

# MIND THE GAP!

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## KEYWORDS

Cultural Participation, Situated Learning, Musician Training, Hysteresis, Vigilance

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I am a performer, composer, teacher, community musician and researcher based in Northern UK. I lecture in music education at the Royal College of Music and Trinity-Laban Conservatoire in London, and led Sage Gateshead's Higher Education programmes from 2010-2019. My research interests centre around the humanising nature of music-making, specifically the benefits of group singing; musician training and community music.

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## ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the role of higher education in promoting cultural participation, drawing from a research study on musicians trained in higher education. I make the argument that gaps in cultural participation can begin to be addressed not just through the encounter between culturally less-engaged publics and 'socially-engaged' (Helguera, 2011) musicians, but also by the 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1999) within which musicians can interrogate and develop their collective practice. I review a cultural institution's 'situated learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) approach to musician training in the NE of England which addresses this issue, capitalising on changes in educational and cultural policy from 1997 to the

present day, and revealing how a ‘socially engaged’ artistic practice can also help to address a second ‘gap’, namely the one which exists between study and professional practice in music. I consider the efficacy of such a ‘community of practice’ approach to musician training which situates learning within a community of musical practitioners, and the impact of this approach on the practices, values and attitudes of the musicians involved. An analysis of qualitative data collected via purposive sampling by questionnaire produces a number of findings which highlight the positive impacts of this approach to practitioner development, especially in terms of shifts in musician identity and underpinning values.

I conclude that the development of musician training programmes at Sage Gateshead – a major cultural institution in the NE of the UK – has proved helpful in bridging the second gap between study and professional life for aspiring musicians from diverse musical and social backgrounds and practices, supporting them to develop ‘a more differentiated ‘portfolio’ career’ (Renshaw, 2013, p. 42), and contributing to a valuable shift in musician identity toward a fuller appreciation of music’s value to people and society.

I also suggest that, as part of a strategy to bridge the first gap in cultural participation between the minority elite consumers of ‘high art’ and a more general public, this institutionalised approach has only been partially successful because of the broader composition of the field of cultural production (Bourdieu, 1993). The approach represents incremental progress toward a more culturally democratic model of cultural participation, including important shifts in artist identity around the value of teaching within a professional portfolio. However, the basic inequalities of access to publicly-funded Arts and culture have not yet been significantly overcome (Neelands, University of Warwick, & Heywood, 2015), suggesting that a more rigorous and epistemologically ‘vigilant’ (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991) position is required in order to broaden access to public funding for arts and culture in future, and ensure

that cultural policy initiatives can be more strongly embedded within the communities they purport to serve.

I conclude with the suggestion that it is the encounter between socially engaged musicians and their various publics – rather than the institutionalised approach *per se* – which holds the promise of a more democratic participation in cultural life. While HE programmes such as the ones outlined herein might be said to have made a positive contribution to closing some of the gaps in cultural participation in the UK, they still represent progressive approaches to musician training, and their vulnerability in a competitive market highlights the need to support such initiatives in the face of more conservative paradigms of cultural participation.

## BACKGROUND

In this section, I outline the terms of my enquiry, including the current disparity in access to public funding for arts and culture, the changing value of music in light of the ongoing disruptions to the field of cultural production, and the need for new approaches to addressing these issues, especially when it comes to how we train musicians to develop a professional practice in this complex situation.

### THE GAP BETWEEN THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS

In order to better understand the complex inter-relationship between musician identity and the field of cultural production, I frame my argument around two distinct, but related conceptual ‘gaps’ which require bridging: firstly, the unequal distribution of public funds for cultural participation, and secondly, the ‘gap’ between study and practice in the arts. While at first glance these may seem like separate concerns, I hope to demonstrate that they are intimately connected.

The first 'gap' is the one which exists between the haves and the have-nots, in terms of political access to the means of cultural production and reproduction. Two competing views of culture have evolved over time in relation to cultural participation: on the one hand, an approach which is referred to as the 'democratisation of culture'; and on the other the idea of Cultural Democracy, or 'when people have the substantive social freedom to make versions of culture' (Wilson, Gross, & Bull, 2017, p. 3). From the perspective of Cultural Democracy:

'The picture of cultural creativity emerging through our research strongly challenges the underlying logic of the prevailing approach to UK cultural policy – what its critics call the 'deficit model'. Within this paradigm, dominant for the past 70 years that the UK has had an arts council, the leading ambition has been to widen access to a particular cultural offering that is publically funded and thereby identified as the good stuff.' (Wilson et al., 2017, p. 6)

Despite decades of investment in the arts in the UK on the basis that 'participation in arts activities brings social benefits [which are] integral to the act of participation' (Matarasso, 1997), public funding of the arts has not found its way into all layers of society, but rather has remained principally within a minority elite. The Warwick Commission's recognition that, 'the wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population accounted for at least 28% of live attendance to theatre, 44% of attendances to live music, and 28% of visual arts attendances' (Neelands et al., 2015) are alarming statistics, not just because of the inequality of access to publicly funded arts and culture they illustrate, but because of the failure of the 'deficit model' of culture to have done much about it.

## HYSTERESIS

This maintenance of privilege has gone on despite other significant changes in the field of cultural production in relation to the value of music, which have produced conditions that we

might view as a complex and unfolding ‘hysteresis’ (Camlin, 2016a, p. 7). Hysteresis is defined as

‘the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities and, in particular, of the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past.’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 83)

Also referred to as, ‘the disruption between habitus and field and the consequences of this over time’ (Hardy, 2008a), the term ‘hysteresis’ contains the idea that the field – of music in this instance – has been disrupted and has not yet stabilised (Camlin, 2016a). Constant innovations in information technology – digital distribution driving down sales of recorded music since 2000, and more recent developments in VR and AR technology changing the experience of live performance, for example – mean that musicians can no longer be certain of how they will make a living over the course of their career. Paradoxically, the same technological developments which may be seen to democratise the means of musical production and consumption (cheap music apps, free online instruction, near-zero cost of streaming music and so forth), and the attendant rise of the ‘prosumer’ (Matarasso, 2010), threaten the livelihood of those attempting to make a living out of their musical creativity.

