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Music in Action: tinkering, testing and tracing over time*

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Introduction

Music, so the research literature informs us, has power in action. Across a range of disciplines, the idea of music's capacity to effect change, and thus to be an instrument of social ordering, has been central. But how exactly does music get into action such that after even one episode of musical engagement, things (practices, tastes, identities, sensibilities, bodies, situations, collective memories, practices and cultural conventions) may become transformed? In what follows we address these questions in terms of ethnographic strategies for socio-musical analysis. We suggest that these strategies can help to open up the 'black box' of socio-musical study by shining light directly on the processes of how music 'gets into' action through a focus on musical activity (Becker 1982). While we would not wish to be overly programmatic, we suggest that the strategies described below help get down to brass tacks about what music may or may not 'do' and how and in the process can enhance more conventional ethnographic approaches in socio-musical studies. Along the way we engage in dialogue with the work on arts and crafts by Paul Atkinson, whose work is celebrated in this Festschrift Special Issue.

With these aims in mind, we draw upon a theoretically-oriented ethnographic case study concerned with musical activity in and around a London mental health facility (Authors 2016). This was an ethnographic study of SMART, a community centre adjacent to a large mental health hospital. From 2005, SMART offered a weekly community music therapy activity, a two-hour mixed format of solos with accompaniment (provided primarily by the music therapists at the keyboard), group sing-a-long, ensemble numbers, and improvisations. From 2008 that activity was supplemented with further musical endeavors at SMART, a choir, the SMART Singers, a music theory class, and a rock band. These activities continue into the

present, now convened by Sarah Wilson. The ethnography was longitudinal (six years) and employed multiple technologies of data capture and representation.

The music ‘box’

The question of music’s ‘effects’ has been pursued through different perspectives, according to varying epistemological positions and methods. The full gamut of that difference, methodologically configured (and excluding ethnography discussed below), includes hermeneutic analysis, in-depth interviews, and, less frequently, randomized controlled trials (RCT). Despite their potential advantages (e.g., interviews permit probing and follow-up), none of these methods can address head-on the question of music in time and in action, conceived in terms of individual and/or collective experience.

First, all of these methods approach musical engagement – whether conceived as music making or music listening - from outside the temporal window where that engagement happens. They are therefore able to offer only *retrospective accounts* of actual, on-going, social life and events. Second, musical engagement is understood through proxies that bypass micro, and often tacit, practices. These proxies, whether they are words (narrative accounts ‘about’ experience) or measurement devices (questionnaires, diagnostic assessments), may not be commensurate with what actually happens in and during actual engagement and therefore may *lack ecological validity* (Cicourel 1996). Third (with the exception of some strategies for the use and analysis of in-depth interview data) these methods set aside singular, person-centred analytic lenses in favour of the aggregate, the general, and the generalizable (statistical or, with interview data, thematic). Rarely, if ever, do they show us *worked-through examples* of musical engagement as it happens in real cases in real time and

as it matters, often in unique ways, to real people. While any method worth its salt ought also to be able to address questions about music's role in instigating larger-scale collective change, we will suggest below that, even when the research questions are addressed at that level, the focus on *singular*, case-by-case study provides a grounded, and thus, process-driven understanding of music's role. Meanwhile, however, there are some basic questions to address before launching our project here.

In 2011, the authors of the first RCT on music and acute psychosis (Talwar et al 2006) published a follow-up editorial in *British Journal of Psychiatry* where they asked, simply, 'music: it seems to work, but how?' (Talwar et al 2011). While this question certainly remains urgent in the area of mental health and wellbeing, it is equally important for cultural sociology. In both cases the question of how culture gets into action and with what kinds of consequences is at stake and, in both cases, that question asks us to open the black box of music in action. It directs focus to often collaborative, real-time, micro practices of musical engagement in situ as performed by specific, singular, individuals and groups. This focus is bullishly ethnographic. It is also *tedious* in the (ironic perhaps) now obsolete sense of the word, i.e., moving very slowly.

