

LIVED EXPERIENCES IN SOUND

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B.A., University of British Columbia

Thesis in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

in the
Faculty of Education

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2009

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Abstract

This thesis deals with an art form that can be used to 'give voice' to people with diverse backgrounds, character and needs, helping them to explore and bring meaning to their lives through music and sound. Drawing on his extensive experience as professional musician and producer, the researcher examines his practice of creating 'sound documents' that combine the talking and singing of his clients, together with electroacoustic and soundscape elements to create rich multi-layered pieces.

Using arts-informed research methods, the researcher identifies the qualities of curiosity, attentiveness, and acceptance-collaboration as important aspects of his process, and compares these with qualities that are associated with exemplary practice in the teaching profession. This investigation will have relevancy for educators embracing digital and multi-modal forms of literacy, as well as for music educators interested in aural literacy.

Keywords: Music education; sound document; audio narrative and collage; multimodal literacy; music teacher qualities; living inquiry

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many people who have been part of my musical journey over the years, the people I have played music with and have learned from—you know who you are. It is the inspiration I find in the people I play music with that keeps me going.

I would like to thank a high school teacher, Mr. Halowski for igniting my curiosity. I'd like to thank my friend Stanley Cornfield for reading through my drafts and sharing his knowledge.

A special thanks to my senior supervisor, Dr. Carolyn Mamchur, for her warmth and encouragement, her high standards of excellence, and her ability to recognize a good story when she hears it.

Thanks to Dr. Allan McKinnon, for his support of the ideas.

To the memory of Brian Cunningham, whose story is in the first part of the thesis, and to Tamara whose story is the second piece. Thank you to Earle Peach who has been active with the Carnegie Center Music Program.

I would like to thank people who took time out from their busy schedules to answer my email inquiries and, by doing so, made me feel part of a scholarly community: Dr. Rita Irwin, Dr. Cynthia Selfe, and Dr. J. Gary Knowles. Thanks Hildegard Westerkamp for taking time to have a discussion with somebody you didn't know.

*To My Parents,
Steve and Pat*

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Chapter 1.

Introduction, Definitions, Methodology

Purpose

This thesis deals with the matter of *giving voice* to people with diverse backgrounds, character and needs, helping them to explore and make meaning of their lives through music and sound. This is an educational project, whether these *voices* are well-known or on the edges of our society.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe and explore the process I followed in creating two sound documents, and to reflect upon the value of composing sound documents in the field of arts education.

The two sound documents were “Talking Blues” and “Tamara’s Dad”. The first emerged as a result of the Carnegie Community Centre CD (Compact Disc) Project located in the heart of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The second was created for a course in creativity and consisted of a mixture of an original song by a Russian immigrant, her conversation, and sounds I added electronically, to create a moving human drama. In examining my processes, several questions emerged that formed the basis for this investigation:

1. What has brought me to this kind of work?
2. How does one discover a subject?
3. What skills and attitudes are needed to produce this work?

Personal Need

As a self-described lifelong learner, I am aware of the compelling importance of self-discovery. I am drawn to sparks of creative excitement and find myself nourishing and flaming this spark as a facilitator and collaborator. My 25 years experience as a professional musician (which has included recording, touring, producing and song-writing) has been a search for that authenticity and creative spark I find so fascinating. The musical pieces I examine in this thesis grew out of the fabric of my life, and so I find it necessary to examine the warp and weft of that cloth. It has been said that at the root of a thesis lies the lived life of the researcher, which Meloy refers to as the historically located personal importance of one's project (Meloy, 2001). I have put mine at the forefront by examining how I engage with other people from a participatory stance to create these sound documents.

Need in Educational Practice

This study is unique in that it addresses the need to examine the practice of sound documents as an emerging art form, and to consider their implications for education in a way that has not been systematically studied before. This will require some exploration for it is not just a question of harnessing digital tools, but also about finding more engaging ways of teaching, growing out of more engaged images of knowing (Palmer, 1998). As Eisner (2001) foresaw:

Given the availability of the computer, there are now opportunities to invent music that would have been technically difficult to invent twenty years ago. Composition in music has its echo in the composition of our mental life, a mental life deeply connected to our somatic experience. It would be well for schools to make music composition a domain that students have an opportunity to address. (p. 9)

Changes in education, ushered in by modern technologies have brought the practice of new art forms into unprecedented focus. Nowhere is this more acute than in music education, for “if music teachers are to become flexible learning leaders they need to be researching how effective teaching (and learning) happen in their own digital-rich music classrooms” (Burnard, 2007, p. 38). This need is echoed by Savage and Challis (2002b) in the challenge they pose for:

...any of you who work within the field of electroacoustic music and would like to develop educational dimensions in their work to take the plunge into the murky world of music education. Opportunities for creative partnerships are there and your ideas and experiences are desperately needed. (p. 7)

My work accepts this challenge by suggesting perspectives to help fill the gap where “conceptual frameworks for investigating the multifaceted nature of creativity and technology are desperately lacking” (Burnard, 2007, p. 39).

Discussion concerning music education is too often instrumentally driven, failing to address the needs referred to by the B.C. Federation of Teachers in their rationale for music education: “Through creating, performing, and listening to music, students experience the ways in which music evokes and conveys thoughts, images, and feelings” (BC Ministry of Education, 1996, ¶1). The arts have been acknowledged as a safe place in which students may engage in activities that give them choices and in which they can try things out, and explore a sense of self. After all, “Art is a way of understanding experience, ourselves and others” (Richmond, 2005, p. 87). The use of music in an Information and Communication Technology environment can provide students with an opportunity to develop and document their growing aural literacy, while

creating sound documents can provide them with a powerful way to shape their critical and aesthetic responses.

Music is part of the soundtrack of our students' lives, yet this vital world is not given much attention in the classroom. By helping bridge these worlds, we provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the sounds that make up their lives, thus assisting teachers as they answer questions that are being asked about music education today:

How might schools open spaces for students to explore and invent new music? Can we rethink instrumental music programs to include more opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and cultural relevance? How might music educators renegotiate the dichotomy between the music we teach in school and the music our students enjoy in homes and hallways? (Allsup, 2003, p. 24)

Green's research has shown that while popular music makes up a major part of curriculum content, "the informal learning practices of the musicians who create these musics have not normally been recognized or adopted as teaching and learning strategies within classrooms" (Green, 2005, p. 27). Green's work is supported by Burnard who found that new collaborative partnerships between schools and composers, performers and artists, can close the gap between what goes on inside and outside schools: a gap that is becoming blurred by the use of Information and Communication Technology (Burnard, 2007a, p. 198). As consumers, students are already exposed to concepts of musical collage and morphing from their own listening. There is an urgent need for music educators to bring informal music practices into the classroom in a way that can foster greater musical learning and development. A background in popular music enables me to bring a unique, personal perspective to this

research into the informal music practices of popular musicians to show how that might impact on education.

The creating of these two sound documents arose from a desire to represent and communicate a multi-layered sense of life through the medium of audio. I believe students will respond to the challenge of engaging in this kind of undertaking, and that teachers will resonate with the qualities of curiosity, attention, and acceptance-collaboration that I identify as important to my process. Educators concerned with the domain variously described as multimodal composition, or media and digital literacy, will be impacted by this study.

The creation of these two sound documents helped give a voice to the two people whose lives are introduced in the audio component. There are powerful social and therapeutic implications to this work, of which it would be important for educators to be aware.

Methodology

"Understanding of self is not narcissism," Pinar (1988, p. 150) argues; "it is a precondition and a concomitant condition to the understanding of others" (quoted in Casey, 1995, p. 217).

The recording and editing of a sound document is a way of exploring and establishing one's identity; a way to communicate the essence and nuance of our existence to our selves and to others. Some researchers might refer to this kind of inquiry as being phenomenological, while others might use the descriptor, autobiographical when the sound document is our own, or biographical when we assist

others in assembling their sound document. Whatever the label happens to be, this kind of research draws upon the artist within us, as researchers and consumers of research, as we essentially develop what Elliot Eisner would call *educational connoisseurship* in his discussion of qualitative research in education (Eisner, 2004).

This image of the *artist-theorist as practitioner*, in which arts research is founded in practices that come from art itself, was mapped out by Sullivan (2005), who saw its use for educational inquiry. Sullivan noted that, “the digital world is proving to be an especially rich setting in which newer conceptions of theory and practice in the arts are being explored” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 188).

Because the process of composing sound documents hasn't been systematically studied before, this qualitative research highlights the subjective and reflexive presence of the researcher (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 61; Cresswell, 1994, p. 21). I was not trained in arts-based research when I produced these two works. They were not produced for any specific research, except my own. Nevertheless, they share many similarities to the work that arts-based, and arts-informed researchers engage in.

Sullivan, in *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, argues that the imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists is a form of research (2005). The two sound documents arose from a desire to explore and to make sense of the world, using the medium I am most comfortable with, sound, to communicate a multi-layered experience of lived life. They share many of the properties mentioned as comprising arts-based research as documented by Barone and Eisner (2006, Chapter 5; see also Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005). They are reflexive in orientation, collaborative in nature, make use of lived situations, and are collage-like in structure. The two sound documents

reflect my involvement with the two individuals, to illustrate how I both found and constructed meaning from my interaction with them.

Some researchers might refer to this kind of inquiry where the work is oriented toward description and interpretation rather than evaluation, as being phenomenological (Bresler, 1995), while others might call it auto-ethnographic (Chang, 2008).

Phenomenology regards the lived experience of the researcher as being important and worthy of investigation. Jonathan Savage, a music education researcher in Britain, has written:

...if I want to understand any attempts towards innovative practice in music education, it is essential for me to find ways to represent and understand my own subjectivities. It is not enough to be able to write a biographical account of their work. I find myself agreeing with Kushner (Kushner, 1993, p. 39) that in order for true educational changes to occur, both my pupils and my own life experiences should become the context from which educational understanding will emerge. (Savage, 2007, p. 200)

Writing this thesis, it felt necessary to acknowledge my previous work, and, in acknowledging this work, to reflect on experiences that brought me to this point. These stories and memos, along with the sound documents, became my primary data. Gouzouasis speaks about how “our stories about lived experiences—experiences in all aspects of music—are the most powerful ‘data’ we can use in our research” (Gouzouasis, 2008b, p. 222). This is echoed by Chang, who feels that our personal memory taps into a wealth of information, which can be written down as textual data (Chang, 2008, p. 72). My memos and stories were augmented with interviews I conducted with two client-colleagues, and which, along with an analysis of the two sound documents, provided a triangulation of data sources to help me identify aspects I felt were important to the process of composing these sound documents. This process of

identifying qualities and then giving them labels, is in keeping with what Mason suggests:

So collecting accounts-of is one step towards creating a phenomenon, that is, identifying a type of situation, tension, issue or interaction which is exemplified in several different incidents or experiences. It is helpful, once a sense of a phenomenon emerges, to give it a resonant label which can then serve as the hub for a collection of incidents and associated gambits... (Mason, 2002, p. 41)

By zooming in to examine details in the sound documents, and then stepping back to get an overview of how that fits in with my other work, a practice suggested by Wiggins (2007, p. 460), I was able to identify aspects that were important to their creation. This active interrogation and interpretation of the data led me to identify themes, which I have called qualities. In this manner, reflection becomes a way to become better acquainted with one's own story (Savage, 2007, p. 193). As Van Manen stated:

From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings. And since to *know* the world is profoundly to *be* in the world in a certain way, the act of researching-questioning theorizing is the intentional act of attaching ourselves to the world, to become more fully part of it, or better, to become the world. (Van Manen, 1990, p. 5)

The Two Sound Documents

The audio component of the thesis (Appendix A), includes the two sound documents that were completed before my thesis work began and which form the center of my research. The first piece, "Talking Blues", was produced as part of the Carnegie Community Centre CD Project located in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and is available through the Vancouver Public Library.

The second sound document, “Tamara’s Dad”, was created more recently and has not been released to the public.

Assumptions

- Our experiences help to create the persons we are today. A relationship exists between our backgrounds, and our thoughts and behaviours in the present.
- Our music playing reflects a *self*, which can be expressed and communicated to others.
- Sound documents, composed through a combination of experience and skill, can be considered works of art.
- An analysis and reflection of these art works can help further our own understanding of ourselves, and the world around us; as well as facilitating development of further skills and attitudes necessary to the creation of these art works.
- This kind of work can and should have a place in our school system.