## CHANGING VALUE OF MUSIC

As a consequence of these complex disruptions to the field of music, its value has also become unstable, and this has profound implications, for musicians in particular, and especially for those just emerging as practitioners within the field.

## SOCIAL VALUE OF MUSIC

The first of these disruptions have come about as a result of changes in understanding of the social value of arts and culture developed in the late 1990s - referred to above - in response to the idea that arts participation can bring about social 'goods' (Matarasso, 1997), and which have led cultural discourse away from more self-perpetuating arguments about 'art for art's sake' and toward more instrumentalised discourse surrounding music's 'extrinsic' value to people and society. Within some policy frameworks, there is a recognition that reducing an understanding of music's power to this simple dichotomy is not helping to articulate its value terribly well, and we therefore need to "break down the divide between the intrinsic and the instrumental camps" (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016, p. 5). Despite this recognition, the arguments still rage.

## ECONOMIC VALUE OF MUSIC

The second of these disruptions concerns the radical and ongoing shifts in the ways that people have accessed and used music since the advent of the internet, and how these changing patterns of consumption have disrupted music's economic value (Anderson, 2009). One of the consequences of the disruption to the economic model is more consumer choice, which puts added pressure on the 'deficit model' as people choose to access culture on their own terms. The dominance of the 'aesthetic' model of music (Elliott, Silverman, & Bowman, 2016) coincided neatly with the scarcity model of musical distribution, which may well have helped to strengthen the paradigm of the economic value of 'aesthetic' forms. However, as consumer choice has increased, and the 'zero marginal cost' (Mason, 2016; Rifkin, 2015) of distribution of musical goods has become more widespread, the relative economic value of those goods has waned, to the point where music is expected to be 'free in all senses of the word' (Price, 2013). This decoupling of the aesthetic model of music from its economic value raises important questions about the use of public funds to support forms of cultural production which predominantly

benefit a minority elite. It is these significant changes in the field of music which have required changes in the 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977) of its practitioners.

## NEW PHILOSOPHIES

In response, a range of new, and broadly progressive philosophies surrounding music / cultural participation are emerging, including the emergence of Community Music (CM) as an academic discipline (Higgins, 2012; Higgins & Bartleet, 2017; Higgins & Willingham, 2017; Veblen, Elliott, Messenger, & Silverman, 2013) Socially Engaged Art or SEA (Helguera, 2011; Kester, 2005; Roche, 2006), Artistic Citizenship (Elliott et al., 2016), Everyday Creativity (Hunter, Micklem, & 64 Million Artists, 2016), and a resurgence of the Cultural Democracy movement (Wilson et al., 2017). Alongside these new – or revitalised – philosophies we also find new ideas about the kinds of dispositions musicians / artists need to possess (Bennett & Burnard, 2016) in order to establish themselves in this complex and contested emerging field of cultural production. My own research has focused on what might be learned from institutionalised responses to the disruptions to the field (Camlin, 2015b, 2016b) and the ways in which musicians' dispositions are changing in response (Camlin, 2015a, 2016d, 2016a, 2017).

## THE GAP BETWEEN STUDY AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The implications of all of these complex disruptions to the field of music for emergent musicians is profound, and highlights a further 'gap' in the way that they are able to prepare for a professional career. This second 'gap' – the gap between study and professional practice in music - has always concerned music educators; how music education prepares its students to 'inhabit' the professional field of music is understandably of primary concern. However, the dramatic changes in the composition of the field of music – especially since the advent of free digital distribution of music – have disrupted practice to such a degree that the 'habitus' or 'cultural personality' (Söderman, Burnard, & Hofvander-Trulsson, 2015) of music practitioners

– i.e. the way they ‘inhabit’ the field of music - has had to change, in order to sustain a successful practice.

## CASE STUDY: SAGE GATESHEAD

To explore these implications for emerging music practitioners, I wish to draw the reader’s attention to a case study of a UK music institution which has historically been concerned with both ‘gaps’ – developing a socially engaged programme of music participation whilst simultaneously training musicians to be practitioners within such a programme. Against the complex backdrop of policies and philosophies described above, Sage Gateshead (Sage Gateshead, n.d.) emerged in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a regional music centre for the NE of England. Employing its first staff in 2000, and opening the doors of its Norman Foster designed iconic building in December 2005, it rode the policy wave of the social impact of Arts and culture to achieve a position of national significance as a cultural institution. The organisation has always articulated its artistic programme as *equally* performance and participation, emphasising both the aesthetic dimension of music’s power in its hosting of Royal Northern Sinfonia as its resident orchestra, alongside an ambitious Learning and Participation (L&P) programme.

The evolution of the L&P programme highlighted the need for a workforce of musicians of sufficient size and with the appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and corresponding value base to deliver the organisation’s ambitions around music participation. This ‘gap’ in the existing workforce provided the rationale for an equally ambitious musician training programme which started in c. 2003 with an innovative 18-month traineeship. By 2010, this had further inspired the establishment of two undergraduate music programmes, including the UK’s first BA (Hons)



Community Music alongside an established BMus (Hons) Jazz, Popular and Commercial Music programme re-located to Sage Gateshead from a local FE college.<sup>1</sup>

There is a certain paradox in seeing the ‘institution’ as a site for social and cultural change. Cultural institutions might be considered as some of the best examples *of* the ‘deficit model’ of culture, often reinforcing the dominant paradigm of ‘high art’ as being more deserving of state support than the emergent heterodoxies outlined above. More specifically, recent reports bring into serious question the ‘impact of major cultural buildings’ like Sage Gateshead in urban regeneration, owing to the fact that,

‘the regeneration of places is usually accompanied by gentrification, the rise of the ‘experience economy’, and the disruption and exclusion of communities as those who live there and produce there are forced out by rising property prices’ (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016, p. 8).

In the current climate, there is therefore a certain measure of scepticism which ought to be applied to any claim about the efficacy of institutional approaches to broadening access to public funds for arts and culture. It is this uncertainty which qualifies any of the benefits I shall go on to describe about this particular approach. Nevertheless, cultural institutions represent more dominant positions within the field of arts and culture, benefitting as they do from higher levels of financial support from governments. The rationale for this study is that institutional approaches to the thorny issues surrounding cultural access and participation can provide useful and valid insights into how the field of arts and culture is responding generally to the disruptions it currently faces.