Taking it 'slow'

As Atkinson observes (2015: 60), potentially, ethnography can do better than offer proxy measures or accounts (for events, experiences and feelings). Ethnographic methods can follow socio-musical transformations *in the making* (which is not to say however that all ethnographies always achieve this aim). This concern with 'making' is always an historical concern since making happens in and over time as things get put together and taken apart. To study this construction work involves being co-

present with history's 'workers' and that takes *time* (even the shortest examples of micro-ethnography take longer than an in-depth interview). It involves picayune, meticulous, gentle (Ansdell and Pavlicevic 2010) documentation of practical construction work - what people do (not just what people – research participants and/or analysts - say), and what people do with materials and each other in ways that draw in but are not reducible to words (Acord 2010). This work is and should, in every sense, be 'slow' (Silverman [on Sacks] 1998:187-190; 1999; Atkinson 2006: 31-2; DeNora 2014: 3-13).

Researching 'slowly', as we describe momentarily, involves a quite particular type of ethnography. Not all ethnographies move 'slowly', nor do all stay close to what people do, and do with materials (and with each other). In our opinion, ethnography, understood most generally as being in, and reporting on, some field or group or place or organization, should do more than offer painterly descriptions of scenes, sights, smells, people and customs. That strategy promotes a static understanding of culture and is inimical to the topic of change. Moreover, not all socio-musical ethnographies avoid making hasty identifications (attachments) based upon the researcher's personal impressions or appraisals or on abstract tropes and assumptions (DeNora 2001: 425). When such equations are used – or offered as the only account of events - even ethnography may end up offering little more than proxies for social experience. So too, when ethnography concentrates excessively on verbal data – what field participants have to say about themselves – we are returned to proxy data. In short, we think that all the strategies just described move away from ethnography in our 'slow' sense, that is, a focus upon detailed praxis in real time.

By contrast, and in favour of 'slow sociology' then, the ethnographic strategies described here take inspiration from the commitment, as Atkinson puts it,

to, ‘specify how cultural significance and musical performance are actually produced and performed’ (Atkinson 2006: 190) and how this performance is, ‘grounded in local practices, settings and organizations of production and perception’ (ibid). How then, to follow the links as they are forged between humans and music and situated, in real time? We turn now to three investigative strategies expressly devoted to the music-ethnographic task of illuminating the processes where by music gets into action (and vice versa).

Tinkering with new ‘ways of the hand’

The first of these strategies focuses on, as Atkinson has put it, the ‘work whereby cultural bric-à-brac is assembled in the process of creating’ (Atkinson 2010: np). Atkinson describes this process as iterative; it happens over time as people and things are drawn together, as things are tinkered with, and as one thing changes in response to the other. In this regard, ethnography as we conceive it here, is concerned with histories of the present, the temporally unfolding matter of how things get put together in ways that draw together what came before with what happens now and what will or may happen later on (DeNora 2016). A focus on this unfolding places the spotlight on seemingly ‘insignificant’ details. So, for example, in his study of glass blowing craft, Atkinson attends to *feet*, specifically how feet are placed and positioned as part of learned, embodied, choreographed craft.

Taking a leaf from Atkinson’s work, and bearing in mind that musical engagement involves and can invoke forms of entrained, ‘mundane choreography’ (DeNora 2000: 77-80), we propose a program of music ethnography focused upon embodied practice, in this case, hands, bearing in mind that, ‘the hand bone’s connected to the arm bone’, etc., and to non-human things as well.

Each week for the first few years setting up for SMART Music Sessions meant fetching and moving things between the hospital and SMART sites. This included songbooks (compilations of lyrics from frequently performed numbers, and colour-coded red, blue and yellow); a miscellaneous collection of percussion instruments such as shakers, tambourines and rattles (a giant bean pod, dried gourds...), and a collection of more ‘conventional’ instruments such as two djembe, electric guitar and bass, and a small suspended crash cymbal.