Definition of Terms

Cresswell (1994) has suggested that “researchers define terms so that readers can understand the context in which words are being used or their unusual or restricted meaning” (p. 106). Because a major part of the thesis involves a discussion of what I have chosen to call *sound documents*, I will briefly explain the use of this term; there are also a few other terms that might benefit from some preliminary description. Otherwise, I will follow Cresswell’s recommendation that terms should be defined when they first appear in the research study.

Sound Document

I am using the term *sound document* as suggested by composer Hildegard Westerkamp in private conversation (November 12, 2008), to distinguish it from terms like audio collage, documentary, electroacoustic composition, digital storytelling or my other choice, audio narrative. A sound document may make use of techniques used by any of the above approaches but, as a description, maintains neutrality. It is a description defined in part by its broadness—a collection of sounds which may or may not include the human voice assembled or composed by a person.

Audio Editing

Audio editing shares some similarities with word processing. Software programs enable the audio to be cut into various phrases, or pieces, which can then be moved, copied, or layered to create new combinations. The audio is usually displayed by a grid style of representation, where a horizontal strip represents a *track* of audio. Each strip, or channel, can then include various types of inputs like Equalization (bass and treble), or Reverb, to alter the sound. This form of basic audio editing was all that was required to create the first sound document, “Talking Blues”, where pieces of audio have been arranged in new ways.

The second sound document, “Tamara’s Dad”, utilized a greater manipulation of the given sounds, as well as the synthesizing and creating of new sounds. Both acoustically based (real world) sounds were mixed with newly synthesized sounds to create a combination that will sound both familiar and strange to the average listener. Appendix B shows a screen shot from my computer displaying the sound document “Tamara’s Dad”, to illustrate how audio is presented in the audio editing program *Logic*

Audio which I used. The white vertical line is called the song position line which moves from left to right as the song is being played.

Electroacoustic Music

Many definitions of electroacoustic music in the texts are very general. Deutsch (1993) defines electroacoustic music as: "Music made in whole or in part by electrical instruments, amplified or electronically modified instruments, recording devices or computers" (p. 5). This definition is similar in some ways to Otto Luening's definition of electronic music (cited in McCartney, 2000, Section 2), and is the one I use in this thesis.

Electronic Music

Electronic music is a generic term describing music that uses electronically generated sound or sound modified by electronic means, which may or may not be accompanied by live voices or musical instruments, and which may be delivered live or through speakers (Luening, cited in McCartney, 2000, Section 2).

Chapter 2.

The Personal Journey

Introduction

The sounds I hear are an invitation to tell a story. Just as writers are known to use bits of overheard conversation, so in a similar fashion the sounds and text of everyday life become a catalyst in the creation of a story in the form of a sound document. For example, when I hear someone play the guitar, perhaps even just strumming a few chords, the attack, the sound, all tell me how much experience the person has with music and the relation she has to her instrument and to music. I feel that what I am hearing is part of the being of another person as the music resonates through me in an embodied manner. I have wondered how I came to this view and what experiences might have been instrumental in shaping this outlook.

I recall being huddled under the covers of my bed in Richmond BC, with my little hand radio, picking up the signals of stations from as far away as Mexico. The music and strange language piqued my curiosity about the world. Later, as a young man, I imagined that the best way to satisfy this curiosity might be by playing music and traveling. Music seemed to be a way to engage and learn about the bigger world *out there*, and it still is.

I write about some of the experiences both within and without school that influenced my choice of music as a career and affected how I look at the world, and in turn how and why I create music.

Growing Up

I am the eldest of three children; my parents came from Irish and Eastern European (Ukraine, Polish, Russian) backgrounds. My parents were both only children, born to new immigrants here in Vancouver. As a meteorologist, my father started his career in Halifax, where I was born, and then moved to Gander, Newfoundland, where I lived up to the age of six. My early memories, then, are ones of the outdoors, of trees, and the small ravine where I played every day. There were no stores, restaurants, or TV. My first experience of a city was our stop in New York City before we traveled across the continent in our new car back to Vancouver. I recall going to a fancy restaurant, bright with glass and chrome where I had watermelon. I can still see it perched up on the counter at my eye level, and another restaurant, dark, with low wood tables where I had steak.

When we moved to Sea Island, an island in the Fraser River Delta close to Vancouver BC, it was still very rural. I would go for walks that seemed as if they went on for miles of bush and grassland. I recall this old wooden tower, and wondered if it was left over from the war. A neighbourhood boy's father trapped muskrats in the large ditches and hung the pelts on their clothesline.

My first experience of *noticing* sound was as a child, I was sitting on the floor and recall being aware that sound was coming out of an old radio. I didn't grow up with much

music around me but I do have experiences that remind me of my interest in music and sound such as the time I came home from preschool singing the song “Billy Boy” to my mother. In Grade 1 or 2, while waiting for the school bus, I would make up songs in my head that were a curious mixture of repeated sounds based on words, both real and imaginary.

In Grade 5, I had my first experience with a musical instrument, the recorder. I can recall the smell when I opened up the purple cardboard box it was stored in. The acrid, sharp biting odour would cause my nose to wrinkle. I always wondered what caused that. There was this mixture of unfinished wood around the mouthpiece and then the smooth finish of the main body. There was a kind of ritual involved in opening the case, assembling the parts and then, after playing, cleaning and putting it back in its case. I joined the recorder club, the first and only club that I was ever involved in at school. There were about three or four of us that met after school to sit in the front row with our recorders; I don't recall if we were playing arrangements, or if we were all just playing the melody. The teacher was quiet, not very demonstrative. I assume that she had a love for the music; I am just left with a sense of her quiet patience.

Reflecting on this, I am aware of how the recorder enabled a sensual connection or engagement with the world. I remember the soothing quality of the sound when it was correctly achieved, its pleasing rich timbre, something I had created. As a child, I was happy doing things on my own, an independence that allowed me to stay in touch with my thoughts. I think that in this respect, playing the recorder shared some of the qualities that caused me to grow gardens from the age of 6 to 18. It was something I could do on my own, and see the results. I took a keen interest in my plants, noticing the growth of the various varieties. A few years ago, I had an opportunity to look through some old

papers that were saved from school and in one scribbler was a journal we must have been asked to keep when we were just learning to print. It was a revelation to read how in my young hand I wrote about my garden and how certain plants had just flowered.

Curiosity Awakened

I remember the exact day when my curiosity about the world was awakened. It was an afternoon in Grade 7, a day like any other; I had no idea at the time that it was to contain such a pivotal event. It was in writing class; I can visualize where I sat, about fourth from the front, and the second row over from the right side of the wall. The teacher, who was to my left towards the window, was talking about the ring he wore on his finger. He showed us this ring, and I could barely make out the pyramid with an eye on top that he was referring to. He explained that he was part of a group that traced its roots back to the ancient pyramids of Egypt. Not just anybody could join this group, he explained, one had to pass certain tests. For example, you were put in a cell and water was slowly added until it was almost at the top, if you cried out then you failed.

These stories and how they were told were unlike anything I recall hearing first hand. It also was so out of character for a *teacher*, to talk to us as if we were equals. These stories captivated my imagination. The world suddenly seemed a much richer and more mysterious place than I had imagined. It was as if my life had been lived in a kind of daze, and these stories awakened me. I was to have this teacher again in Grade 10, at which point he talked about our auras and our previous incarnations in class. He was happy to lend us books like Bucke's (1901) book *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study of the Evolution of the Human Mind*, or the stories of Lobsang Rampa, the supposed story of a monk growing up in Tibet. These opened up vistas beyond my suburban world. Palmer

(1998) has written how teachers can act as mentors: “Their power is in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives” (p. 21).

I am sometimes asked what drew me to playing guitar. It was while I was a teenager (15 or 16) that I first started taking lessons. I remember having an inner memory or feeling, of an acoustic, steel stringed guitar being played, much like a cowboy accompanying himself. I was drawn to the sound of the guitar, finding it both soothing and captivating. I took lessons; they were traditional, just working out of a Guitar Method Book. I don't think that I was really taught to listen or feel the music, to be aware of tone, or timing, or any ear training, but I did become proficient at sight-reading. There was something about the fact that it was an individual lesson that made a difference—I was responsible for practicing the material. I remember how I would enjoy it on a Sunday morning when the house would be very quiet and I could enjoy the sound of the guitar.

I think about these things now when I give lessons. I am aware of how this can be a unique situation for a student, spending a half hour with an adult in a one-to-one relationship and what a powerful influence I might have on them.

I didn't have any more specific music experiences in school, unfortunately never joining the school band. During my school years, two rock bands came and performed at school, both were memorable performances of groups that were part of the burgeoning Vancouver music scene. Towards the end of school, I had a band with school friends, mainly playing cover songs. Even at that point I was drawn to the idea of creating my own songs and tried collaborating with one of the band members; there was something exciting about creating your own music

The first person I met who wrote her own songs was a teenage girl living in the basement of a foster home in Richmond, who later made a name for herself in the women and lesbian scene of the seventies and eighties as Ferron. Even at this age, she was beginning to write songs with honesty, and a sense of lived experience that drew me to perform with her. Here is a quote that helps to situate her music:

Many original songs present a more personal vision of the world, whether poetic, minority, individual, or obscure. These tend to express emotional reactions directly, and to contain detailed physical or environmental descriptions. They may be regarded as "folk songs" if performed in an otherwise traditional style or in a context where traditional material is also performed.

Example: Many "singer songwriter" songs fall into this category. Such well-known songwriters as Ferron, Joni Mitchell, and Gordon Lightfoot present many examples. (Spalding, Lederman, Parsons, & Rahn, 1988, Section L, ¶1-2)

Ferron had an ability to put into words what I was aware of in the back of my mind, but hadn't articulated. Donald Murray, the writing coach, captured this quality of a good writer when he said, "...when he digs deeply into himself and is able to define himself, he will find others who will read with a shock of recognition what he has written" (Murray, 1968, p. 4). Ferron has this ability. Her lyrics could be very personal and yet universal at the same time. The AllMusic Guide described her music as:

In listening to Ferron's music, audiences are allowed to acknowledge the passage of time, people, memories, and hopes through her poetic metaphors. Her familiar vernacular, direct statements, enlightened associations, warm and husky voice, and engaging stage presence have permitted identification with her experiences and her process, her struggles and her wisdom, her universal anguish and strength. (Post, n.d.)

Ferron's ability to put into words her experiences in a way that resonated with others is what writers call "the voice of authority." As I performed with Ferron, I witnessed first hand how words and music could reach out to touch another person.

Ferron's masterful lyrics are often narratives of life's difficulties. "It seems to me that you can get tenderness and all your ideas across with music, and its very healing," explained Ferron. Still, she seems bemused by the appeal of her early music. "I don't know what life is made of...I was just trying to tell somebody what was going on. And you know and I waked up and realized I was on the stage. (Carson, Lewis, Shaw, Baumgardner, & Richards, 2004, p. 104)

Playing guitar with Ferron provided me with a way of entering into a relationship with that feeling and emotion myself. I felt as if I were helping to amplify the meaning of the song, helping to locate the song in the world. Adding a guitar solo to a song felt like adding in some shading, or colour, connecting to how the song made me feel, and expressing some of those feelings. With Ferron, I experienced first hand the power of a song, and how it can resonate and move out into the world. A decade later, working with the young Sarah McLachlan, I was to experience this on a broader scale as I witnessed how Sarah's songs and singing reached out to touch millions of people across the world.

It was at this time that I began to satisfy my thirst for travel. I had enjoyed the books of Alan Watts, chronicling the introduction of Eastern thought into the West and its parallels to psychotherapy. This interest in the burgeoning field of Humanistic Psychology led me to visit San Francisco, where I attended talks by R.D. Laing, John Lilly, and Buckminster Fuller, among others. I also visited the office of the Esalen Institute where I ran into the fiery 1960s activist Jerry Rubin.