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<sup>1</sup> For more detail, see (Camlin & Zeserson, 2018)

The scope of this study is centred around the community of music practitioners which has emerged from within Sage Gateshead as a result of its musician training programmes. The community members include established musicians – performers, teachers, producers – alongside trainees, students, and alumni of both undergraduate programmes and its traineeship / advanced traineeship. The purpose of the study is to build up more detailed knowledge of the attributes – skills, values, attitudes – of those musicians who have benefitted from Sage Gateshead’s musician training programmes, and to understand how these attributes might be changing over time, in response to the cultural shifts described above. In particular, it is to understand how musicians’ attitudes toward the social value of music – through teaching, facilitation, community music, health musicking (Stige, 2013) and so on – might be changing over time in response to the waning of music’s economic value i.e. sales of recordings, performance fees etc.

## METHOD<sup>i</sup>

The study was conducted as progressive cycles of ‘action research’ (McNiff, 2013) over three years 2015-2018, with elements of participatory action research (PAR) (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013) informing research design. Undergraduate students on Sage Gateshead undergraduate Music programmes - i.e. musicians ‘emerging’ into professional practice - co-designed an online survey as the basis for interviewing more experienced musicians within the broader regional community of practice. This survey was administered in a number of ways, depending on circumstances:

- As a google form which respondents completed in their own time;
- As the basis for a structured interview between the undergraduate student and the respondent;

- As the basis for a semi-structured interview between the undergraduate student and the respondent;

There is therefore an inevitable lack of consistency in the way that data were collected. However, the rationale for this flexible approach to data collection was in order to capture the more experienced musicians' views in as ecologically valid a way as possible. Having selected their subjects, students were invited to consider what would be the best way for them to collect the data, and these approaches varied considerably. Some respondents were happy to undertake the online questionnaire in their own time, while others preferred to have a more informal chat about their practice with the student, using the survey questions as prompts.

'Purposive sampling' (Plowright, 2010, p. 42) was used as the basis for data collection. Through discussion with lecturers, undergraduate students identified other musicians who had influenced their own development, and these individuals received a personal invitation to participate.

Justification for this approach lies in the different ways in which practitioners inhabit the field:

“Where a smaller scale project is envisaged, then data about the most significant individuals and institutions in the social space are the most useful, because these field participants occupy the most dominant field positions, and therefore also occupy positions within the field of power, where they are able to determine the value of field-specific capitals. Here, the data collected are not a statistical sample, but should be a particular subset of individuals selected because of their powerful influence on the field.”

(Hardy, 2003b, p. 240)

The ways in which those individuals perceived to be occupying a strong position within the field inhabit that position – i.e. their practices, behaviours, attitudes and values – is useful situated knowledge for 'new-comers' to the field about its 'old-timers' (Lave & Wenger, 1991), as it

helps them to reflect on their own position, and develop ways of strengthening it. As well as basic demographic information, we therefore invited respondents to reflect, in their own words, on their career (what do you do?) and how they have come to be where they are in their career (how did you get to be where you are now?) Through the subjective narrative accounts which emerged, we hoped to be able to build an understanding of the professional lives of more established musicians from the perspective not just of their ‘professional capital career creativities’ (Bennett & Burnard, 2016, p. 124) i.e. ‘field-specific strategies, which take on a new significance or career advantage’ (p.124) such as their musical / pedagogic skills, but also their ‘human capital career creativities’, as identified and defined by (Bennett & Burnard, 2016):

1. Community-building creativity represents professional networks and communities of practice.
2. Inspiration-forming creativity includes role models, inspirational figures and supporters.
3. Career-positioning creativity represents the creation of capacity through interest, recognition, new markets (including market ‘engagement’) and professional learning.
4. Bestowed gift-giving creativity refers to capital that is ‘given away’ in forms such as mentorship and pro-bono work. (p.126)

Supplementary questions were asked of respondents about: their professional networks; their own inspiration; their qualifications, dispositions, skills and values; their attitude toward professional learning and working without financial reward. We also invited respondents to reflect on the relative weighting of different aspects of their portfolio (e.g. performance, teaching, composition, production) in terms of time spent on each activity and proportion of income arising from each activity.

## EMERGENT THEMES

At the time of writing, 33 musicians had completed the survey. 25 of them (76% of responses) spent at least 5 days a week on their music work, effectively making the majority of respondents full-time musicians. The remaining 8 respondents spent no fewer than 3 days per week on music-related activity.

### PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL CAREER CREATIVITIES

A range of musical skills were identified as contributing to respondents' positions of strength within the field of music, especially, "aural perception, a good knowledge of music theory" and "the idiosyncrasies of stylistic playing" alongside "significant confidence on an instrument" or "being very good at the particular musical activities that I do." Domain-specific skills were mentioned i.e. skills of technical production on a voice, instrument or mixing desk. Sight reading, good rhythmic skills, and, "the ability to write and arrange music to suit your group" were also highlighted. Musical flexibility emerged as a core creativity, including:

- Experience of playing with many people, being in many different musical situations with people more experienced than yourself;
- Flexibility in approach to suit the needs of the people you work with;
- Being able to work with a variety of settings, genres, ages.

A critical understanding of the context of practice was emphasised, including a "comprehensive knowledge of relevant research, sound pedagogical/teaching methods and skills," as well as the practical skills of "navigating new software and online platforms."

Many respondents talked of the intrinsic rewards of international touring or “writing charts<sup>2</sup> that occasionally I get to hear played by great musicians,” and those respondents whose portfolios included music production spoke highly of the satisfaction gained from having “contributed to great programmes at the world's leading broadcaster,” or “hearing recordings I've worked really hard on, on national radio, TV etc. It makes it all worthwhile.”

#### HUMAN CAPITAL CAREER CREATIVITIES

Responses to questions about human capital career creativities drew a range of responses which, when taken together, appear to indicate significant shifts in musician identity which in turn facilitate the development of authentic socially-engaged practices in service of more marginalised members of society.