As it happens, it is this cymbal that [Author A] carries over to the SMART basement on her first ever visit to the site in May 2006. As she enters SMART someone directs her to the front of the room. The cymbal goes *there*, just opposite the white, upright piano. The room is furnished with cafe-style tables and chairs that are arranged to face the front of the room – the improvised ‘stage’ area – which is where the piano and a microphone (for the singing of solo numbers) are positioned. As [Author A] sorts out the cymbal, a bit fiddly at first, someone else offers her a bit of instruction, but also a gentle word of caution – *Don’t sit there, don’t play that cymbal – that’s Eloise’s*.

(Authors 2016: 10)

At the time, Eloise was a service user at SMART. A woman in her late sixties (and an aristocrat by marriage), Eloise contributed to the musical scene solely through her cymbal playing which, according to the project log, she first engaged with in 2006 (see below).

We began to trace the links between Eloise's hand, a drumstick, and her cymbal in terms of their pathway over time. That tracing (to be unpicked below) was possible because of multiple technologies of data recording over time: Author B's weekly log book describing who was there, who played what, incidents, and stylistic matters, after-session wrap-up notes, photographs, 50 audio and 4 DVD recordings, 'dual-handed' ethnographic observation (Delamont and Stephens 2008) by both authors and two full rounds of recorded interviews with SMART service users conducted by Author B. Thus data collected included observations about many features of SMART musicking – the built environment and its use, material culture, music therapeutic craft, gestures, repertoire and evolving musical space (DeNora: 2013a; Ansdell 2014) – and it included the nine individual 'pathway' case studies of which Eloise was one. Compiled from field note extracts, Eloise's connection to the cymbal, and through that her links to many other things over the next five years can be seen to expand *but* at any time can be traced back to her stance at the cymbal on the first occasion that she played it:

Initially, Eloise uses a drumstick to hit the cymbal.... Watching her arm and hand movements it seems that Eloise takes care not to play with too much force – because when hit with a drumstick the cymbal is loud and resonant, it doesn't blend but stands out in front of the overall group sound. That care in turn constrains her ability to be physically expressive while at the cymbal. The next week when setting up, Author B substitutes a jazz brush for the drumstick, and the 'problem' is solved, the possibilities for physical exertion expanded. This freedom in turn allows Eloise to include new physical gestures and movements. With this small adjustment, Eloise's career as a musician within SMART is launched.

A year passes. A photograph is taken. It shows Eloise, caught in full flow, the metallic brush about to sweep downward.

2007: The cymbal is facilitating musically led friendship between this posh elderly lady dressed in a headscarf (reminiscent of the Queen at Balmoral) and others. For example, Bobby [a soul drummer] tells Eloise that her new haircut looks good, and she gives him a toothy grin.

And the role, as cymbalist, gives Eloise license for new forms of expressivity. It leads to new ways that she is perceived by others in the group. For example:

one day, ___ [the chief music therapist who took over from ___ in 2008] notices the Tibetan gown Eloise is wearing which ___ thinks seems to go with this persona that Eloise is developing. At one point in the afternoon, Eloise plays the cymbal with two guys on the drums.

Some time later, Eloise seems very pleased to note that the cymbal she's playing was made in Turkey, which leads her to reminisce about her travels there, the music there, the ecstasy of the 'whirling dervishes'.

The focus here is on connections, tangible, material, and – crucially – made by the participants, here mainly Eloise herself: a seat in the front, a hand and a stick, then a brush, and the ways of that hand – duration, force, frequency and visual prominence – as it makes contact with a cymbal. Over time, hand and arm gain visual prominence, the gestures that connect brush with cymbal become exuberant; while we cannot say for sure if this playing is 'ecstatic' for Eloise herself, we can point to her personal use of proxy descriptors (words and topics) and her other attempts to 'furnish' (DeNora 2013a) SMART with new features (a Tibetan gown, a discussion about Turkey and ecstasy). These 'furnishings', and the music to which they are connected change Eloise and her relation to others. They draw her into new forms of practice (new ways

of the hand, new clothes) and into new relationships (some of whom, initially may have seemed like they would have been unlikely companions) through a gentle process of give and take that results in the development of an idioculture (Fine 1979; 2012) understood as the meanings and practices of small groups that form the basis for future interaction within those groups and beyond. These idiocultural practices get partially stabilized and re-stabilized. They take Eloise to yet more links, including doing things with words. Understood in this way, words are not the primary medium for understanding either what happens in SMART or its ethnography. They are themselves practices that (try to) make space conducive for future action and future identity.