Next, I began a more ambitious trip that started in Rome and led to India. The most interesting parts were the times that, by design or accident, I was able to get off the

beaten track. One such time was the week I spent visiting the monasteries at Mt. Athos in Northern Greece. Another was traveling through the Khyber Pass on the back of a truck going through the tribal villages. Another time was when I traveled too far on a train across India to end up in the restricted travel area of Assam, where life seemed relatively untouched by the modern world. I don't view myself as a collector of experiences but, rather, my curiosity pushes me. While travel opens one up to possibilities, it can also be a little overwhelming, so I returned home to finish off my BA in Psychology.

One person I had met while performing with Ferron was the writer Keith Mallard, who later, when he was teaching at the University of British Columbia, introduced me to a student of his who was writing songs that defied description. I was drawn to his unique song-writing, which forced me to find innovative ways of playing guitar to reflect and bring out the character of the songs. I began to explore the use of guitar pedals to shape and change the sound of the electric guitar. Eventually, I bought one of the first versions of the guitar synthesizer and would blend that sound in with the *natural* guitar sound to add further colour and surprise to the sound. This collaboration led to the birth of the innovative band called Red Herring, which performed on the Vancouver stages during the eighties and left a legacy in the form of one EP (extended play record) *Taste Tests*. Our \$25 video, made with a rented video recorder from the local 7-11, was nominated in an International Video Awards Show.

I began to branch out further with my music as more opportunities came my way. With a thirst for adventure and a desire to keep learning, I took on musical challenges as they came. Recording on the debut album *Touch* by emerging artist Sarah McLachlan, and subsequently touring with her, provided me with more travel opportunities. The band

Red Herring had traveled as far as Montreal, while a similar band, The Animal Slaves had gone as far as New York. With Sarah, I was able to travel to Europe, Japan, as well as throughout the U.S. Even then, while I played the *ethereal pop* that Sarah was then known for, I was also playing the earthy music of Jimmy Roy and His Five Star Hillbillies. I had always enjoyed bringing influences from one style of music into another, enjoying how it opened up new worlds of sound and colour to me. For instance, on the solo to Out of the Shadows from Sarah's first album, I was able to bring in influences I had gathered from diverse guitarists such as Canadians Lenny Breau, and Amos Garrett. Lenny Breau's playing has been championed by the late Chet Atkins and currently by Randy Bachman, the guitarist for The Guess Who, while Amos Garrett is famous for his solo on the song Midnight at the Oasis as recorded by Maria Muldaur. It was this same mixture of curiosity, and openness to new ideas that eventually led me to work with the computer and to the creation of sound documents.

If I were asked to sum up what elements of my life story might resonate with and inform the arts educator I would say foremost that it would be this thirst for direct experience. For instance, with my love of jazz guitar I attempted to go and hear many of the original artists who fortunately were still alive in the 1980s, like Tal Farlow, Jim Hall, Joe Pass, Barney Kessell, and Les Paul, among others. My interest in the power of music to reach out to people, also led me to be part of the first cohort in the Music Therapy program offered at Capilano University.

Chapter 3.

Sound Document #1: “Talking Blues”, Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside

Introduction/Overview

“Talking Blues” grew out of my involvement with the Carnegie Community Centre CD Project. In answering the first research question, “What influences led me to create sound documents?,” I will share stories about my vivid and varied experiences in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside as musician, music therapist, and census taker for Elections Canada.

“Talking Blues” mixes blues with a revealing interview to reflect the collaboration between a participant in the Carnegie Community Centre CD Project, and the researcher. Curiosity, interest in authentic music, and a belief in the power of music to sustain the individual and his community, are the elements that address the third research question inquiring into what qualities the researcher brings to his work.

General Background

My first involvement with the Carnegie Community Centre began shortly after it opened. I had finished my Music Therapy training and formed “Music in Action” with a classmate. One of our first contracts was at the Centre, where we introduced Music Therapy techniques into our weekly session. I had many opportunities to observe how a

song, like a smell, can trigger memories to awaken feelings and memories that had seemed forgotten. As music therapists, we were always on the lookout for this potential, and would gently bring the participants into the group and encourage them to share their memories. It wasn't uncommon that friends would learn something new about each other in the course of these revelations.

The Carnegie Centre sits in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown East Side whose many problems of drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness, and attendant social issues have been well documented in the media. Many outsiders are fearful about walking around this neighbourhood which is described as having "the poorest postal code in Canada" (*Pivot*, n.d., ¶3). Locals see the Carnegie Community Centre as "an oasis if you like, amidst a barren landscape of poverty and violence, drugs and alcoholism..." (Brian Cunningham, personal communication, March 15, 1999).

The building started its life in 1903 as a public library, with an endowment from Andrew Carnegie. When the library moved in 1957, the building housed the museum until 1980 when it became the Carnegie Community Centre. While the building has seen better days, it still stands proudly at the corner of Hastings and Main Street.

When entering this building, I recalled visiting it as a boy when it was a museum, roaming through its rooms, which housed large wooden display cases with collections of butterflies and beetles. Even as a boy of about 12, I could sense the feeling of forlornness that its musty smell of age and neglect suggested.

The neighbourhood had seen a gradual decline as the commercial district shifted to other areas of the city, leaving behind cheap hotels, which came to house many of the city's poor. Along with this came the bars or *honkytonks*, where men from the lumber

campers, and fishing boats came to let off a bit of steam on their visit to the city. Vancouver, after all, was built around its exploitation of natural resources coupled with its ability to ship or rail these to markets. Ian Tyson, the internationally recognized Canadian songwriter, caught the flavour of this time and place in his song “Summer Wages”, written in the early 1960s and recorded by the duo Ian & Sylvia.

In all the beer parlors
All down along Main Street
The dreams of the season
Are spilled down on the floor
All the big stands of timber
Wait there just for fallin'
The hookers stand watchfully
Waitin' by the door

(Tyson, n.d.)

My Background in this Area

When I first started performing music in the mid 1970s, I sometimes got a call to fill in for a guitar player who played this circuit of bars that still existed around the Carnegie Centre. I would haul my guitar and amp to one of the half dozen or more of these clubs, meet the other players in the band and somehow get through a night of traditional country songs and old Rock 'n Roll standards that was the typical fare. Someone in the band would yell the name of the song or the key, and away we would go. I learned to “fly by the seat of my pants” in these 4- or 5-hour shifts on the bandstand where it was “sink or swim”. This is a training that musicians through the years have benefited from, learning to use their ears and to respond to the moods of the crowds. Sadly, this kind of training for aspiring players has dwindled as large TV screens and DJ (Disc Jockey) sound systems now provide what passes for entertainment in the few remaining bars.

By the late 1970s, I was living in the adjoining community of Strathcona, two kilometres away from the Carnegie Centre. Strathcona at that time was a polyglot neighbourhood; various waves of immigrants had left remnants of Italian and Portuguese, to mix with the early Asian and Black communities, now slowly being invaded with young urban artists. My curiosity about people was stimulated by this eclectic mix, and I never tired of walking around observing this village like neighbourhood. Although only three blocks from Hastings Street, the neighbourhood was generally quiet and peaceful, with the occasional drunk or argumentative voice to remind one of its proximity to unruly Hastings Street.

A short walk North, past Hastings Street, would take me to an old fashioned working men's diner which overlooked the waters of Burrard Inlet from where I could observe the fishing boats being unloaded. This nautical scene included a soundtrack of screeching seagulls, mixed with the distant sound of boat traffic. At lunch hour, the diner would be packed with men and women from the cannery, still wearing their rubber overalls and boots. This lively scene was a reminder of Vancouver's historical dependence on its natural resources, despite the awakening that was transforming our backwater town into a modern city. I was surprised when I was first taken to this location, as even then it seemed like something from a bygone era, or from a small town. I had a feeling that it wouldn't last long and sure enough, after a couple years it was torn down as the waterfront area was restructured.

Little did I realize at that time that in the early 1970s the soundscape of Vancouver was being documented under the leadership R. Murray Schafer, at Simon Fraser University. Now, thankfully, with this archive, I can help recall the sounds I remember, for just as the visual face of a city changes, so does its *auditory ear*.

My Musical Landscape

At this point, as an aspiring jazz guitarist, I would spend my days listening to the sounds of the swing guitar pioneers, transcribing the solos of Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, and Wes Montgomery. For entertainment, I would take a walk, sometimes passing by the Waterfront Corral, a bar frequented by the sailors from the nearby boats, or The Main, a bar close to the Carnegie Centre, frequented by bikers, which often had honkytonk music.

I was drawn to music which communicated a feeling of authenticity; and found this in both the music I was transcribing and in the country music that I heard in my neighbourhood. They both possessed a visceral quality that spoke of an embodied relationship anchored in time and place. To give the reader an idea of what I mean by authenticity in guitar playing and because I spent many years listening, and soaking up the sound and playing style of these guitarists, I would like to share a little about their backgrounds.

Briefly, Charlie Christian, as a Black growing up in Oklahoma in the 1920s and 1930s, played in the family band before he was discovered by John Hammond, the same man responsible for discovering Billie Holiday and Bob Dylan, among others. Charlie was whisked off to New York City to become a key member of Benny Goodman's Band and in his few short remaining years created a legacy as "father of the electric guitar" (Mongan, 1983). Wes Montgomery honed his smoky jazz blues sound in the southern "chitlin circuit" (the circuit of nightclubs, theatres and restaurants that catered to Black Americans during segregation) before his albums became best sellers in the early 1960s. Django Reinhardt, the French gypsy who lived in the 1930s on the

outskirts of Paris in a caravan, fused the new sounds of jazz with his Roma heritage to create a style that is still attracting fans to the freshness and passion of his improvisations.

These guitar players communicated a sense of lived experience, which drew me to them. It wasn't something I theorized about, it was something I responded to in a visceral manner.

But, it wasn't only these players that held this fascination for me, for right in my neighbourhood, in my own back-yard, I was to discover sounds that I thought had been buried by the onward rush of civilization. One night, as I was out for an evening stroll, I walked by the Waterfront Corral, where I was drawn in by this wild *twangy* guitar sound that reminded me of the sound I had heard on Duane Eddy recordings.

From the stage came a glorious guitar sound that enveloped the room. Not only the sound, but also the style of playing had a purity I had never heard or seen before. Most guitar players at this time were influenced by the sounds and styles of the sixties and seventies rock music, but here was a player whose roots were obviously in the fifties, and who played as if these last two decades had never existed.

Although I didn't talk to the guitarist, Jamie Kinloch, we were to cross paths a few years later, beginning a friendship and collaboration which has lasted since that time, and has included our years touring and recording together with Jimmy Roy's 5 Star Hillbillies, and Ray Condo, internationally respected Canadian Rockabilly artist, who passed away in 2004.

The Carnegie Centre CD Project

Here I was again, almost 20 years later, making my way through the motley crowd of people that gathered by the entrance to the Carnegie Community Centre. While a policy of no drugs or alcohol is strictly enforced inside the Centre, the street out front was wide open, bustling with a restless energy inside of which lurked a sense of danger.

A lot had changed since the time I had walked around this neighbourhood. I had spent about 10 years “on the road” with various groups; I had now played most major cities in the USA and toured Europe a number of times. After recording on many albums, I was beginning to take on the responsibility of producing albums, enjoying the challenge of helping singer songwriters or groups hone their vision and commit it to posterity.

Earle Peach, the coordinator of the music programs had asked me to produce a CD of the singer/songwriters who were associated with the Centre. I had known Earle through the Vancouver music scene where, on occasion, we had shared the stage. Over the years, music programs had developed at the Centre and now, two afternoons a week, a stage was set up with PA, mics, amps, guitar, bass, and piano; everything for a band was available on a sign in basis. This provided anyone who wished, a chance to sing, invite others up to play, or just *jam* with the instruments. As well, there was a weekly Coffee House evening for performers to try out their material in front of an audience. Out of these initiatives grew a solid core of participants, and the idea of putting out a CD was born.

The Process

As Producer, I wanted to experience the music first hand, so I would attend the afternoon and evening music sessions introducing myself to the songwriters. They already knew that I was a friend of the co-ordinator, that I was a musician, and that I had had played with a *famous* person—Sarah McLachlan. While this introduction had probably been designed to bolster my credentials and create a feeling of respect, it also created a barrier to overcome. As well as being a stranger, an outsider, these credentials represented another person to potentially make the participants feel inferior.