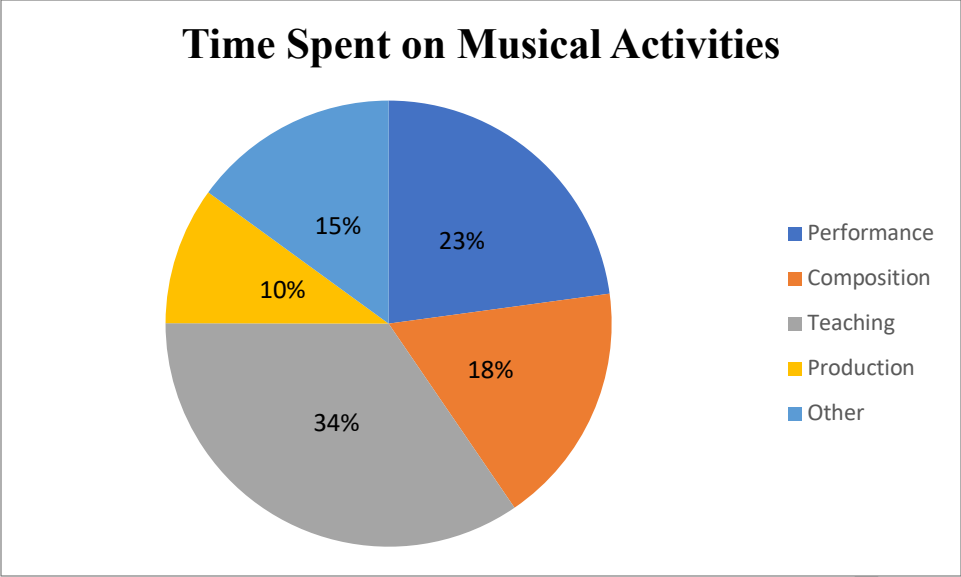
Respondents highlighted the importance of pro-social professional dispositions such as, “being reliable, always on time and prepared” alongside the importance of an “easy-going friendly nature” and an “ability to demonstrate kindness and compassion,” as well as to “enthuse and engage”. An “understanding of human behaviour” and the interpersonal skills of working with a “wide variety of people and personalities” were balanced with the need to foster one’s own “creativity, self-care, resilience, determination, discipline (to practise / learn repertoire)”.

#### *Career-positioning creativity*

All of the musicians who responded to the survey worked across more than one sub-field of music, highlighting the importance of ‘portfolio’ working as a way of maintaining a stable position in an unstable environment, effectively spreading their time across a number of music-related activities. Respondents’ time was divided in the following ways:

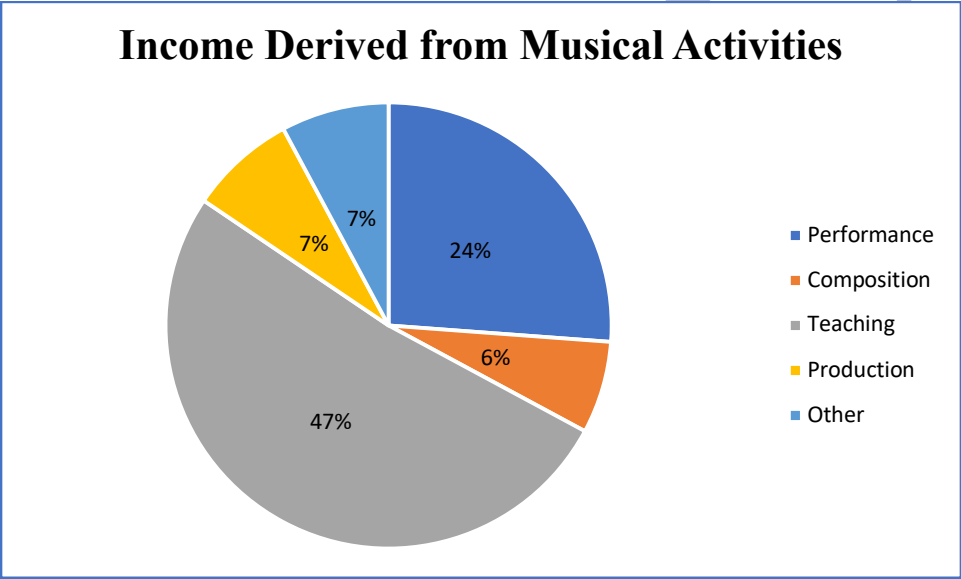
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<sup>2</sup> Chord-based musical notation used by musicians in jazz and pop ‘sessions’



*Fig. 1 Time Spent on Musical Activities*

The income derived from these activities broke down in the following proportions:



*Fig. 2 Income Derived from Musical Activities*

Some respondents (n=29) were willing to share information about their earnings. In relation to the UK average annual income (c. £26,000 per annum), 5 respondents (17% of sample) earned

‘about the average’, with 8 (28%) of respondents earning more than that, and 16 (55%) earning less than or *significantly* less than the national average annual income.

For these musicians, perhaps the clearest point to note is the centrality of teaching – understood here as a broad range of pedagogical activities in formal, non-formal and informal settings - within their portfolios, collectively accounting for the most time spent on musical activities as well as being their main source of income. Furthermore, while the relationship between time spent on different musical activities and income derived from those activities is roughly equal in most cases, for teaching it is significantly higher (47% of income for 34% of activity), suggesting that for these musicians, teaching is an effective means of stabilising income across a broad portfolio of professional work.

However, for the most part, the teaching aspects of people’s portfolios are not merely an instrumentalised means to financial stability. The teaching is clearly its own reward, as some of these comments reveal, in response to the question, ‘which aspects of your current career do you find the most rewarding?’:

- Teaching is ultimately the most rewarding part of my current career, particularly the 1-1 instrumental tuition / mentoring where you are able to get alongside students and respond to their particular needs at that point in their personal and professional development.
- Being able to introduce music to many different people in many different ways. Seeing the response, growth and enjoyment that people get from doing music.
- Teaching and leading sessions, supporting others to get more joy from music.
- Seeing children enjoy making music and their enthusiasm when they see me enter their school.
- Creating art with people, finding insight and meaning, seeing progression, making connections.