Before Author B leaves for a sabbatical during the autumn of 2011 Eloise beckons him over after a SMART Music Session:

I've not had mental lapse... *or a drink*... for 10 years now, and a major part of that is the benefit of music therapy! I really *mean that*, I need you to understand that....

Narratives, such as this one, cap and tap situations made by other practical means and media (DeNora: 2013c). They are not 'about' experience but are rather building blocks for more experience, and for the (purportedly positive) difference in Eloise (and others in relation to Eloise) as understood by Eloise and others got made over time. At times, moreover, repetitive practices, and the links they establish, speak more eloquently than words. And they provide the basis, at the idiocultural level, for shared symbols and focal points or cues for the production of shared meanings. For example, in 2012:

Eloise is ill. The cymbal is brought out weekly [by SMART members] and put in its precise and habitual place, just in front of a chair on the front

row of the cafe, just behind the back of the piano. On the cymbal rests the jazz brush. No one plays it. [But it is important to note that a cymbal is a resonant instrument, and so, in response to the music and musical motions of others, it begins to ‘speak’.]

When Eloise dies shortly afterwards, this cymbal is not brought out again in this way. There is no overt discussion of this. But when an afternoon of SMART Music is dedicated to Eloise a month later, many people mention her cymbal playing, and the vigour of her commitment to being in and amongst the music that this small instrument conveys to everyone. Eloise is remembered fondly for the times when she was in full ecstatic flow, vigorously beating the cymbal to the rock 'n roll being played by nearby guitars, piano and drums.

Time after time, Eloise & Co pieced things together. Time after time, we, the ethnographers pieced things together, identifying features and practices as they emerged and took root or were abandoned. Over time, this tracing shed light (we think) on developmental ‘careers’ within this social space. People improvised, learned, relearned and displayed. They connected, disconnected, reconnected, and they found ways toward what— over time as practices are repeated — came to be recognized as personal styles. And, if style, temporally and spatially occasioned, may be understood as more than a proxy for sensibility (in other words at once indicator of and scaffold for sensibility), then it is worth reconsidering something Goffman had to say at the end of his essay on the moral career of the mental patient.

Speaking about how a person in a certain category moves through a, ‘standard sequence of changes in his way of conceiving of selves, including importantly his

own', Goffman proposed a focus on, 'happenings which mark a turning point in the way in which the person views the world' (1961: 168). He suggested that we examine the 'tacks or strategies' or, 'stands that [a person] takes before specifiable others, whatever the hidden and variable nature of his inward attachment to these presentations' so as to, 'obtain a relatively objective tracing of relatively subjective matters' (1961: 168).

Here we come closer to the quarry of musically grounded forms of aesthetic (musically founded) sensibility and in ways that draw together, as Dicks puts it (Dicks 2014: 663) the often juxtaposed concerns in ethnography today with, on the one hand, sensory experience and, on the other hand, observation and the maintenance of analytical detachment so as to observe social life as it is accomplished. If, as Atkinson suggests, ethnography may convert, 'small happenings into big ideas and big ideas into local phenomena' (Atkinson 2013:60) here then the 'big idea' is that music is part of, as another SMART member put it, a medium that she could not only enjoy, but produce relation and experience understood as modes of feeling and emotive style (and in ways that, over time, may be passed on and shown to others – small groups, individuals, and even mass audiences via film or radio [SMART was featured on Radio 3 in 2008]). Indeed, as we shall see, outward and inward development is produced through processes of musical attachment, and in ways that co-produce each other (Hennion 2015). The learning, mostly informal, associated with the processes by which music comes to be linked to para-musical meanings can be seen here at idiocultural level (new pairings between Eloise and other SMART members musically mediated) but it is worth noting that similar processes take place whenever music is part of larger-scale social change. At the so-called macro-level, that process involves pairing music in exemplary (Eyerman and Jameson 1998) ways with other

