measure the actual impact of music-making when people move within and outside of the criminal justice system, particularly in countries such as the U.S. where inmates serve extremely long prison sentences. Often, people are moved within an institution without notice. As found in Good Vibrations research, this factor caused difficulties when a researcher had arranged a visit to interview 16 participants, yet due to a move over the weekend, only 5 could be found within the time allocated to the research visit (Henley, 2015a). Depending on the institution, people may only stay at an establishment for a few weeks before being moved elsewhere. There are also challenges in contacting people once they have left the prison. Researchers attempting longitudinal research have found that even when former participants who have been released can be contacted and interviews have been arranged, the former participants may also exercise their right to withdraw from the study (Henley et al., 2012). Therefore although vital to understanding, collecting data to examine the relationship between music-making and rehabilitation over the long term is extremely challenging.

At the root of challenges in collecting longitudinal as well as any type of data are the ethical issues that surround research practices in prisons. In addition to gaining access to prison contexts, studies must be designed in ways that the inmate participants' rights, confidentiality, and privacy are maintained. Caufield and Hill (2014) recommend at least three principles for researchers in criminological contexts: they must (a) be competent to carry out selected research project, (b) show respect for all involved, and (c) act responsibly avoiding harm to participants, research communities, and broader society (p. 28). They also strongly recommend the need for researchers to consider every piece of research individually on a case by case basis. They refer to this idea as "consequentialism," emphasizing the need to consider the consequences of all aspects of the research (p. 32). Furthermore, they emphasize that rather than ethics being a set of rules to adhere to, there are guiding principles and the researchers must mindfully examine their research designs and decisions regarding each situation.

Purposes and Procedures

The purposes for music-making in prisons are as broad and wide as the number of people who lead these programs. Possible categories include: (a) freedom within incarceration, (b) opportunities to express possible selves, (c) providing opportunities for music-making and self-expression, (d) increasing the public's awareness of issues related to incarceration and reentry, and (e) enhancing social relationships among participants, audience members, and people within the prison institution. We suggest two key procedures based on community music concepts: (a) the approach of the facilitator (e.g., Higgins's "welcome"), (b) equality within decision-making processes. These categories and procedures are explored within the next section on two vignettes of community music programs within prisons.

Two Vignettes

Higgins (2012) suggests that the key dispositions of community music practice include

person-centered facilitation processes, access for all members of the community, a recognition that participants' social and personal growth are as important as their musical growth, and an acknowledgement of both individual and group ownership of musics. (p.156)

These dispositions occur as a result of the community music facilitator working *with* participants rather than *on* participants. The following two vignettes provide insight into the ways that community music and prison music-making interact through face to face encounters that enable acts of hospitality to take place. It is not our intention to make claims through these small descriptions, rather to highlight the intersections between the aims of community music as described by Higgins and the possibilities of prison music-making.

Good Vibrations

Good Vibrations is a registered charity (number 1126493) in the U.K. that helps prisoners, secure hospital patients, returning citizens, and others in the community develop crucial life and work skills, through participating in intensive gamelan (Indonesian bronze percussion) courses or weeklong sequence of workshops. In 2014-15, the musical leaders of Good Vibrations worked with 390 individuals in a mixture of prisons (61%), community settings (35%) and secure hospitals (4%).

A Good Vibrations course typically runs as a week-long residency for a group of 15 - 20 participants. At the end of the week, the group puts on an informal performance. Each performance is recorded and a CD produced, a copy provided to everyone who has taken part (good-vibrations.org.uk).

Evaluation and research has indicated a variety of benefits of participating in a Good Vibrations project (Caulfield, Wilson, & Wilkinson, 2010; Digard, von Sponeck, & Liebling, 2007; Wilson & Logan, 2006). Researchers have suggested that the impacts that have been consistently reported by participants are supported by the communal and social nature of the musical activity (Henley et al., 2012). A key finding from recent research highlighted that the approach the facilitator took in terms of ensuring each participant had the opportunity to contribute to the music and to discussion and decision-making, was crucial in fostering the sense of community within the group (Henley, in press b). In other words, acts of hospitality on the part of the facilitator instilled a sense of sharing:

This is what life is about, and music, sharing everything. When I get into it, I started enjoying it.