I experienced this feeling of distrust towards outsiders amongst many of the people who frequented the Centre; they had become used to one another, and would tolerate one of *their own*, but an outsider was feared, or possibly envied. Brian might have expressed what many of them felt, when he described in his interview, as part of “Talking Blues”, the feeling of being judged for wearing the same jeans they had on last week. Personally, I did not think of myself as an outsider, a view that was perhaps my biggest ally in changing their perception.

As I familiarized myself with the talent at the Centre, I would sometimes *sit in* with the ensembles. The term *sitting in* is used by musicians to refer to the practice of joining in with an existing group. It implies utilizing your listening skills to add to what the group is doing and indicates a level of involvement and participation beyond that of a casual bystander or listener. A background of performing with singer songwriters in different genres has given me confidence in this practice of sitting in with a group and contributing to their sound.

Overall, I attempted to be visible and approachable. I would frequently have my lunch at the centre, or join everyone for the free coffee served in Styrofoam cups that was a ritual of their activities. After assessing the talent, I felt there was enough powerful original material being written and sung by the participants and that the CD should reflect this aspect of the lived experiences of the participants.

The Creative Process: Discovering a Subject

It was during this time that I met Brian Cunningham. Outgoing and talkative, Brian discussed his personal life in a forthright manner. He presented himself as one who had “been there and done it”, and was happy to be alive to share his story and help others. Brian’s opinions on how the Carnegie Centre had helped him struck a chord with my belief about the power of music and its ability to help build and sustain community. Unfortunately, the cassette that he presented of his blues playing, as well as suffering from poor sound quality, didn’t convey this power. Not wanting to lose the opportunity of incorporating his views, I asked him for a write-up that could be included on the CD sleeve. Looking his writing over, however, I felt the loss of his relaxed, casual yet upbeat speaking voice and delivery. It was at that moment that a solution came to me. Why not tape an interview with him and layer this over his blues playing, thereby creating a piece which would be the perfect introduction to the CD?

The inspiration for this idea probably came from the work that I was already doing with the music co-ordinator recording other songs for the CD. While I had read about how the computer could be used as a recording studio, this was my first experience at observing first hand how audio, similar to word processing, could be cut up, copied and moved around. My interview with Brian was recorded on a mini-disc,

which was then recorded into the computer where it could be edited, the same process being used with the cassette tape of Brian's blues playing.

Since completing these sound documents, I have been introduced to what is called the writing process, which I discuss in Chapter 6. Initially designed as an aid to student writers, this process provides insight into understanding the creative process. The first part, "Discovering your subject", is the forming of a relationship or understanding between you and your material. A subject is something you already know from your lived experience. Changing the direction of the song wasn't so much a change as a honing in, a clarification, of what I already knew *in my head*. The vision of the whole CD was one of communicating the lived experience of the people who made up the CD Project. By changing the song through layering, I felt that Brian's spirit, and through him of the Carnegie Centre, was better understood.

Talking Blues

Brian's interview was edited so that it begins with autobiographical details allowing us to learn that his father was a jazz musician, and that he grew up with music all around him. Starting with his story of Muddy Waters, we learn of the impact an admired person can have on the people he meets. Brian speaks frankly about his battles with addiction; his stories are vivid with the details of first hand experience.

These details convince us that he knows what he is talking about, for example, the story where he describes what it feels like to own just one pair of jeans, wondering if you are being judged for showing up in the same clothes as last week. As the writing coach Donald Murray (1968) said: "The reader knows that the authenticity of what he has to say comes from the specifics he uses. He will be believed by the reader if he uses

concrete details which have the ring of truth” (p. 5). Brian seemed to have an intuitive grasp of how to communicate an effective story, which I felt could speak to both the locals and to outsiders.

The Role of Collaboration

I attempted as much as possible to connect with the participants of the Carnegie Centre. I encouraged them to come forward, and was supportive of what they brought to me; but I also felt that they had to take some steps themselves to show that they wanted to be represented on the CD. They each had to take some initiative, making the process of collaboration unique for each individual. With Brian, I felt in the presence of someone who wanted to be treated as an equal. He didn't seem intimidated or fearful while he was around me. I sensed a confidence in him that inspired a similar confidence in me, a feeling that if I made plans with him that he would keep them. We discussed the idea of the interview and decided to conduct it outside on the street.

Conclusions

Opportunities to play and listen to music first hand in the Downtown Eastside were made possible by my love of music, curiosity, and openness to the world around me. Ongoing listening and learning of guitar styles helped develop an appreciation of the role that *time and place* play in understanding authenticity within musical expression. My travels to various areas of the USA had provided me with a deeper understanding of the development and importance of regional styles to the story of country and swing music, further facilitating my understanding of how time and place can be expressed through music.

I drew on these rich life experiences during my collaboration with Brian Cunningham, helping me identify his ability to verbally capture life in the Downtown Eastside. Layering his talking over his blues playing was a way to acknowledge and respect his unique gift. I feel I created a space in which this gift could be honoured, a space which gave Brian an opportunity to step forward to join in. Creating this space is a form of generosity born from an acceptance of Brian as a person and as an artist. As Goethe said, “one learns to know only what one loves, and the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to be, the more powerful and vivid must be the love, indeed the passion” (quoted in van Manen, 1990, p. 6).

When I listen to “Talking Blues”, I hear the hiss of the analog cassette tape that Brian gave me of his blues playing. As a recording, it sounds rough around the edges, and I wince at some of the choppy editing of his interview. My belief is that despite those faults, the piece is redeemed by its authentic feel and its documentary value. Observing the power and creative potential of digital editing firmed up my desire to buy a computer and embark on this work myself, which was to give birth to the next sound document.

Sadly, Brian Cunningham passed away a few years after the CD was released. In presenting his story, I experience the power that story can have; how it can resonate out into the world in ways unforeseen at the time of conception, as his story finds a new life in this thesis. Brian’s story and testimony offer us a glimpse into an individual in one of the toughest neighbourhoods in Canada.

Chapter 4.

Sound Document #2: “Tamara’s Dad”

Introduction: How I Met Tamara

It was through a weekly café show I played with the Romanian violinist Lache Cercel, that I was introduced to Tamara. She had sat in a couple of times, with Lache’s Roma Swing Ensemble, where she sang songs like the traditional Russian song “Dark Eyes” with passion. Even though she sang in Russian, which most of us probably didn’t understand, her singing drew the audience to her with its bittersweet expression of sadness and beauty. Fellow Vancouver singer-songwriters like Linda McRae, and Ana BonBon, were captivated and became fans, later supporting her by performing at her CD launch. It was around this time that I invited her to record at my home studio.

My Place: The Studio

By describing my place, I am painting a picture of the environment in which Tamara and her daughter recorded, while also sharing aspects of myself. From Commercial Drive, you walk up one flight of stairs, proceed another 12-feet, and you are there. The door is sound proofed, so when you enter the living room, which has now become more of a studio, it is surprisingly quiet. It’s difficult not to notice the old vinyl records perched on the top ledge around the room. With evocative titles like *Evening in Paris*, or *Mallet Mischief*, their colourful presence is a reminder of a bygone era. One

wall of the living room is taken up with shelves to house the rest of that LP (long playing) record collection, which also acts as a sound absorber and diffuser, helping with room acoustics.

As you look around, you will notice other artefacts in the corners of the apartment. Old guitars and amps, now highly valued for their ability to authentically reproduce sounds of the past, mix with newer racks of equipment with their multitude of knobs and blinking lights. The old and the new mix comfortably, in a way that invites a newcomer to reflect that perhaps their story too, can find a home.

The kitchen is also a library, music books, old bound copies of National Geographic predominate here. The bedroom has more bookcases and record shelves, one on top of another. Another shelf is bursting with old cassette tapes; somewhere there is a cassette of Sarah McLachlan's songs that made up her first album, including some that were never released. Some old reel-to-reel tapes of Ferron, tapes of other bands, and on it goes, with a pile of old posters and another box of vintage sheet music. While some might see this as junk, I view it like the backroom of a museum, where artefacts sit waiting to be catalogued; waiting for their day in the sun.

Recording Work: The Session

This was the setting into which Tamara entered, or rather into which she burst, exuding an excitement and energy that was palpable. This was an opportunity for her to tell her story, and she was ready. Tamara sat in the center of the room playing acoustic guitar and singing, while a few feet away, I was at my desk managing the recording, while also playing mandolin.

It was mid-day, as I remember the light coming in from the windows that look into the walkway beside my apartment. Tamara had brought her 20-year-old daughter, who sat on the couch behind us. I think she thought her daughter could play some hand drums, which she attempted to do during the recording; or maybe she was there for support.

Although this was only a preliminary session to preview the songs that we would later record, I was recording it with one microphone to help decide what songs would be chosen. Tamara began with a spoken introduction.

Just like a village, right? My father grew up in a village. It's a beautiful morning, 4 o'clock in the morning, they sleeping peacefully before the war, the second world war started, he was 13 years old and that is how the morning comes, and then comes the war.

Then she began to sing.

The Creative Process: Discovering a Subject

The song Tamara sang that day had a melodic phrase that lodged in my brain. The song had been interrupted by Tamara's talking and was never used on her CD, yet I was drawn back to work on it, to see what I could do with the material. A memo I wrote while reflecting on my process of creating this sound document captures my reaction: "Her first sung melodic phrase had a haunting quality that lodged in my brain. Its rich mixture of pathos, of pain, and beauty, spoke to me in some way."

Was Tamara's singing somehow bringing back memories or associations for me? I am of Eastern European ancestry on one side of my family, including some Russian, and although I don't recall hearing any of this music while growing up, I do recall that

after the age of six we would visit my grandparents and listen as they sometimes conversed with each other in Ukrainian. I don't know what memories I was recalling, but I do know that I felt that Tamara's singing embodied an aspect of authenticity, of lived experience I responded to. This question of where your initial impulse arises from is intriguing. Wiggins, in his article on the *Compositional Process in Music*, quotes Sloboda's investigation of this question.

There seems to be agreement that the first step in composing involves some process of generating or inventing musical ideas. From where and how do these ideas come? Sloboda (1985) shares responses from the writings of Beethoven ("they come unbidden"), Richard Strauss ("a melodic phrase occurs to me suddenly"), Mozart ("whence my ideas come I know not; nor can I force them"), and Roger Sessions ("may come in a flash, or as some times happens it may grow and develop gradually"). (Turner, quoted in Wiggins, 2007, p. 456)

The creative process of developing "Tamara's Dad" was messy. Paths were tried that didn't work out, ideas attempted that proved difficult to execute. But there were also moments of excitement when something worked out or led to fresh insights. I didn't know what the finished product was going to be like but I knew when I was happy with the direction it was taking. It is this elusive process that gives work in the arts its mysterious quality. Many have attempted to explain it and many have failed.

Hildegard Westerkamp (1988) spoke of her creative compositional process as occurring in the studio environment where "I could find my creative inner voice without interference from the surrounding social, cultural context. It allowed me to imagine, invent and use my fantasy freely" (p. 133). She went on to say: "The sound studio has taught me to be in touch with that inner voice and to believe in it. In my electroacoustic compositions my inner voices speak and in that form I have been able to make them public" (pp. 133-134).

This is similar to writers who may get their inspiration from life around them, but then prefer to write alone as they develop that inner voice. I believe we can look to the craft of writing to provide conceptual tools that apply to the creating of sound documents. In Chapter 6, I discuss the writing process, and examine the role of what writers call “discovering your subject” can play in the process. Discovering your subject means forming a relationship or understanding between you and your material that gives voice to your work. Voice is what “allows the reader to hear an individual human being speak” (Murray, 1985, p. 21). Similar to the writers that Murray describes, I find that subjects constantly reveal themselves, as ideas beckon with the promise of a story to be told. It might be the sound of somebody whistling as they walk down the street, or a piece of music I hear as I am recording. The act of creation appears connected to our ability to first see or notice something, and then our desire or tenacity to pursue that vision. There is no easy way to answer those who ask how one comes to discover a subject, for a subject grows out of what you know about life.