things (para-musical things such as values, stylistic practices, action scripts). So, for example, a large number of people may engage with mass-produced music after which, and to different degrees and in different ways but in relation to the produced exemplar, they may imitate or espouse the perceived style or values they perceive to be associated with that music (always with scope for creative re-appropriation and never a mechanical process, [see DeNora 2013a:115-16]).

Watching musically-instigated patterns being made, changed and elaborated is watching people in the act of furnishing a musical situation, understood as an informally assembled world of materials and connections for conducive ways of being (together and apart) and ways of becoming (something different) over time (of any size). There are two further strategies can assist the documentation of this furnishing as it is conducted over time that we will now discuss: first, the musical map, and, second, the musical index as used in tandem with the musical event schema.

The music space map

Documenting repeated musical practices and musical attachments, and comparing those practices singularly, individual by individual, within a social space or network allows us to map the topology of practice over time. In SMART we used the musical map only heuristically and we made them up by hand, as for example in the map in Figure 1, though maps can be generated with software such as NVivo to represent graphically the frequency and interconnectedness of practices (The music log made each week at SMART by Author B lists participants as well as who did what.) A given individual's participation can then be drawn through the parts of the space that they occupy, and using line weight to indicate the depth of their musical footprint during some time period. (So, for example, see Author A's trail – less

frequent participation, never solo-performance.) Needless to say this technique is not to be fetishized (Atkinson 2013); it will be only as good as the filed notes/log used to inform it.

[place Figure 1 here]

In contrast to the models of social space associated with the work of Bourdieu – topology graphically arranged according to static, proxy indicators such as income, education and survey-reported tastes (Bourdieu 1984:122), here, the musical map is a graphic depiction of recurrent practices. As such, it offers a rough and ready platform for considering arguably more interesting matters, for example, how people come to develop musical personae and styles (Goffman’s ‘stands’), understood as produced through repeated, patterned practices of musical engagement.

Consider the person on the map called ‘Daniel’. Daniel was a frequent participant in SMART, but took part less frequently in group-singing. His musical contributions tended to cluster around blues and jazz. The map shows how he is in fact occupying a sub-territory of the SMART musical space at this time that circumvented more ‘popular’ or ‘classical’ musical discourses. The musical map begins, in other words, to point to the ways in which SMART individuals were associated with stylistic-musical affinities, expressed somewhat crudely here as patterned attachments to genre. While the musical map is unable to address the question of how music is experienced by participants or to open up the question of what specifically it is about those genre that is important to people who attach themselves (sometimes adhesively) to those genre, it offers a platform that can be supplemented by other and more suitable techniques. (It can also be used to map domestic music listening – which music, when, with whom, and in which part of the

domestic space.) To address these questions we turn to our final set of strategies, ones that can be used to document musical practices in time, the music therapeutic index and the musical event.

Traces and tracings: the music index and the musical event

The index, if used in carefully sampled circumstances, helps us to see how musical practice is simultaneously about musical attachments enacted in real time. It also lets us catch glimmers of music's 'inside' (sensibility, emotional stance, affect). These glimmers come at times of conflict over music where people hold and hold on to musical materials, stands and stances so as to render music 'this' way not 'that' way. These conflicts highlight, in other words, the elements of musical practice that are relevant for those actors, elements that have in a different context, devoted to the study of musical reception rather than musical performance, been termed 'relevant units of affect' (DeNora 2000: 62-3). These units may consist of fragments of musical phrases (the sound of a singer's intake of breath, the turn a melody takes as it moves from major to minor, a rhythmic figure, micro-phrasing, a harmonic passage, a tone colour... At stake on such occasions, whether of listening to music or here, in music performance, is nothing less than environmentally afforded opportunities for expressive, emotional experience, the prominence of these affordances within musical space, and the desire musically to occupy certain niches and territories within that space as these matters are linked to forms of musical rendering. In both cases, then – listening and performance – it is possible to understand musical engagement as, always and inevitably, producing the reality of what comes to count as 'the music'. Thus, the methods we describe here, with their explicit focus on the 'present history' of musical engagement and its accumulation into trails over time, are applicable to