Many of the values which appeared to be important to this group of musicians seemed to derive from their teaching responsibilities. As well as more universal dispositions about flexibility, patience, openness, fun, a positive mindset and a “determination to succeed in a competitive and difficult industry,” respondents talked with some passion about the values which underpinned their educational work:

- Egalitarian approach & view that music is for everyone rather than for the 'talented' few, along with a strong belief in the sociological & personal benefits of making music.
- To understand the role music has played in people's lives in a broader historical context. Rather than a purely modern perspective. To believe that everyone has something musically interesting to offer regardless of how far into the musical journey they are. To support people taking chances, creating new things and staying true to a meaningful underpinning of their music.
- It's important that participants shape and have a say in the way they learn.
- Compassion, opportunity for all, diversity (of approach, understanding, perspective, expectations, cultures, material, contexts)...beauty / aesthetic enjoyment, valuing relationship, social consciousness, meaning making, humility, bravery.

These responses reveal a significant shift in attitudes toward teaching, and the role artists have to play in facilitating cultural participation. Historically, teaching may have been seen by artists as a 'negation' of professional identity (Bennett, 2012; Camlin, 2016c, p. 45), yet these musicians clearly derive a high degree of personal artistic fulfilment through their teaching work. Being able to view educational / participatory work as an integral part of an artistic identity clearly helps them to think outside of the traditional constraints of 'performance' and 'teaching' as discreet fields in themselves.

### *Challenges of portfolio working*

Some respondents recognised the challenges of balancing these different aspects of their professional identity:

“Initially community music work was very rewarding - seeing young people embrace the music, bond as a group and flourish as musicians. At a certain point I stopped enjoying the teaching - I was using all my energy to enable other peoples' creativity but not stimulating my own. I formed my current company to enable me to work with other professionals creating new work in a variety of contexts, hardly any of which now involve community music.”

“There isn't enough money in teaching for me to support myself without doing it full time. There are not enough opportunities in music performance full time, and the few there are often require creative compromise. Balancing both teaching and performing is quite unreliable, but is the only way to ensure that my life as a musician encompasses the aspects of music I find to be important.”

As well as the inherent challenges of professional life at the highest levels of practice e.g. “sight reading sessions, orchestral recordings, depping for the first time on a new show in the West End,” respondents also spoke of the challenges of balancing the various aspects of a portfolio career, whilst “keeping my approach fresh,” highlighting the often precarious nature of this kind of professional life:

- Because I am self-employed obviously the infrequent work and pay plus the alternative work patterns make life a challenge;
- Managing the different demands upon my time (professional and personal).

- The constant hustle to get projects off the ground, raise money, find time for R&D and think two steps ahead;
- The most challenging part of my career has historically been the uncertainty of ongoing work twinned with the strange hours that one has to lead as a musician;
- The bureaucratic / economic elements of teaching and playing in bands;
- The short term contracts and low pay;
- Carving out enough routine time to keep on top of things like emails and invoicing.

Because “work is sporadic, and income difficult to predict,” one respondent noted that, “it's too easy to take on too much work,” a sentiment echoed by another: “I'm often rushing from one session to another (and trying to fit around my family life) so some days can get quite full on.” The challenges of balancing professional responsibilities with a healthy personal / family life was a common theme:

- “Working as a musician can be very lonely. Despite the fact I work with people, I don't always feel like I have colleagues due to the nature of the work. There is a lot of travelling involved and I work very erratic hours.”
- “Balancing parenthood with gigging and rehearsing schedules, work expectations.”
- “Being a freelancer with no regular jobs and 3 kids!”
- “It makes home life different and a challenge with relationships and roots.”

For some respondents, there were inherent frustrations about the systems they were required to work within, including “frustration with political agendas overwriting academic research when it comes to curriculum or organisational priorities,” as well as, “financial pressures and lack of access to progress with academic study / access to training / restraints on time.”

### *Community-building Creativity*

31 out of 33 respondents (94%) felt that the various professional networks they were part of were either 'important' or 'very important' to their career. These included online networks based around music e.g. forums and project websites as well as Facebook Groups relating to specialist areas of interest. Professional associations also provided an important way of feeling part of a wider community, with respondents citing PRS<sup>3</sup>, GEMA<sup>4</sup>, Musicians Union and Sound Sense as valuable professional networks. One respondent elaborated: "Through work with Musical Futures I developed an incredibly strong and influential network of academics, musicians, teachers and hub leaders on twitter who have allowed me to get advice and many work opportunities."

More significant, however, were the more informal networks of other musicians that respondents encountered through being active members of a wider 'community of practice', including current band members, other artists on the local music 'scene', "colleagues who I worked with at Sage Gateshead who are now freelance," as well as "key significant teachers [who] have become long term friends and colleagues," and networks of local musicians resulting from "connections made at university whilst studying." As one respondent noted,

"informal networks get created through usually playing with others in function bands, jazz combos. You could be the best player in the world but if you're not out playing it's of little use. Even my production work, stems from knowing these players."

These informal networks may coalesce around musical styles, instrument-specific connections or cross-disciplinary engagements like theatre work. Respondents also mentioned "international

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<sup>3</sup>UK Performing Rights Society

<sup>4</sup> Gesellschaft für musikalische Aufführungs

connections with those I've created projects with”, as well as “artists I meet at festivals and gigs.”

### *Inspiration-forming creativity*

As well as the diverse range of individual famous musicians, teachers, composers, artists, songs and genres cited as inspiration, respondents also identified significant family members and other members of their ‘community of practice’ - at all levels of proficiency - as providing inspiration e.g. “my colleagues and people I work with, band mates; people around me, participants; the children, families & teachers I work with.” One respondent commented,

“I am inspired by musicians (and non-musicians) who dedicate themselves to doing their 'own thing' and being true to themselves, whether it's a high level of proficiency in a given genre or simply giving it everything whilst only knowing 2 chords!”

This recognition of the inspirational potential of ‘everyday creativity’ (Hunter et al., 2016) represents a much more culturally democratic view of inspiration than might be found in a more traditional mindset of the ‘aesthetic’ value of music, and is further indication of the democratic values which underpin more emancipatory artistic practices.