[It is] lovely to see everyone sharing music together and helping everyone out.

Through sharing music and musical decisions, participants recognized the importance of listening and co-operation both within music and in other areas of life:

When you get annoyed, frustrated, you have to listen and respect people.

I learned how to speak with people and to communicate.

You need to be able to listen to each other.

Even though a lot of us didn't know each other, we were working together. Prisoners rarely do. You just shout a lot in here, that's what you do. [Good Vibrations has] built a real sense of cooperation.

For some, these skills were carried with them as evidenced in interviews six-weeks after participating in a program.

I've listened a lot more. For a while in prison I've not listened to people. This [Good Vibrations] has reopened that channel. It's only looking back now that I see that. It's one of those things, it may not seem significant at the time, but you take something with you. For me, it was cooperating with each other, which means listening.

I am able to listen a lot more ... that was something that I struggled with before. I used to be, 'I don't care, I'm here for one person and one person only'. You can't be like that. In order to get anywhere in this world you've got to listen.

The building of the community through the acts of hospitality by the facilitator enabled the participants to develop individually in different ways.

Gave me a sense of pride, worth - you can't feel proud of much in prison; it's an alive feeling; I've felt it a lot this week.

Gives you something to focus on; something I can talk to my probation officer about.

It's calming and relaxing; helped me feel so good about myself.

Helps keep you straight. You can put your energy into this instead of other stuff.

For some, this personal growth enabled them to reflect on their own behaviors.

There were people on that [Good Vibrations] course that I couldn't stand. They knew I didn't like them. I avoided putting myself into a situation that could get me into trouble. I'd not do that on other courses.

After the project, looking back, I only realized the effect ... [I think about] how much of a good experience it was, how much it taught me, how it has expanded my life.

Whereas for others, the program gave them the opportunity to engage in developing positive possible selves.

If I don't stick to it now, it makes me think I can't stick it when I go out and get, I want to go the right way about it this time. So I know I can stick at it when I go out. I really want to go out and get a job. I want to buy my own clothes, it means a lot to me.

Oakdale Community Choir and Songwriters' Workshop

In the Oakdale Community Choir and Songwriters' Workshop, some of the dimensions of community music surrounding the programs include hospitality, a recognition that participants'

personal and social growths are on an equal part with musical growth, and the idea that all people have an ability and right to create, make, and enjoy their own music (Higgins, 2012, p. 5). The Oakdale Community Choir began in 2009 to offer men serving sentences in a medium security prison in the Midwest of the United States an opportunity to sing (“inside singers”) in a choir alongside women and men from the community (“outside singers”). The choir has a reflective writing exchange and a songwriting component (Songwriters’ Workshop). Each season the choir concludes with two performances in the prison gym--one for an incarcerated audience, a second for an audience of adults from outside the prison. Since its inception, 70 outside singers and 107 inside singers have performed in one or more of the 14 themed concerts inside the prison gym. We send CDs to family members or friends on the inside singers’ visiting lists.

The songwriting activities give the inside singers an opportunity for developing their musical skills and expressing themselves. According to Wilson’s (2013) analysis of original lyrics, themes of songs include happy (i.e., amazement, enthusiasm, hope, love), sad (i.e., anger, disappointment, fear, tension), and coping (i.e., determination, humor) (p. 123). In the summer months, the songwriters gather to create, share, and workshop original songs. As of October 2015, 90 original songs have been created and performed by the choir or the songwriting participants.

Many of the outside audience members have not been inside a prison before, and their perception of prisoners tends to be informed by media portrayals of incarceration. Although systematic research has not yet provided evidence-based data, anecdotal comments from audience members indicate that these performances shatter their previously-held stereotypes. For example, a recent audience member wrote: “Now I find myself examining my attitudes and prejudices about people in prison and thinking about how tonight gave me a chance to affirm the worth and dignity of the ‘Insiders’.”