both musical performance (as explored here) and music reception (closely observed, real time studies of musical reception that could be indexed and later discussed with listeners), as explored by other scholars most notably Hennion (2015).

For example, Daniel, through practices showing affiliation with jazz and blues, and a self-distancing from classical music, pop and show tunes, is hesitant about attaching himself to musical materials associated with what might be termed (by us) a ‘pop’ sensibility. This reluctance can be traced through the ways that Daniel actually renders both music and his own musical persona, outwardly manifested through postures, words, and musical renderings. Occasionally, though, situations offer a glimpse into how it feels (and does not feel) to be, musically, Daniel (and not someone else) understood as a cluster of stylistic, micro-musical and para-musical practices.

So, for example, on one occasion, Daniel introduces a performance of a jazz number with the words, ‘I am Dinah Washington’. By this description, Daniel means that the external ‘happenings’ (cf Goffman above) of his musical manifestation include such things, aside from choice of repertoire – jazz, blues - as micro-pauses before harmonic and rhythmic cadences and a strong element of blues timbre (grain of voice, chest voice and throat voice) when he sings. ‘Dinah’ is emphatically not, for example, ‘Ella’ and when, on one occasion Daniel realizes that someone else in the group, Jane, is singing ‘his’ song, *The Way You Look Tonight* (and more in the style of Ella in ballad format), he jumps up and joins in.

The music therapeutic ‘index’ can be used to document this process of identity negotiation. It traces musical action moment-by-moment and sets that action next to a parallel stream of para-musical action (e.g, talk, gesture, movement, comportment, props and their mobilization). Music indexes in music therapy are typically write-ups

of audio-visual recordings and these may take various forms, including full-blown musical transcriptions (Procter 2013:18; Ansdell1995: 48-58). They may be facilitated by video analysis software (and in music therapy the index involves ‘listening back’ to recordings of sessions) such as Transana or NVivo. The music index can also be used however as a guide for writing up field notes and thus used retrospectively, as it is here:

Time, approximate in minutes	Musical	Paramusical
1		Jane comes up to the front. A bit of a faff with reading specs, sheet music, getting ready. She looks to Author B at the keyboard.
2	<p>Author B begins, reprise of melody, ‘cocktail pianist’ style, metronome marking around 70 beats per minute. He takes care to mark out the melodic line clearly, as a cue.</p> <p>After another intro the two begin. Jane sings it rhythmically straight as a ballad (the passage, ‘when I’m feeling blue’ sung in long, linked notes of equal duration carefully placed on and off the down beat) and in a lyrical manner.</p> <p>Daniel’s delivery style is different. It is less lyrical and more clipped (‘I am Dinah Washington’), offering up a vocal grain that is less tied to the literal notes on the page, less focused on the down beat, more rhythmically</p>	<p>There is slight commotion from the back. Daniel hurries to the front. ‘This is my song. I have to sing this song’ he says.</p> <p>Jane seems oblivious to any bid for a style shift</p>

2.5	<p>improvisatory ('swing' style). He begins to jostle to shift the tempo.</p> <p>Musical conflict ensues—around rhythm, tempo (Daniel is singing it faster than Jane) and style (Daniel is pushing his preferred rendition, through his mode of delivery into a swing style and into a faster pace (more around 120 bpm)</p> <p>Author B hammers out the chords, singing along, and uses his body as a metronome to chart a middle way through so that they will be able to finish the piece together, so that it will not have to be stopped and restarted. He wants, as he puts it later, 'to land the plane safely'.</p>	Daniel calls out to Bobby and enjoins him to play faster on djembe, encouraging faster pace through use of his head and body motion.
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Indexing can be applied to both music making and music listening situations as long as those situations are observable in real time. Indeed, they can be used to draw out what socio-musical observers have said for decades - listening is not passive. The index foregrounds music as it connects with and can be seen to 'get into' action and, through action, sensibility.