### *Bestowed gift-giving creativity*

On the question of working without financial reward, respondents had much to say, highlighting the complex and highly-situated nature of ‘pro bono’ work. All respondents acknowledged the need – and sometimes the value – of working for free, whilst also highlighting the sensitive and complex nature of these kinds of decisions. One respondent summed this up by acknowledging, “it's complex for different people for different reasons, I'm happy to work without financial payment at times.” As well as for charitable causes, reasons given for doing ‘pro bono’ work usually included “some kind of commensurate return”, including:

- if I feel it is progressing my skill level;
- when it is viewed as a donation, as it is worth money.
- when the performance is an unconstrained expression of my own relationship with music; when I believe that the music is my contribution to the on-going story of human music making;
- repertoire sharing / training;
- as an incentive to continue the work / project in a paid capacity;
- as an opportunity to ‘assess’ the client and see what will work best;
- build up contacts or a reputation;
- artistically / creatively fulfilling;
- working with great people;
- supporting family members.

The careful balance of ‘reciprocity’ in ‘pro bono’ transactions was clearly explained by one respondent, who was “very happy to [work for free], provided it is received by someone who understands the offer. Some people will take your blood if you let them, so I choose who I give my time to for free carefully.”

Some respondents noted that their attitude to working for free changed as they became more established, and especially as they started their own families:

- I think you have to start out this way to let people know you can deliver what they want. However, it's also important to value your ability and have the courage to progress into paid work. It's not easy to decide when this happens but it definitely has to. Once you're into the realm of charging people for your time, it's probably not wise to go back.

Especially if word travels that people are getting freebies and angering your paying clients.

- Having kids means I really need to prioritise my time so I don't really play in bands for free (or very little reward) any more unless for example it's a festival the whole family want to go to.

Many respondents spoke favourably about giving their time for free in mentoring situations, perhaps because of their involvement in a community of practice where they had been on the receiving end of others' time and attention:

- Things like mentoring and networking are particularly valid if it is a two-way process and you are getting out as well as putting in
- Happy to mentor students/emerging practitioners pro bono in some circumstances & provide free 'tasters' to build new work opportunities but would expect to be paid in other contexts.
- In terms of mentoring - this I don't view as work. It is a learning experience for both the mentor and the mentee and adds to both's CV. Bringing money in may taint the relationship. I currently mentor a couple of younger, less experienced people in the industry and I do it because I enjoy being a part of their career and learn a lot from mentoring them myself.

This willingness to work for free under some circumstances recognises the complexities of the ways in which, “cultural capital (and increasingly social capital) takes precedence as the medium for expression of field interests” (M. J. Grenfell, 2012, p. 156), and may also indicate a willingness to engage in the ‘gift’ economy (Hyde, 2012) as a viable alternative to financial transactions. As music has been the first field in the arts to experience such profound disruption

to its economic value (Anderson, 2009, p. 32), these changes in practitioner dispositions towards a reconstituted field - where the relative values of different kinds of capital are in flux - are significant. They provide a valuable insight into how the values and attitudes of music practitioners are changing in response to changes in the field, in turn providing useful insights into how the field of music itself may evolve.

## DISCUSSION

In this section, I discuss the ramifications of the closure of Sage Gateshead's HE music programmes on the changing mindsets of musicians to encompass more socially-engaged practices and attitudes, and the importance of 'vigilance' in how we might proceed to a more democratic and socially-engaged musical future.

### PROGRAMME CLOSURE

The undergraduate programmes at Sage Gateshead themselves became a casualty of the unfolding hysteresis in the field of music when the decision was made in 2017 to close them. Despite their regional importance, and their evident success as a means of musician training, the collaborative business model with University of Sunderland was judged to be under-performing against the collective expectations of both institutions to make a significant *financial* profit from them, and their subsequent closure became a business decision owing to low recruitment in an increasingly competitive market. Ostensibly a short-term tactic to improve financial performance, a more critical analysis might also view their closure as a 'turn' toward a more conservative institutional approach to musician training generally, representing a reinforcement of a more orthodox understanding music and its historical traditions, and perhaps even a conservative backlash against the need for more progressive solutions to the inequalities of cultural participation. As this disappointing decision reveals, bridging the gaps in cultural



participation through progressive approaches to musician training is therefore not something we should take for granted. During the ongoing hysteresis in music, we might reasonably expect similar casualties. The pressures on HE Music departments is intense, and their ongoing existence more precarious, especially in the light of the erosion of the music curriculum further down the educational food chain (Jeffreys, 2018; Romer, n.d.).

Therefore, capturing the knowledge which is developed through more socially-engaged programmes, in order to influence future developments in musician training, is likely to prove complex and challenging, given their precarity. In the case of the Sage Gateshead programmes, their closure also closes the window of opportunity for a more longitudinal study of evolving regional musician 'habitus' over time. However, the insights realised through more than a decade of institutionalised 'situated learning' in Music at HE are still valuable, as they offer a glimpse of the attitudinal shifts required of musicians in response to the rediscovered value of music as a holistic practice, not just a performance art. And it is to the importance of these attitudinal shifts that I now turn.

## MUSICAL FUTURES

The uncertain world of the future calls on us to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the value of music. Perhaps the only thing we can be certain of about our future is that it is much *less* certain than at any time in the last seventy years, and mutuality, trust and cooperation – the very qualities and values which are engendered through musical participation (Tarr, Launay, & Dunbar, 2014) - going to become increasingly important values to guide our citizenship. A combination of factors means that the world of 2050 will be a radically different one to the one we currently experience (Camlin, 2016a; OECD, n.d.; United Nations, 2015). The projected 30% increase in global population by 2050, attendant falls in Potential Support Ratio (PSR) and fertility rates, ageing populations facing increasing dementia rates, impact of global warming,

mass migration, decline of global economic growth rates, rises in global earning inequality, computerisation of employment, increases in depression rates (OECD, n.d.; United Nations, 2015) - all of these factors point to an increasingly uncertain future for us as a species. As competition for increasingly scarce global resources intensifies, we can expect the mobilisation of 'divisive and conflicting identities' (Appiah, 2016) to intensify as well, leading to an increasingly fragile situation. We might see the recent political upheavals in western liberal democracy – the rise of populist leaders, the current political turmoil in France, Spain, the UK and elsewhere – as evidence of these more partisan identities - along racial, religious, class and territorial lines - becoming mobilised in order to compete for what appear to be increasingly scarce resources.