Outside volunteers have indicated that they have become more aware of issues related to the criminal justice system after singing with this choir. Additionally, research has indicated that female and male volunteers singing with a group of incarcerated men improved their attitudes toward prisoners (M. Cohen, 2012).

The inside singers have repeatedly indicated that weekly visits from the outside singers for choir rehearsals provide them a sense of self-worthiness. One noted: “At first I was scared thinking I might not be good enough or maybe looked down upon. As the practices went on, I felt more confident in myself” (M. Cohen, 2012, p. 50). The role of hospitality and welcome were key aspects of this finding.

Implications of Music-Making in Prisons: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the Values, Applications, Meanings of Community Music

The welcome and hospitality, central to facilitating community music activities, take on deeper values in prison contexts where power dynamics are inherently part of the system. Research evidence suggests that participation in music-making activities where the facilitator consciously seeks to engage participants in the musical community as equal members can foster the development of new personal narratives that help to build new identities (Henley & Cohen, 2014). The community musician's respect shown toward incarcerated participants is fundamental to participants' steps toward feeling that they are a valued and equal member of the musical community. Feeling valued through successful participation in a prison choir can also lead toward internal motivation for inmates to get involved in other educational programming (Cohen, 2007).

The Oakdale choir songwriting program provides an opportunity for participants to reflect upon past experiences and explore new future possible selves, empowering them through their own self-expression. Without the hospitality provided by the choir leader and songwriting facilitators, the men may not feel that they have the freedom that they need to express themselves in this way. Ultimately, the application of the values of community music provides a means for incarcerated people to build and sustain hope. Hope is fundamental in any change process, particularly in relation to desistance from crime (Farrall, Hunter, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2014, pp. 188-194).

When viewed from the perspective of prison music-making, concepts based in community music practices become not only an approach, but an essential characteristic of any program that seeks to support personal growth and social strengths that may lead to the development of a more positive identity (McNeill et al., 2011). Recognition that building social capital is vital to social cohesion and enabling people to engage in the social world is crucial in any rehabilitative process. Having said that, the two are symbiotic; building social capital involves cooperation through shared common values, and it is shared common values that enable people to engage in the world in positive ways (Field, 2003). Furthermore, central to social networking is the role that the individual has in shaping and sharing those common values. Yet prison environments provide little opportunity for the *sharing* or *collective development* of positive common values (e.g., Behan, 2006; Rideau, 2010; Santos, 2006). Through the welcome and hospitality provided by community music in prisons, values can be introduced and modeled by the facilitator, and within the ensembles.

The challenges that exist within music-making in prison contexts demand community musicians to be mindful, thoughtful, and purposeful as they develop and research their practices. As Cormac Behan (2006) notes, although a great amount of institutional limitations exists within prisons, positive potential prevails "within the human spirit" (p. 158). That human spirit, when guided by foundational components of community music, has possibilities for individual and social growth in meaningful ways.

Reflective Questions

1. What are the relationships between facilitating music-making in prisons from a community music approach and experiences from the perspectives of participants, leaders, audience members, and other people involved such as prison staff and participants' family members?
2. What are the challenges to community music in prisons and what are innovative and positive ways of navigating these challenges?
3. What are the possible purposes of music-making in prisons and in what ways might we consider broader, deeper, and new perspectives surrounding these purposes?
4. In what ways might community musicians collaborate with other educators and/or criminologists, incarcerated populations, public health researchers, law-makers, justice activists, and related populations and professionals to rethink criminal justice systems and practices toward positive progress?
5. What are new approaches to community music practices in prisons that are grounded in research on desistance processes, restorative justice, transformative justice, and other related fields?

Additional Sources for Further Reading

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Websites

IMERC Music in Prisons: <http://www.imerc.org/j3/mip>

Prison Arts Coalition: <http://thepisonartscoalition.com/>

National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice Evidence Library:
www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/evidence-library

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