For example, first, this index shows a tussle over how to render a specific song and thus identity understood as Daniel's location in musical space affords the taking of stands, in Goffman's sense. In Daniel's case the stand involves comportment (relaxed and casual), musical stylistic features (minimal vibrato, throaty timbre, and the subtle syncopation and held back downbeat characteristic of Dinah Washington),

social (a slightly detached stance toward situation and group at SMART) and professional (accomplished jazz musician). Second, the index can be used to highlight, as mentioned earlier, ‘relevant units of affect’ and the ways in which, for some people, individually and collectively, certain, often highly specific and fragmentary features of music can become vital – instrumentation, timbre or tempo but also fragments, figures, even single notes and, indeed, even breaths, gestures, single sounds (Pavlicevic 2012). Third, these features may themselves be associated with entrained patterns of performance or reception.

Perhaps most significantly, musical indices can be linked over time so as to trace socio-musical careers and, more specifically, to trace features of real time engagement with music (the ‘during’) as they are converted into future, musical/para-musical matters. This focus on the future of real-time musical engagements tracks change over time as particular actors draw music into action in ways that provide materials for action/feeling time after time, possibly in patterned ways, individual and collective. The musical index allows us to examine music as it is drawn into action, and tinkered with for use as a medium of aesthetic display and aesthetic agency.

It is certainly possible to connect these indexes into temporal chains so as to follow socio-musical history as it is made, time after time, as what happened ‘then’ is drawn into the ‘now’ and later reactivated next time and in ways that may transform whatever went ‘before’. This is, once again, a form of bricolage, this time concerned with fashioning temporal continuity and change within a social setting, network or set of repeated occasions and scenes. This focus can be set on a more formal analytical footing as we do now with the final technique to be described here, the musical event (DeNora 2003: Regev 2013: 95-6).

The musical event schema allows us to track the development of this process time-after-time and in terms of what gets accumulated and changed when music is invoked. As for ‘what’ can change, that might be instruments and embodied techniques, repertoires, relationships (musical and social), verbal labels, habits, interests, concerns, orientations. This list cannot be produced in advance but rather is arrived at retrospectively, according to connections made by participants themselves. In each case, the musical event schema forces us to specify those links as they are invoked by those participants rather than as they may or may not be hypostatized by social and social scientific observers. It draws the ‘during’ of musical engagement together with relevant (linked) pasts and futures in this basic format:

The Musical Event:

Time 1 Before the Event (history of previous, as meaningful and linked to Time 2:

Conventions, associations, previous practices

Time 2 During the event (of any duration, seconds to years)

Features of the Event:

A. Actors: who is engaging with music

B. Music, what and with what significance as imputed by

Actors

C. Acts of engagement: what’s being done? (listening, responding, performing, composing – and how)

D. Local conditions of C (how did this engagement come

about)

E. Environment: setting understood as material cultural
features, interpretive frames provided (talk, text)

Time 3. After the Event

Outcome(s): What, if anything, happens later that is connected,
in any way with any feature of Time 2?

For example, Eloise's musical and para-musical activities can be mapped as an iterative series of musical events that led to social widening. Here are three such events, interlinked such that the 'before' (Time 1) of the second event picks up the 'after' (Time 3) of the previous.