With Tamara, how I was going to accomplish my goal of reworking the song in which there were interruptions from her talking wasn't clear, but my curiosity was sparked and I was engaged. Dorothy Heathcote, the drama teacher, describes that time when the artist has his materials ready which make it possible to go somewhere, as a crossroads (cited in Wagner, 1976, p. 27). It can be a daunting time, but as the choreographer Twyla Tharpe pointed out, you just need to start moving (2003). I began by returning to the first phrase Tamara had sung, the one whose beauty had first captivated me. I was curious if from the seed of this first phrase, I could create a new piece. Unfortunately, this idea didn't develop, so I returned to the song and transcribed

the melody to create an instrumental version of the song. Although this enabled me to extend the song, it seemed too *flat*, too incomplete.

I returned to the song once more after I had studied Electronic Music at Vancouver City College (VCC). This study exposed me to new ways of thinking and conceptualizing about sound and music, and provided me with fresh ways to proceed. Rather than eliminating the talking that occurred during the recording, I would incorporate it into the piece. This conceptual shift allowed me to move ahead. Next, I added a layer of electroacoustic composition, feeling that the sense of lived experience I responded to in her voice was being better communicated, helping to amplify the emotion I heard in the song.

By introducing layers of sound, I was creating a denser, thicker texture which, like Geertz's (1973) use of the term "thick description", aims at offering a fuller evocation of Tamara's story. There are parallels here to the visual arts, where the use of hatching and cross-hatching is used to build depth and weight in a sketch.

By having her daughter present, Tamara was already introducing the element of family into the picture. Although on the original recording her daughter's voice is barely audible, I focused in on her comments, feeling that they provided an important ingredient. It was difficult work because to be useful her comments needed to be distinct from other sounds as well, since she was in the background, the audio signal was weak and therefore *noisy*. It was only later, after the piece was completed, that I began to appreciate the role her daughter might play in Tamara's life. Her daughter saying, "It's OK Mama", "don't be that way", and "that's alright", may reflect their real life relationship in which her daughter helps *contain* the moods of Tamara. In a sense, then, her

daughter helps *frame* or *ground* both Tamara and the sound document. Her comments, which I initially viewed as distracting to the recording, began to take on greater significance, eventually acting like a recurring musical phrase to tie the composition together.

Powerful themes of family, war and death had already been established in Tamara's short but evocative introduction. These themes, combined with her sense of drama, offered hints, or foreshadowing, that I built on in providing a sense of narrative development to the piece. For example, her reference to war gave me the idea of creating sounds to resemble the crackling and static of a shortwave radio, or of explosions, which gives the feeling of tonality being swallowed up as the song is gradually overtaken by these sounds of war.

These things did not become clear in any one moment, but rather unfolded as I played with sounds and tried things out. There were times when I felt as if I were painting with sound, and I was reminded of Apps' (2007) description of a visual artist at work. She describes an artist she observed: "Leo watches closely for the shapes that emerge from the drying pools of colour, the scrapings and the splatters of paint. It is from these emerging shapes that Leo discovers his subject" (p. 53). Apps found that his work grew out of the painting itself. Like Leo interacting both physically and aesthetically with his paint, I felt I was interacting with sound as I created the layers of sound. In the process, as I make choices, I am engaging in what Eisner (2004) calls the creation of meaning in the absence of rules as "...the work yields clues that one pursues" (p. 6).

The Skills

After the experience of the first sound document, *Brian's Blues*, I bought my first computer and began the process of learning and using the "Logic" recording software. I signed up for a course called "Electronic Music" at (VCC), which introduced me to electroacoustic composition. This training provided me with the tools to create my own synthesized sounds and the ability to *morph* samples. An example of this morphing, can be heard at the beginning of the song, where a process called granular synthesis, was used to capture different parts of the daughters voice in order to *stretch* and repeat phrases. Other *software instruments* were also used to create other sounds heard throughout the song.

The final sound, which is reminiscent of a drum roll, is an example of software synthesis. I feel that a real sample, or recording of a drum roll, would have made the piece too literal, and that its effectiveness comes from the listener having to make the connections himself. Rather than passively taking in the sounds, the listener becomes engaged, helping to make meaning as he interprets the sounds and creates his own *links*.

Conclusion

I believe that I was responding to a sense of emotional truth Tamara communicated with her voice. Even without understanding the lyrics, the song stirred feelings of beauty and pathos, inspiring me to compose this sound document. In order to amplify and communicate the feelings and emotions that were aroused, I introduced the

layer of electroacoustic composition, which becomes more noticeable as the song progresses and helps to *thicken* the texture.

When I think of the process of development this song went through from its original performance, I feel that if the story was first experienced in black and white, I have tried to add in color. If the original material were like a movie, I have edited the scenes, taking out some of it here, but then adding some at another place. I have tried to keep the focus on that mixture of beauty and pain that I experience in her voice as we listen to what I feel is a compelling drama of war and family.

This sound document captures in sound many of the themes I have written about, my hunger for engagement, my own journey for lived experience, and my curiosity. Composition is a process of discovering who you are, and part of this is learning about how you live in the world. I refer to these as the human qualities of this work, which include curiosity, attentiveness to details, and the process of collaboration. These are the qualities that I examine in the next chapter.

Postscript

Tamara has been very appreciative of the work I have done with and for her. This piece was initially recorded during the recording sessions that led to me producing a CD for her. I helped her finish that CD, coordinated the art work and manufacturing, and set up a successful public CD release show. She sometimes refers to me as “her saviour”; we keep in touch, and have done a few more performances. Her comment when she heard this song was, “Wow, you have resurrected it. I thought it was ruined.”

Chapter 5.

What Does It Take to Do this Work?

Introduction

I think every work of art expresses, more or less purely, more or less subtly, not feelings and emotions the artist has, but feelings which the artist knows; his insight into the nature of sentience, his picture of vital experience, physical, and emotive and fantastic. (Langer, quoted in Eisner, 2008, p. 7)

Langer is describing the interrelationship that exists between who we are and what we do, to show how a work of art is capable of being a representation of all we know and feel. In his book *The Art Spirit*, Robert Henri (1984) spoke about the relationship of the artist to his work as being manifest in the power and complexity of a brush stroke.

Strokes carry a message whether you will it or not. The stroke is just like the artist at the time he makes it. All the certainties, all the uncertainties, all the bigness of his spirit and all the littlenesses are in it. (p. 71)

Examining and describing my practice of creating sound documents, *audio brushstrokes* if you like, resulted in the identifying of characteristics, or what I call qualities.

This process, as described in the Methodological section of Chapter 1, was based on a triangulation of data. I began by discussions with two artists whose material I had produced who are both experienced counsellors, trained in reflecting on

interpersonal interactions. The feedback from these two informants provided me with a way of seeing myself through others' eyes and ears. In interviewing these two artists and examining my collaboration style as producer and musician, I was asking the question, "what are the personal qualities that help me facilitate creativity?" After listening to the feedback and much reflection and introspection, I identified the qualities of curiosity, attentiveness, acceptance (collaboration), as being important to the creating of these sound documents.

Just as Eisner who has written extensively on clarifying the forms of thinking the arts evoke, felt that his orientation to knowledge as the symbolic representation of human understanding was shaped by his experience as a painter (2004, 2005), so I was led to examine my background and orientation as a practicing musician. Bresler (2005), a noted researcher and musician, has also discussed how her relationship with music affects how she looks at and feels at home in the world. Reviewing the literature of both educators and artists helped identify what has said about these qualities of curiosity, attentiveness, acceptance (collaboration), in relation to the artistic and educational process.

Curiosity

In making sound documents, I am attempting to share what curiosity has impelled me to discover about the world. The Oxford English Dictionary defines curiosity as "a personal attribute. Carefulness, the application of care or attention" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989). One researcher, defining curiosity through an experimentalist approach, administered a questionnaire to 500 students, developing a curiosity scale

that suggested that the criteria of fluency, flexibility, and originality are the major indicators of the level of curiosity present in individuals (Shumakova, 1992).

These criteria are very similar to Bresler's (2005) description of the qualities music making develops. She sees that a sense of fluidity, which characterizes the music making process, can help musicians develop flexibility. Fluidity was also recognized by Hugill as a quality prevalent in persons working in the field of digital music, which he described as consisting of an open-mindedness and a cultural curiosity (2007, p 16). My experience as a musician supports these points of view and, as I show in Chapter 6, these same criteria are viewed as being similar to the aims of education (Hickman, 2005, p. 99).

Curiosity fuels my willingness to explore and experience life as an adventure, leading me to feel energized, and alive. Growing out of an interest in how people live, an interest I have chosen to channel within the vocation of musician, it has given me the opportunity to meet people from many walks of life. Buber has spoken how "we should stake our whole existence on our willingness to explore and experience" (Hodes, 1971, p. 56), and always be "engaged in the constant discovery of himself in relation to mankind and the world" (p. 32).

Reading about the lives of creative people is to be witness to the immense curiosity, which governs their lives. For example reading *Hockney on Art* (Hockney & Joyce, 2002), I experience the endless curiosity that Hockney directs towards the visual world. Hockney and Joyce say that all Hockney does is work, which is to say that all he does is *play*, as his *work* is one of exploration. For Twyla Tharpe (2003), "Everything is raw material. Everything is relevant. Everything is useable. Everything feeds into my

creativity” (p. 10). As Henri (1984) said referring to the sketcher, “He is looking for what he loves, he tries to capture it. It’s found anywhere, everywhere” (p. 17). Similarly, my ideas can come from any source such as a walk down the street, an overheard conversation, or in the discarded music of others. Donald Murray, the writing coach claimed: “Many writers, and I am one of them, do not have to seek ideas for writing. Topics rise from within in a constant flow, and there is no need to think of ideas or to stimulate more ideas. The problem is to deal with the ones that demand attention” (Murray, 1985, p. 11). Of course, art doesn’t have any claim on curiosity, the sciences likewise are driven by this curiosity to know more about our world.

As a powerful drive, curiosity leads us to question the world around us, thereby motivating us to learn. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1991), we stimulate curiosity in kids by exposing them to possibilities until they find something they can connect with.

Because no matter what you're curious about, if you are really curious, you will have to learn everything else. Whether the topic is bugs or stars or singing, there are connections. There is mathematics behind the music and chemistry behind the animals. (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, pp. 14-15)

Affective psychologists, probing into the neuroscience of emotions, list curiosity as one of the primary emotions common to both humans and animals (Damasio, 2003). Hensley has pointed out that curiosity is not a skill you teach but a characteristic (2004, p. 3); if we expect curiosity, then as a teacher we need to practice it (Evans & Harrar, cited in Hensley, 2004, p. 2). Palmer suggests that it is for this reason that it isn’t something that can be taught in the traditional sense of teaching (1990, p. 3). In Chapter 2, I spoke about how my curiosity was first ignited by a teacher in Grade 8 who showed us his ring. Curiosity has propelled my exploration of different styles of music, leading me to explore hybrid forms of composition like these two sound documents.

Attention

...the careful, personal selection of details placed in a story is nothing less than the preservation of the individual.

(Mamchur, 2004, p. 79)

This quotation points to different facets of the word “attention”. There is the aspect of observation, of details, and then there are the implications of this for ourselves, and those around us. I am using attention to refer both to our ability to be attentive to the world around us, specifically its sounds, and how this attention is embodied in the creative collaboration process by the facilitator.

Growing up in a rural and isolated environment encouraged an affinity to the world of the senses, which led to a powerful relationship to art-making. Other people, such as Haggarty (2005), have spoken about the hold that the land can have for one growing up in a rural environment. This might help to explain the pull and enjoyment I feel in capturing the live raw sound. When I am in the recording studio, I try to capture the *take* before the recorded take. This is similar to photography where you click the shutter before the subject has *prepared* her smile.

As Sullivan (2008) states, anyone who works in the arts knows that “creating with forms, intentions, drives, and ideas is a provocative and intensely unknowing process that engages the whole body, as what is known comes face to face with what is not and this propels the inquiry” (p. 240). Part of the challenge is in understanding the “ways in which learning emerges through the interaction of the body and the environment” (Powell, 2007, p. 1084). Abram (1996), also, has written eloquently on the different kinds of learning that direct contact with nature develops (p. x).