What it will mean to be a musician in such an uncertain future is beyond any of our comprehension. However, if music is to make any kind of valuable contribution toward mediating the demographic, economic and environmental challenges facing us over the next 30 years, the only thing we can be certain of is that our old ways of thinking about and 'doing' music will not be sufficient. These societal challenges call us to broaden our understanding of music's power from the primacy of its economic value to a more socially-engaged and holistic understanding of how it might condition and mediate everyday experience. Changing attitudes to music and its value to people and society is not something that will happen overnight, especially within communities of musicians, who perhaps stand with the most to lose from such a reconstitution. For some of the respondents in the current study, for example, their teaching work might come across more as a pragmatic approach to stabilising their income in a precarious situation, rather than anything more 'socially-engaged', motivated by the *economic* value of teaching, rather than anything more culturally democratic.

However, I also feel that the response of musicians to the questions in the survey give us some cause for hope, representing as they do a cultural shift in understanding the value of teaching as part of a professional portfolio. They also represent a shift in mindset, and one that is occurring as a result of the dialogue, disagreement and reflection which goes on naturally within a 'community of practice' in response to the changes in the field which constitute it. It is within these emergent communities of more socially engaged practice where the re-constituted value of music – as a holistic practice not just a performance art – will be (and is being) realised. The perspectives of more socially-engaged musicians – agents working in solidarity with the socially marginalised into more fulfilling and creative lives – are the most influential voices in this discourse, because they represent values furthest from the 'old' way of thinking of music's value in primarily economic terms. Hence, participation in the kinds of 'communities of practice' described in this chapter, like the activities they produce, 'engender a kind of egalitarian consensus building' (Turino, 2016) which promote more humanistic values. Like the participatory activities they engender, membership of this kind of community of practice provides a valuable space for the community's members to experience 'values and practices diametrically opposed to a capitalist ethos' (ibid), and which therefore provide them with a way of existing in a more socially just way with each other. It is at least partly for this reason that I think this kind of approach has value, and should be promoted.

## VIGILANCE

However, we should not assume that the evolution of the field of music into a more holistic and socially-engaged practice will occur naturally, without critical interrogation of many of the assumptions which underpin such practice by its practitioners, audiences and participants, and hence the focus of this kind of musician training. Current research suggests that the policy of funding cultural institutions to deliver more democratic means of access to publicly-funded arts

and culture ‘has reached a dead end’ (Wilson et al., 2017, p. 19). If we accept that our best efforts to broaden cultural participation over the last twenty years have largely not been successful (Neelands et al., 2015), we must also accept that we need to do something differently about it in the future. In this instance, doing something differently entails being more critical of the assumptions which have underpinned past efforts at broadening access. In order to develop a critical appreciation not just of the practices which we seek to understand, but also to understand how our own social existence may ‘condition’ our responses to those practices, we need to be more ‘vigilant’ in our understanding, by which I mean being more critical of our assumptions, approaches and positions of privilege. It is possible to see such interrogation emerging within the various utterances captured through this study, as practitioners negotiate a variety of different musical identities, as producers, teachers and performers, but there is also clearly a long way to go.

#### FIRST DEGREE VIGILANCE

The ‘art for art’s sake’ position is perhaps a good example of what (Bourdieu et al., 1991)<sup>5</sup> term ‘first degree monitoring’, or “waiting for the expected or even alertness to the unexpected” (Grenfell 2012). We know that art is good for us, and therefore if we create more great art that more people have access to, the world will be a better place. The basic premise of the argument - ‘art is good for us’ or more specifically ‘the art that is good for me is good for everyone’ - is not up for discussion, and to challenge it is to be heretical. Perhaps the reason that some flagship cultural projects collect no baseline data or longitudinal studies of their impact is because to do so would be to implicitly critique the foundations of deeply-held beliefs about what art is and

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<sup>5</sup> Introducing the ideas of Gaston Bachelard

what it does. This position is intellectually lazy, and needs challenging whenever we encounter it, especially in our own work.

## SECOND DEGREE VIGILANCE

Second degree vigilance – or “spelling out one’s methods and adopting the methodic vigilance that is essential for the methodical application of methods” (Grenfell, 2012) - begins to recognise the complexity of social situations, and the corresponding need to question methods of investigation which appear simply to reinforce pre-existing beliefs and assumptions. Many attempts at broadening cultural access flounder because they become locked in the discourse of the ‘democratisation of culture’ and how pre-defined ideas about culture may be made more accessible. The UK government’s recent White Paper on culture is perhaps a good example, suggesting that the purpose of cultural policy is to, “increase participation in culture, especially among those who are currently excluded from the opportunities that culture has to offer” (DCMS, 2016).

This kind of approach represents the hegemonic privileging of a ‘rational community’ (Biesta, 2006) of culture i.e. a community that already exists and has been canonised through the act of ‘distinction’ (Bourdieu, 1979), and whose primary purpose is not only to reproduce itself, but to broaden the consensus about what distinguishes it from other forms of cultural expression.

Extending the boundaries of who can be included in this kind of cultural community seems like a democratic ideal, because of the access it provides to dominant forms of cultural expression, but it raises some important challenges. Acknowledging the complexity of cultural participation i.e. rather than the easily-understood mantra of ‘great art for everyone,’ recognising that certain types of art might be ‘good’ - in a variety of different ways - for certain people, under certain conditions, is simply not as easily understood; it doesn’t make for a simple sound bite. The

reality of cultural participation is more complex than it at first appears, and acknowledging that complexity makes it less straightforward to comprehend.

Moreover, as the Warwick Report shows, the ‘deficit model’ of culture doesn’t really work in terms of doing the thing it says it wants to do i.e. providing greater access to cultural participation for those excluded from the ‘rational community’ of culture. The ‘8%’ figure quoted earlier should really give us pause for thought. If access to cultural participation has not been democratised over the last two decades, despite our best efforts, we really need to be doing something differently, and this change has to start with how we train cultural practitioners.

### THIRD DEGREE VIGILANCE

It is only when we recognise that much of the discourse about cultural participation is formed and framed *within* the ‘rational community’ of culture, that we can begin to understand why so many people are excluded from it. What Biesta terms the ‘other’ community i.e. those excluded from the ‘rational community’ of culture is in fact the majority of the population. While the rational community of culture is formed by consensus over what qualifies as ‘Great Art’, the only thing that unites this ‘other’, excluded community is the fact that it doesn’t share the commonalities of the ‘rational community’. Alphonso Lingis refers to this community as ‘the community of those who have nothing in common’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 64; Lingis, 1994).