Three 'Cymbalic' Events

Event Number 1: Time Frame of During = a few minutes where the
stick is exchanged and after through the two hour session:

Time 1: Before

March 2006: Eloise has played cymbal before at
SMART

Time 2: During

April 7, 2006: Eloise returns to the cymbal and this time
Author B offers her a jazz brush instead of a stick and
Eloise plays with less inhibition

Time 3: After

Eloise has now twice claimed her status as a cymbalist (a growing claim to an identity). How she strikes the cymbal has altered and now it has more force and is more demonstrative (see following month, May 2006, when Author A is told not to sit at or play the cymbal because that belongs to Eloise)

Event Number 2: Time Frame of During = two hours at SMART

Time 1: Before

Eloise's identity as 'the cymbal player' is firmly established. She has been playing the cymbal for over a year at SMART

Time 2: During

November 22, 2007: Fieldnotes: 'Bobby tells Eloise that her haircut looks good, and she gives him a toothy grin. In the front row they make the most incongruous pair – he a black soul drummer, skilled; she, with a cymbal & beater (brush), an enthusiastic amateur. Yet there she is making increasingly gleeful sounds during the blues – what unexpected participation!'

Time 3: After

Eloise has engaged with a new musical genre: the blues.

Event Number 3: Time Frame of the During = 1 minute

Time 1: Before

Over past year and a half, Eloise has been engaging with new genre, e.g., Blues (and thus musically and socially with Bobby)

Time 2: During

January 15, 2009, fieldnotes: ‘a boisterous jam, with Bobby on drums, and instructing Eloise in a hilarious way to play her trademark cymbal in rhythmic patterns along to the ongoing funk/jazz jamming. Eloise is grinning and Bobby shouting “come on, Lady!”’

Time 3. After:

Eloise’s new role as enthusiastic participant and friend (of Bobby, who now takes on role of percussion tutor to Eloise) is consolidated and further elaborated through link to additional new musical genre (funk, jazz)

In the sequence of these events it is possible to see skills, attachments, identities, and relationships (here Eloise’s but also Bobby’s) being articulated with reference to each other through specific moments of activity. It is also possible to trace Eloise’s developmental *career* (Delamont and Stephens 2008) as a percussionist.

And it is possible to see how, through musical activity, Eloise's social identity in and for other participants (in this case Bobby) changed such that her original status as (as an aristocrat) can become an incongruous feature of her musical identity and thus a topic for jest ('come on Lady'). In accepting her role as Bobby's percussion mentee, and through this being inducted into new genre, we are able to trace Eloise's many points of conversion as she embraces the blues, jazz, funk and even rock and roll. So, by the autumn of 2009, the field log notes:

Eloise puts amazing energy into her cymbal playing. During a loud rock 'n' roll number today she's just crashing it out, with an absolutely ecstatic face

Adding these events together gives purchase on matters that are more than the sum of these parts. These events help us to see specifically how music can be said to have helped underwrite or support change. That change includes Eloise's expanded social capital (by generating what music therapist Procter [2011] has termed 'proto-social capital'). That proto-social capital in turn includes Eloise's altered embodied habitus (Delamont and Stephens 2008), from the tentative, somewhat inhibited tapping of the cymbal, to the thrashing almost ecstatically of autumn 2009.

Tinkering, Tracing, Testing and Time

We have described three sets of techniques that can help us to observe and document music in action. We do not by any means insist that these techniques should be rolled out as a kind of program, and indeed we prefer to think of them as heuristic,

devices that can encourage a focus on the actual, and with 'slow' methods concerned with the mutual constitution of music and para-music in and over time. This project, directed to the question of how culture gets into action and experience, lies at the core of sociology. It is illuminated through ethnography and it is central to any form of research concerned with music and how it matters. It also connects ethnography to historiography to point out that the difference between the present, the past, and the future is made in situ and in real time, whether it is made on a face to face basis, within a small group, or through the ways that musical features get drawn in to the patterned, iterative practices of many people, separately or together in large numbers and at times on a massive scale. At any level of magnitude, from face-to-face encounters to mass-cultural change, if music 'gets into' change, it is because people engage with it and draw it into interactive webs of significance and practice. Through the - however multiple but still singular, temporal and situated - musical events of many actors doing things (sometimes together) in relation to music, and in relation to each other when doing things in relation to music, change, on a scale from small to large, can, and often will, transpire - in ways that show us just what people and music together can achieve.

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