The arts invite us to observe the world. By attending to qualities of sound, sight, taste, and touch, the arts give us “permission to slow down perception, to look hard, to savor the qualities that we try, under normal conditions, to treat so efficiently that we hardly notice they are there” (Eisner, 2002, p. 5). A gradual involvement in music deepened this capacity to be mindful of the world around me as I learned to slow down and listen with fresh ears to the sounds I might previously have taken for granted.

Buber spoke about how the “attentive man faces creation as it occurs. He listens to the sounds of his life....” (quoted in Hodes, 1971, p. 23). He referred to this as “the poetry of the everyday” (p. 23). In a similar fashion, we could speak about the *music of the everyday*, where we learn to appreciate sounds that we might take for granted, sounds that we didn’t realize were there until we make room for them.

As our listening develops through attentiveness, we are able to move with increasing ease between the realm of abstract sound to one of a shared social world, learning to decipher the music’s rich multiple layers. Aoki was aware of this transformative power that listening and creating music could have and, in his practice, he emphasized the “significance of the ear and of listening in educational experience” (quoted in Pinar, 2003, p. 10). Paulo Freire referred to this as situating the activity within the lived experience of participants (Smith, 1997, 2002). As Weiler explains, “One of the most important pedagogical tenets for Freire was the need for teachers to respect the consciousness and culture of their students and to create the pedagogical situation in which students can articulate their understanding of the world” (quoted in Abrahams, 2005, p. 13).

In this manner, the affordances offered by the medium of sound take us beyond traditional print literacy to a multimodal literacy as placement of sound, and layering, become ways to look at, and to represent the world. This temporal web, which is part of our auditory world, is the start of narrative creating the possibility for story; indeed, I considered calling these pieces *audio narratives* early on in my research, for this reason.

Education, both formal and informal, developed my capacity to perceive layers and patterns in music and sound. Electronic Music courses helped develop an understanding of the building blocks of sound, allowing for a closer examination of the minutiae of sound. “Once ears have been opened, they can hear more. When they hear more, they appreciate and understand more” (Green 2006, p. 115). It is a kind of mindfulness that Gouzouasis calls “listening with ears wide open” (2008, p. 227).

Just as “writing is largely made up of listening to life” (Snowber, 1997, Section 11), and “does not begin when we put pen to paper, but in the way we are mindful towards life, in the way we live, breathe, think, and dwell in our bodies” (Section 15), so mindfulness becomes a form of acceptance of the world around us. The importance of ongoing education to help us has been pointed out by Broudy: “Unless there is outside stimulation and help, growth in subtlety of insight and flexibility of thought ceases” (quoted in Bresler, 2001, p. 44).

Heathcote developed an approach to working with drama students, which can give us insight into how attention can be part of a music practice. In her drama work, paying attention to the student is a form of acceptance. By teaching with attention to detail and its relation to the whole, she feels that we are creating the possibility of significance for the student. For her this is done by the hard work of the teacher making

ordinary experiences significant (Heathcote, 1984, p. 24). While the teacher creates the possibility of having an authentic experience, the student must be attentive for this to happen (p. 25). Of course, as Custodero (2005) has pointed out, the activities that we call art “are focused on expressing, elevating the nonchalant to the significant” (p. 12).

In a similar way, as I work with my clients I deepen their experience by adding guitar parts that are intended to enhance the mood, create a setting, or establish an ambience for the essential emotional content of the musical work, allowing them to experience a richness that they may have only imagined. It might be that there is one melody or phrase that I feel holds the key to their song, and that from this kernel we find a way to shape the sound of the song so that it will reach out with greater force to touch the listener. These same ideas are used as I composed the sound documents, where I keep attentive to the intrinsic emotional content of the work to bring out the richness that I hear.

Acceptance and Collaboration

For Heathcote, paying attention to the people you are with, their moods, and their feelings, is a form of acceptance, and a prerequisite for collaboration. I recognize that my clients (the people who come to me to record or have me play guitar on their songs), experience the same mixture of excitement and fear that I share around the act of creating songs. I know that while the desire to record, to leave a mark with your sound, requires a strong ego, it is often accompanied by insecurities as well, as you question will it succeed, or what others will think? Knowing these feelings, and the tensions they create, helps me in supporting the people with whom I collaborate. I feel called to

support and help find solutions to the work at hand, while also trusting that the work progresses with a life of its own, at its own pace.

As I work, I enjoy creating a mood where “anything is possible”. This is a form of acceptance which allows the musicians I work with to feel that they can “be themselves”, and that they are not being judged. I find that as I become caught up in the creative process, I can cast aside my judging self. Heathcote (1984) put it this way: “we must pay constant attention to others, and be slow to make judgments” (p. 21). It doesn’t matter to me if my clients have degrees, or if they have never been to school. I think of the Beatles who never went to music school; their *school* was the music they loved.

Both of my *informants* spoke about this sense of openness they felt working with me. By responding to a core that wants to be heard, I trust that the music will unfold. Like a gardener, I am there to help nurture their ideas. The best ground for this growth is one in which my collaborators feel safe, both physically, and emotionally. One music researcher described the environment he encouraged for his students as: “... an atmosphere where they feel safe and can experiment” (Savage, 2005a). By creating a safe atmosphere, the teacher is giving the student freedom to open himself up to the music.

The feeling I like to attain is similar to the one Brian Cunningham describes in “Talking Blues” when he says how participants at the Carnegie Centre: “feel comfortable playing there because they know they aren’t going to be judged” (Cunningham, 2000). The freedom of not being judged propels you forward, giving you the momentum required to forge new ideas. It is a feeling that has been described as “flow”

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) in which “the creator is lost in an experience that allows for deep inquiry, wonder, and enjoyment” (Irwin & Chalmers, 2007, p. 180).

When in the presence of someone who is sharing a song or musical idea, I experience a sense of awe as they give birth to a new creation before my eyes. I become swept up in the process, experiencing our common bond of humanity, drawn into what Heathcote calls our creative brotherhood. This attitude encourages a *deepening* of the creative process, which allows for the possibility of something new to develop, perhaps something a little different from what the artist did before, perhaps something new for me as well. I call this way of working together collaboration.

Collaboration is part of music making, as musicians perform, rehearse and record together. Through these activities, one grows accustomed to the give and take, the exchange of roles that is part of music making. My work as guitarist or producer constantly involves me in collaborative roles, allowing me to sense the presence of another human being with all their desires, their wishes and hopes and dreams, and their fears, and insecurities.

The two sound documents capture and document real time interactions, offering a window through which to view my collaborations. I would like to think that these pieces convey a sense of respect for the two main protagonists, without elevating them. I am reminded of what John Berger (2001) wrote of Vincent Van Gogh: “what makes him popular is that what he looked at he loved intensely, and that what he looked at belonged to everyday life” (p. 88). Respect goes hand in hand with acceptance.

Not surprisingly, acceptance has been studied by both counsellors and educators. For Carl Rogers, “the facilitation of significant learning depends upon certain

attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship of the facilitator and the learner" (quoted in O'Hara, 2005, p. 332). This ability to carefully listen to another person was described by Buber as a meeting of two people where neither is hiding behind code or ritual, but rather both are relating with the whole of their being (cited in Hodes, 1971, p. 25). He termed this the I-Thou relationship (Buber, 1958/2000), and felt that "...dialogue is possible if the people who are genuinely trying to converse, listen not only to what is said but also to what is felt without having been expressed in words" (quoted in Hodes, 1971, p. 11).

The similarities between Buber's and Rogers' thoughts were explored by the two of them in person just one time in a conversation that fortunately was transcribed (Anderson & Cissna, 1997). This unedited transcript also includes a "running commentary" by the chairperson, allowing us to be witness to Rogers' ability to deepen interpersonal communication. Rogers' capacity to be present with Buber encourages Buber to discuss subjects that he had never before talked about in public. We see in action the resonance between what Rogers says and does, and how it can deepen a relationship, even one in front of an audience.

Collaboration is not a matter of following a script. There is no list of techniques for you to follow. It is a reflection of how you feel about other people, based on a commitment to both respect and prize the other person's experience. However, there are skills I have learned over the years that help me to initiate and sustain the musical collaborations I speak about. These include the ability to play and improvise on the spot, to let go of my fears, and to take risks. These skills, built on experience and trust, enabled me to sit in with musicians at the Carnegie Centre, and to play and record with Tamara even though I didn't know what song we were going to do. By creating a space

for Tamara to share her song, I was also creating a space in which she could share her story.

Summary

The qualities of curiosity, attentiveness, and acceptance are discernable as part of the collaborative process from the soil of which these two sound documents were created. My curiosity about people, music, and their unique story, invited the possibility of these two pieces. Attentiveness to Brian Cunningham (“Talking Blues”) made me aware of his gift of communicating through speech, which, when integrated into the sound document, became an important part of the CD that this song introduced. An acceptance of Brian allowed this collaboration to develop in a relaxed manner, reflected in the quality of the relationship we sense in the recordings.

Again, a curiosity about different music led me to play with the Romainan, Lache Cercel, which led me to Tamara, thereby creating the possibility of the second sound document “Tamara’s Dad”. Attentiveness to the details that were part of Tamara’s recording session led directly to the development of this piece as I focused and responded to parts of the melody. An attitude of acceptance, based on respect for her artistry, allowed a spirit of collaboration evidenced in the relaxed quality of the recording session.

Chapter 6.

Emergent Themes and Their Implications for Education

Introduction

Having explored and described my process in creating two sound documents, I examine the implications of my results for arts education. The following themes emerged from this study, which I examine in conjunction with a review of the literature:

1. The Teacher: Knowledge and Love of Music
2. Acceptance and Collaboration
3. Social Implications
4. Discovering a Subject: The Writing Process
5. Digital Literacy

The Teacher: Knowledge and Love of Music

If nobody loves something, it will be the first to disappear.
(Hockney & Joyce, 2002, p. 243)

My inquiry into the process of composing sound documents demonstrates the importance of curiosity, and attentiveness, which a literature review supports as being important attributes for a teacher, especially an arts teacher. A love of music led me to interact with music and sound in different ways, ways that composer and educator M. Shafer has explored in his teaching practice. By examining the BC Teachers Federation

website (BC Ministry of Education, 1996), I found that these ideas are consistent with many of their aims for music education.

Although I didn't take many arts courses in my school years, the ones I did take were memorable. In junior high school art class, as we worked on assignments, the teacher played music of the Folk Era, such the songs of Peter, Paul, & Mary, on his stereo. I think that he was playing the music that he enjoyed, and that by doing this he was actually sharing something of himself; whether he was doing this intentionally or not.

I took an Art elective in Grade 11, and I can still remember the feeling that it was acceptable, even encouraged, to enter into one's inner world. As we worked away at our projects, the teacher would play records that were part of the late 1960s underground scene, groups with names like Country Joe and the Fish, West Coast Pop Experimental Band, as well as the traditional Indian music of Ravi Shankar. This strange, yet exciting music had a feeling of discovery to it that echoed the freedom I felt in that class. Reflecting back on this time, I agree with Ross: "...students relish the arts not because "free expression" is a license for self-indulgence and anarchy but because it allows them to exercise a large measure of personal control and self-determination over their work" (Ross & Kamba, 1998, p. 198).

In my present role as a guitar teacher, I expose my students to examples of the music that we are working on, and find YouTube, the online video archive resource, invaluable for this. The method book I use has many folk and traditional melodies, and by playing examples from YouTube students are introduced to styles, history, and indeed ways of life that they may not be aware of. For example, with the song "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" we watched an old clip of The Carter Family. Next week, this

teenage student said that she really enjoyed that music and had been listening to more of The Carter Family. Music is part of a culture, and it has connections to a lived life. I feel that by exposing students to original recordings it both broadens their horizons and allows them to find music and stories with which they can resonate. These students think they are learning to play guitar, but I prefer to think that they are learning about life. As Kushner (1999) says: “Music is the pretext—life is the text” (p. 216). Perhaps this is what Dewey meant when he commented that, “one of the greatest of educational fallacies is the belief that children learn only what it is that they are studying at the time” (quoted in Eisner, 2001, p. 8).