Understanding this ‘other’ community – outside of the experience of the elite consumers of publicly-funded art and culture - means breaking free of the constraints of the ‘rational community’, and critically analysing the social conditions which underpin the participation – or rather, the apparent non-participation – of the constituents of this ‘other’ one:

“Only with third-degree monitoring does distinctively epistemological inquiry appear; and this alone can break free from the ‘absolute of method’. The polemical action of scientific reason cannot be given its full force unless the ‘psychoanalysis of the scientific

mind' is taken further by an analysis of the social conditions in which sociological works are produced." (Bourdieu et al. 1991b: 3)

Crucially, the place of encounter between the 'rational community' and the 'community of those who have nothing in common' is not an institutional one. The place of genuinely human encounter is where we meet each other as unique, singular individuals, not as representatives of some wider community. In short, the sharp end of cultural inclusion is the encounter between a more socially-engaged artist and a more culturally-less-engaged individual, and it is the relationship they form which transforms cultural experience, not just participation in the art-form. Both parties need to be willing to encounter the other, and it therefore falls to the practitioner to prepare for such an encounter by questioning and challenging their own assumptions about cultural participation, in order to 'meet' the 'other' with as few cultural expectations as possible. These questions and challenges about assumed cultural value can all be explored through participation in a 'community of practice', highlighting the need for the kinds of programmes discussed in this chapter.

Acknowledging the validity of the experience of individuals from outside the 'rational community' disrupts the 'deficit model' of culture, by emphasizing the different ways in which culture can be enacted or participated in, whilst preserving the value of cultural expression as a universal human 'right'. Such an acknowledgement leads to what Bakhtin termed a 'plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices' (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6). As well as strengthening existing practice, the 'community of practice' model of musician training outlined herein supports the emergence of such heterodoxical positions; the individual testimonies of respondents indicating that even within such a small sample of practitioners, the sheer diversity of their practices is perhaps what unites them.

## CONCLUSION

Despite our best efforts, the gap in access to subsidised means of cultural participation between the haves and the have-nots still exists. In fact, it's growing. The idea that we can rely on cultural institutions to lead on implementing a more democratic form of cultural access is not borne out by the evidence, and this places a severe limitation on the emergent findings of this study.

Bridging the gap between the 8% of the UK population who consume 44% of attendances at live music events (Neelands et al., 2015), and the rest of the population, may be something that institutions are not best-placed to accomplish.

However, what is revealed from this particular study is that the real site for changes in cultural participation may lie at a more individual level than institutions may be naturally disposed to inhabit. As institutions represent the most distinguished forms of capital of the 'rational community' of culture, developing more democratic forms of cultural engagement requires them to 'break' (Bourdieu et al., 1991) from their own world view to encourage the dissensual voices of the 'community of those who have nothing in common' (Lingis, 1994) to contribute to cultural discourse and policy. Either that, or such development has to take place outside of the institution altogether.

It is in the practices and approaches of individual or groups of artists operating with social and ethical intent – existing either within or outside of cultural institutions – where the sparks of cultural democracy are to be found. The democratic nature of locally-based artist-led 'communities of practice' which seek to recreate themselves by democratising the means of cultural production in order to broaden cultural participation does support the call within the cultural democracy movement to resist seeing the institution as the natural site of a more emancipatory form cultural production, and instead recognise the socially engaged artist as a more likely alternative.



The implications of this are considerable. How can the way cultural participation is funded and supported be re-structured to privilege the practices of individual and groups of artists operating within ethical and technical constraints, rather than more institutionalised forms of cultural practice which may be hamstrung by neoliberal ideology about consumption and economic value?

These are not just questions for funders and artists; they are also questions for institutions. Do cultural institutions still have a role to play in broadening cultural participation? Or have they demonstrated through their lack of 'vigilance' in the use of public funds that their natural inclination is merely to recreate the cultural norms which qualify their dominant position in the field, and reinforce inequitable access to public funds which support cultural participation? In short, are institutions best placed to be the agents which bring about such shifts in the means of cultural production and reproduction? Or is it time for a shift in cultural policy, to provide more opportunities for individual and groups of artists to bring about the changes in access to cultural participation which are needed to enable every citizen to lead a creative and fulfilling life?

The questions for the Higher Education sector are equally important. At what point do HE institutions need to confront the possibility that their cultural training programmes may be significant contributors to the unequal distribution of cultural participation, helping to reinforce particular forms of cultural participation which perpetuate the inequalities of access they have aspired to overcome? And what would more emancipatory forms of artist training in Higher Education look like?

While there are many similar programmes to the ones developed at Sage Gateshead springing up around the world, there are lessons from at least the last twenty years that we still need to learn. If the current turn toward participatory practice emerges as one of the forms of capital which musicians can use to strengthen their position in the field, it is perhaps inevitable that it is the

habitus of already dominant players in the field which will adjust first, in order to occupy stronger field positions. After all, ‘it is the people who are richest in economic capital, cultural capital and social capital who are the first to head for new positions’ (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 262). Ironically, there is therefore a risk that more privileged forms of participatory practice come to dominate, to the exclusion of more culturally democratic forms.

Unless we are ‘vigilant’ in the Bachelardian sense of critically analysing the social conditions which underpin cultural participation, there is always a risk that institutionalised development of forms of cultural knowledge capital may in fact reinforce and perpetuate the inequalities in cultural access and participation which our cultural and educational institutions say they have been working to overcome. To that end, it behoves us not simply to ‘mind the gap’, but to be mindful *of* the gap - being more ‘vigilant’ of how it is constituted, and how our own practices might inadvertently reinforce it - if we are to bring about a more culturally democratic society. Finding new ways of ‘giving voice’ to perspectives outside of the ‘rational community’ of culture – for example, by supporting the emergence of more socially-engaged communities of musical practice as described herein – continues to be an important way to bridge gaps in cultural participation.

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<sup>i</sup> A companion website to this study can be found at <http://www.davecamlin.com/mind-the-gap> featuring case studies of individual musicians.

Pre-Print