Teachers provide a model, as students observe how their teacher attends to the world around him/her self. This places the onus on music teachers to have first hand experience of careful listening as they at least try to model and demonstrate what *careful listening* is. This implies an embodied relationship to teaching growing out of an attentive connection to the natural world. Fortunately, in my experience, our hearing, like any sense, can be developed and refined through this careful attending.

Composer and music educator Murray Schafer has developed exercises to help *cleanse our ears*, enabling us to listen and experience the world in a new way. Borrowing from Rousseau’s line in *Emile*, “I do not like verbal explanations. Young people pay little heed to them, nor do they remember them” (quoted in Schafer, 2005, p. x), Schafer believes in the power of direct experience to engage the student. In his landmark book *Creative Music Education* (Schafer, 1976), he applied concepts developed from his composition and soundscape studies, to the development of aural awareness. These concepts are directly applicable to the field of education. At a recent

public talk at Simon Fraser University, Schafer referred to this as developing an “aural literacy” (Schafer, 2008).

Schafer’s ideas are even more germane today, and could become a useful part of a music teacher’s toolkit, for as Green (2006) stated, “once ears have been opened, they can hear more. When they hear more, they appreciate and understand more” (p. 115). Schafer (1977, 1986, 2005) has continued to develop and document exercises for teachers to use. His goal has been to “introduce students of all ages to the sounds of the environment; to treat the world soundscape as a musical composition of which man is the principal composer, and to make critical judgments which would lead to its improvement” (1986, p. 243). One example of an exercise to help cultivate this deeper attentiveness to our sonic landscape is the Sound Walk. In this exercise, students are directed to walk around opening their ears to the huge macrocosmic composition of which man is the principal creator (p. 247).

The benefits of students interacting directly with the world of sound are outlined in the BC Ministry of Education’s (n.d.) website as part of the rationale for music education. “Music education enables students to interact with sound, simultaneously engaging mind, body, and spirit. Through creating, performing, and listening to music, students experience the ways in which music evokes and conveys thoughts, images, and feelings.” (1996, ¶1). The website lists opportunities that music education provides, including the following:

- investigate and experience emerging technologies that find application in music.
- connect knowledge gained through experience in music with other aspects of their lives.

These points are very general, but they suggest a desire and a willingness to explore new ways of experiencing music that I find very exciting. Specifically, they address the importance of interacting with sound, and the use of emerging technologies. Providing students with an opportunity to compose music in an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) environment gives them a chance to interact directly with sound. Savage, reviewing case studies of classroom sound composition in the United Kingdom, found that the use of ICT quickly captured students' imagination and led them to "facilitate and enable a closer analysis of, and engagement with, the micro-phenomena of sound" (Savage, 2005c, p.171), facilitating "original and powerful artistic products" (p. 178).

Because we can't expect every music teacher to be experienced in all styles of music, I recommend that she teach what she knows and loves. The scope of music is wide and whether it is playing the marimba, singing folk songs, listening to the sounds of nature, or exploring composition with the computer, all these activities can help us learn different aspects of music. A teacher should feel encouraged to work with her strengths, using these to meet the requirements of the curriculum, remembering that learning about music is a lifelong endeavour. Both the student and the teacher share in the learning experience.

This attitude of mutual learning frees the teacher from the need to rigidly control the learning environment, allowing her to become comfortable learning from the student. The poet Robert Frost, who spent many years as a teacher, recounted this desire to give more space to his students in an anecdote he shared at the high school graduation of his grandchild:

And I've gone into class in my day, when I had a class of fifty, and sat in front of them, hoping somebody'd start talking, but I got embarrassed and started it myself. I used to think that'd be a teaching method, to make up my mind I'd never say another word in my class till somebody else said something. And not asking for it either, and I'd just sit there until somebody else, you know, spoke up, something like that. (quoted in Seale, 2000, p. 115)

By taking a risk to not control everything, the teacher is giving decisions back to the students, allowing them to become involved. Mamchur (1990) writes that "whenever you can give a student a choice of any kind, do it" (p. 35). An observer spoke how Heathcote "... comes alive to a situation and does her best teaching when she and the students both are moving into the unknown." (Wagner, 1976, p. 21). It is a form of generosity to allow the students to have their own experience. Schafer (1986) feels that while we can learn from the past we should also expand the repertoire.

Education could become news and prophecy; it need not be limited to lighting up the tribal history. I do not mean that we should merely shovel music by contemporary masters into the classroom. Rather, I am concerned that young people should make their own music, following whatever inclinations seem to them right...the hardest thing teachers may have to learn is to keep quiet and let the class struggle-especially when they think they know the right answer. (p. 253)

A teacher is most effective when he doesn't hide behind rules, when he can be the most that he can be; it is then that he can help his students become the most they are capable of being. As Palmer puts it: "as we learn more about who we are, we can learn techniques that reveal rather than conceal the personhood from which good teaching comes" (Palmer, 1998, p. 24). Buber writes about how a teacher "affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them" (Hodes, 1971, p. 119). As Palmer succinctly said, "...we teach who we are" (Palmer, 1998, p. 2).

This emphasis on the qualities that the teacher brings to her job, her personality, is not a new idea. Dewey spoke of the importance of a teacher developing certain qualities such as open-mindedness (van Manen, 1995). Combs (1965) felt that openness, which he called “making one’s self visible” (p. 68), was crucial to effective teaching. Combs developed the idea of the “teacher as instrument”, and argued for the primacy of the teacher in teacher education. He felt that it is the attitude of the teacher that helps to determine his effectiveness, or success as a teacher. He found that, although “good teachers” varied greatly in their approach and their personality, they shared a similar strong sense of self (p. 68). This approach, known as Humanistic Based Teacher Education, directed attention towards investigating the person of the teacher (Korthagen, 2004, p. 79).

Heathcote, in her work with drama education, felt that the teacher needed to take care of herself: “your own condition is the first and most important element you begin with” (quoted in Wagner, 1976, p. 34), and urged teachers to: “ have the courage to come to terms with themselves and to rely on what they are in their struggle for authenticity” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 13). This Humanistic Based Teacher Education tradition is alive today in men like Palmer, who feel that “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10), and that good teachers share one trait: “a strong sense of personal identity infuses their work (p. 10).

Acceptance: Qualities of Collaboration

In discussing the Fayam portraits, John Berger said that we all have a wish to be seen; and, I would add, to be heard. “Sometimes the sitter was alive, sometimes dead,

but one always senses a participation, a will to be seen, or, maybe, a waiting-to-be-seen” (Berger, 2001, pp. 74-75). Berger calls this a form of collaboration, and this notion is one of the most important aspects to be considered when using the term collaboration as I mean it in this thesis. These two sound documents share some similarities to portraits, capturing something of the person while also reflecting the collaborative process. I am both their immediate audience and their gateway to immortality, preserving their voice and story for posterity.

It is an active participation with the people around one, growing out of a sense of acceptance, which can be described as a form of generosity. Our working together is a form of collaboration that grows out of respect for the risks we all take in creative work. Drawing on my belief that music is an extension of who we are, I see our music making as a kind of meeting. Buber says, “All real living is meeting” (quoted in Palmer, 1998, p. 16), and Palmer adds “and teaching is endless meeting” (p. 16).

From this perspective, teaching, similar to my music work, is a form of collaboration involving our bodies and our senses. As an embodied activity, it requires that we listen with our ears and with our hearts. Listening with our hearts, we are encouraged to respond to the lived experience we sense in the voice of the person with whom we are collaborating.

Murray Schafer recounts a story about a friend of his from the Dakota tribe in Manitoba who said, “In our tribe no one sings a wrong note” (quoted in Kern, 2007). This is a reminder for teachers that “a creative musical product is best produced in situations where there are no right or wrong answers. As Ashton-Warner put it, “You never want to say it’s good or bad. That’s got nothing to do with it. You’ve got no right at all to criticize

the content of another's mind" (quoted in Mamchur, 1982, p. 11). According to Hickey, teachers should allow ample opportunity for students to create with as few external pressures or parameters as possible (Hickey, 2001 p.21).

The qualities of acceptance and collaboration were explored by Buber, who, according to Hodes (1972), believed, that the real educator, "...teaches most successfully when he is not consciously trying to teach at all, but when he acts spontaneously out of their own life" (p. 137). This observation is echoed by Rogers who (1967) found that: "the facilitation of significant learning depends upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship of the facilitator and the learner" (p. 3). O'Hara (2005), too, has spoken about how a loosening of the strict roles between teacher and student encourage the teacher to intuit when to intervene, and when to remain silent as he mediates love and care, hope and trust, and responsibility (p. 332).

The BC Ministry of Education's (n.d.) website addresses the importance of acceptance and collaboration in its recommendation that teachers encourage students to:

- practise co-operation in social interactions involved in the creation, exploration, and expression of music
- accept and respect the ideas of others by working together to create, explore, and express through music

The constructing of sound documents and the process of sharing with others in the classroom can provide a powerful and profound experience. It has been said that students "construct knowledge of themselves and their culture by interacting within their material and social worlds" (Barrett, quoted in Wiggins, 2007, p. 465).

I don't think that this form of collaboration is unusual, but rather, as Lucy Green has documented in her book *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education*, it often occurs in informal music learning settings. My experience has shown that popular musicians manage to find collaborative ways to learn songs and even to write their own songs. One study that followed the lives of young people involved in putting together their own rock bands found that "the bands described themselves as democratic because each person shared equally in the responsibility and musical success of their group" (Gay quoted in Jaffurs, 2006, p. 17). In discussing what she felt she had learned from her work as a musician, Bresler (2005), mentioned collaboration as a quality that is learned and absorbed as part of the interdependent and fluid nature of the music making process.

Lucy Green argues that perhaps we can learn from the informal music practices that musicians engage in, using these ideas with our students. My two sound documents grew out of collaboration with another person, in which I came to discover a story in that person's life. Why can't this be tried out in schools? Why not have students explore what this is like for themselves? Stories are not something that exist only in books; they are part of the fabric of our lives (Ohler, 2008, Witherell, 1991, Lambert, 2002). Students could explore their own stories or gather stories from family members. By recording what they say, and using this to create their own sound document, we are inviting the student to become engaged, as they find ways to represent the story and communicate it to others.

If as Berger (2001) said earlier, we all have a wish to be seen, and by extension, recognized, appreciated and valued; then this is especially true in the marginalized populations of our society to whom some of these wishes are often denied. For these

populations, the kind of recognition that we are speaking about takes on a deeper, even therapeutic implication. For this reason I turn my attention to what I am calling the social implications of this work.

Social Implications

As I inquired into the elements that make up these two sound documents, the powerful social implications of this work became more and more evident. The act of committing your voice and your story to CD is a powerful process, which can have profound consequences for those involved; perhaps foremost the boosting of one's self-esteem can create a sense of pride and confidence. In "Talking Blues", Brian's story was put on a CD and released to the public. With Tamara, while her own music was released on a CD, this sound document has not been publicly released. I believe that this piece will have its own story, a story beginning with its inclusion in this thesis. I believe that these sound documents helped to empower the two individuals involved, while providing the listener with alternative stories of courage and creativity.

The impact of this work goes beyond the two individuals to influence the world beyond them, where music can have the power to sustain or strengthen a community. Brian's story, "Talking Blues", appeared first on the Carnegie Centre CD, *These Are the Faces*, allowing his voice to be heard and honoured by his community, providing the opportunity for his vision to move from the domain of the personal to that of the public. The project was also given a wider audience through its airing on CBC radio, thereby helping to invite public discussion. The participants of this project set up a CD release, as well as performing as a group on other occasions. One of the performers on that CD has gained international exposure, going on to tour North America and Europe with his

unique blend of street rap poetry and folk, which has been praised by the renowned artist Tom Waits (*Music Choices: C.R. Avery, 2008*).

In this manner, by documenting the subjects' experiences, sound documents are capable of helping to empower those who are socially marginalized, helping to develop their own identities as well as increasing the influence of their voices in the dominant discourse.

Historically, various producers and artists have used the power of audio recordings to document the "voice of authentic experience", capturing and communicating the rich social worlds that they observed. With the development of the portable tape recorder, this social journalism as an art form took on a new dimension.

Truax (2000) notes:

One of the first people to capitalize on the reflecting power of the tape recorder was Tony Schwartz, who in 1946 devised a portable version of his tape machine and went about recording the rich soundscape of his native New York. Through his earlier experience of recording folk singers, he had acquired an interest in folklore, and when he started recording, he realized that he was surrounded by a living folklore in his own auditory environment. (p. 219)

An extension of this approach was carried out later at the BBC with programs researched and produced by folklorists Ewan MacColl, and Peggy Seeger, where songs created in the folk tradition were interwoven with the language of the people (Truax, 2000, p. 219). As MaColl stated: "They were designed to form part of a continuous text which would move freely between speech and song ..." (quoted in Truax, pp. 219-220). This tradition is also found in the work of Glen Gould's radio documentaries for CBC radio. With the advent of digital cameras, and cell phones, this documenting of our world

has moved to a more visible level and is having a huge impact on the creation of sound documents, and digital storytelling.

I don't believe that Brian or Tamara would have produced this material on their own. The voice of authenticity excited me, and moved me to capture and document it in some way through the recording medium. Sound documents provided me with the opportunity to present the stories of those who for one reason or another didn't have the chance to be heard.

My early training and work as a music therapist helped inform my understanding of the close relationship that exists between a person and her music. Recently, for example, I recorded two developmentally disabled residents in a group home. I augmented the recording with added instrumentation and then presented it back to them on a CD. Just the other day, one of the residents said, "I sure enjoyed making that record, I'd like to make another one." Currently, I am collecting material on camera to document how I use singing with a third client. His singing enables him to express himself by *making up* lyrics that include a larger vocabulary than he utilizes in his limited talking. This material could become the basis for another sound document.

The ability of the arts to reach students who are not otherwise being reached, or to reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached, has been documented by Irwin, Gouzouasis, Grauer, Leggo, and Springgay (2006), and Soep (2006). Sinker (2000, p. 196), reporting on studies conducted with refugees, and deaf populations using media education and practice to explore issues of identity, found that "the themes of these projects provided an opportunity for all the pupils to use their own personal experiences in making work" (p. 203).

Often, youth described as marginalized feel alienated by a curriculum and staff who don't speak to them. In this context, music can be used to "circumvent the resistance that marginalized youths have toward traditional schooling practices" (Higgs, 2008, p. 546). In my experience, individuals who are described as marginalized often have rich stories to tell us when they feel empowered to do so. As Palmer (1990) pointed out: "The challenge of racial and cultural minorities to higher education comes in part from their refusal to accept the validity of a universal' tale that does not honor the particularities of their own stories" (pp. 12-13). This aspect of empowering the individual has been recognized and harnessed by Heathcote in her drama work (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985) and by Mamchur in the writing process work (Mamchur, 1990). Today, youth media projects exist which aim at helping to give voice by providing teenagers with the digital tools and skills to help them express their stories (Fleetwood, cited in Soep, 2006, p. 198).

Longpré's (2004) research into the power of song-writing demonstrated to him there were powerful social ramifications to this activity. He noted that:

While songs permit us to preserve and pass along our accumulated wisdom, they also give voice to the invention of new visions (Dickinson, 1997). Songs can be a newspaper for the illiterate, and a call together for the dispossessed... (p. 105)

More research could be done to review the available work conducted on the ability of media arts to engage students who are not being reached by more traditional means.

I believe that my ability to collaborate with individuals who may be viewed as outside of the mainstream was helped by my life as a musician. Like shamans in the past, musicians live in a state of tension within society, occupying a place that alternates

between the edge and the center of the social world. The shaman was indispensable for his role in performing the rituals that maintain that society, rituals that often included the use of music, chanting or drumming. This position still exists to some extent today, for while there is a need for music, and for its function of providing a beat to dance to, or to change or reflect our moods, musicians themselves occupy an unstable position, being both elevated and denigrated. The musician is often given the opportunity to connect with a wider social-strata, mixing with people from all walks of life. For instance, I recently returned from Romania, where I had the opportunity to be accepted by the Roma musicians I met; then, on a recent occasion, I played at an exclusive private golf club that I would not otherwise have entered. These experiences lead one to develop a more fluid social persona, not as defined and demarcated by socio economic roles and behaviours as required by most jobs.

The term *border-crossing* has been used to describe these kinds of experiences:

...that occur when you place yourself in unfamiliar places or situations...Such experiences with the unfamiliar cultural characteristics of others often challenge and cause you to adjust your cultural "standards" of thinking, perceiving, evaluating, and behaving. Culturally speaking, these are significant moments of enlightenment, which often happen when you visit other countries (Lingenfelder, quoted in Chang, 2008, p. 73).

Both of the two sound documents, in this sense, introduce the listener to different worlds.

While the two individuals might be described by some as marginalized, I found them both to be powerful communicators of their world. I use not only their own words but also their actual voice, to enable us to enter into their sound world.

Discovering a Subject: The Writing Process as Tool

There's no such thing as a good painting about nothing.
(Walker, 2001, p. xii)

My investigation into the process of creating the two sound documents, directed me to the importance of understanding how an idea takes root, to become the subject of one's work. While I have discussed this aspect in each of the two chapters describing the sound documents I will now more closely examine the concept of *discovering a subject*, which is the first step of the 4-part writing process. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully examine the four elements, I would like to call attention to the writing process as a powerful pedagogical tool for teachers involved in multimodal projects.

Murray developed his concept of a "writing process" by analyzing what professional writers actually do, not what they talk about. From his observations, Murray (1968) identified seven elements or steps that are part of the actual process of writing, which Mamchur (1999) further refined and reduced to the following four elements: discovering the subject, searching for specifics, sensing an audience, and creating a design. Apps feels that "... Mamchur's four-stage model is more adaptable and transferable to other artistic disciplines as it speaks more directly to the heart of process", to "direct attention to the internal workings of the process" (Apps, 2007, p. 3).

Other researchers have explored the usefulness of this model to different creative endeavours. Mamchur (1999) has successfully used this 4-part writing process in the teaching of writing skills to pre-service teachers. Apps (2007) has compared and assessed its usefulness to the visual arts, where she concluded that the four stages were indeed recognizable, while Kurnaedy (2009) recently applied a similar type of

analysis to the choreographic process. The relationship of writing to music has been commented on by Duffy (2005) who “found that recording musical compositions and writing academic essays rely on practically the same cognitive and creative processes (first described by scholars like Donald Murray (1972) ...” (p. 9). This notion is supported by the following comments made by a student reflecting on the challenges she faced creating an audio essay:

I...had to take into account many of the same things that I would have had to consider in a written composition. I had to have an introduction where I pulled my audience in. I had to have a thesis so that my audience would know the purpose of investing their time in my project. My narrative had to follow a logical path to its conclusion, and...the conclusion had to leave my audience with something to remember...[E]ven though audio...gave my narrative an aesthetic quality that I couldn't have achieved on paper, I still used many of the same analytical skills a written essay would require. (Borton, quoted in Selfe, 2007b, p. 4)

As audio essays or sound documents find more of a place in the school curriculum, the writing process may become useful as a pedagogical tool for both teacher and student. By concentrating on the first step of the writing process, discovering a subject, I'd like to first clarify what writers mean by this and then briefly show how it was manifest in the two sound documents.

A subject is something already known from experience, known inside the self from lived experience. For the artist, a grasp of his subject allows him to point the way for the listener, the viewer, or the reader. As Mamchur has pointed out, with writing, it is important that the writer “...choose as topics only those things that she consciously and subconsciously knows and cares about” (Mamchur, quoted in Apps, 2007, p.12). This grasp of subject, born from experience, is referred to as “voice” and is considered an

important aspect of writing (Murray, 1995, p. 21). The writer who is able to convince the reader of his story is said to have “the voice of authority”.

In music, this voice can be reflected in tone, phrasing, pacing, and mood. Voice, like the human voice, represents the performer's unique perspective, which can lead the listener along, giving them permission to immerse themselves in the performance. It is a way that the performer can convey a sense of *lived experience*. Without this voice of authority, there is a danger that the listener may hold back, perhaps even taking on a critical stance of non-involvement. The voice of authority can be communicated through use of specific details. For example, in “Talking Blues” we have the specific of Brian's voice, and in his stories he uses specifics like the anecdote of the participants only owning one pair of pants. These act to anchor and give a sense of authenticity to the work.

It is in the details, that, with a shock of recognition, we recognize our shared humanity. This requires an understanding of the larger picture within which a work resides. To use an example from the field of music production, when a sound engineer mixes a song he needs to not only have an understanding of the technical aspects of sound, but also needs to understand what is contextually important about the song. Eisner pointed out that artistically crafted work creates a paradox, revealing what is universal by examining in detail what is particular (Eisner, 1995, p. 3). The writing process recognizes that specifics provide the details that give your writing authenticity by making it believable (Murray, 1968, p. 5). In “Tamara's Dad”, what is most emotionally compelling is the immediacy of Tamara's haunting singing voice, which cuts across any distance created by a foreign language.

The concern in the writing process with discovery of subject is connected to the theme of discovery of the self, both of which are linked through narrative. The theme of transformation and self-knowledge is at the heart of narrative. This forms the theory behind books, such as *Emotional Structure: Creating the Story Beneath the Plot: A Guide for Screenwriters*, and those examining digital storytelling (Lambert, 2002; Ohler, 2008; Gakhar & Thompson, 2007). An example is the oft-used theme of transformation as part of the quest journey where the hero embarks on a journey, which changes him (Ohler, 2008).

Although the relationship of pure music to narrative is a contested one (Monelle, 1992), through the integration of voice and text it moves closer to the terrain of narrative. The narrative process of creating a sound document shares similarities with digital storytelling in that practitioners of both, like modern day alchemists, refashion their materials in the cauldron of the hard drive, if not to promote the dream of everlasting life, at least to immortalize their story. The four steps of the writing process show promise of being more than a tool for writers, but in fact a way to get at the core of the artistic process. By providing a shared language, they can provide the artist with a context for revision, and help to clarify his thinking (Apps, 2007, p. 114). Kurnaedy noted how “This reflection may lead to employing deeper and more complex insights into succeeding work” (Kurnaedy, 2009, p. 130).

It is a tool whose time may have come given the interdisciplinary aspect of the digital arts. The promise of a method to facilitate the artistic process that can be used by teachers in multimodal disciplines to help students warrants further investigation. It could provide teachers with a conceptual framework suited to a constructivist approach such as Walker has discussed, with its use of “Big Themes” (Walker, 2001).

I found the concept of discovering a subject to be useful as a way to both frame and discuss my process of creating sound documents and I can envision a workbook similar to the Study Guide written by Mamchur (1999) for her course on writing being developed as a resource for teachers interested in the creation of sound documents or other media rich projects.

Digital Literacy

While one doesn't think of art-making and technology as existing comfortably with each other, they do share an important relationship. For example, in the past, an artist began his apprenticeship by learning to mix paints before progressing to actual painting. Artists have often been the first to explore possibilities offered by emerging technologies, and so it is understandable that today musicians are exploring the possibilities offered by digital technology. This does not mean that practices from the past are jettisoned; in fact, it can lead to a renewed appreciation and re evaluation of past practices.

The computer is transforming what we mean by the term "literacy." While a full examination of literacy is beyond my research, I feel that, because my work was made possible by the computer, this aspect needs to be addressed. It wasn't that long ago when work similar to these two sound documents would only have been possible with bulky and expensive hardware.

For example, many years ago I designed a multimedia presentation of my visit to the monasteries of Mt. Athos in northern Greece. Placing music and narration behind the slide show involved having a friend narrate the script while I played the appropriate

sections from a record, recording both live onto a cassette tape. Editing wasn't a possibility with the equipment one had at home. Today's technology makes this seem archaic. While I came from the generation that had to adapt to the use of computers, younger generations have grown up with the computer, the cell phone, and the internet, as a given. These tools are changing how we listen, play and record music.

In his recent book *The Digital Musician*, Hugill discussed the potential of the computer for exploring, storing, manipulating and processing sound. He felt that it was the starting point for creativity of a kind unlike anything previous in musical practice, one that required a new way of thinking (Hugill, 2007, p. 4). Eisner was aware of this potential role the computer might have and noted that "New possibilities for matters of representation can stimulate our imaginative capacities and can generate forms of experience that would otherwise not exist" (Eisner, 2004, p. 8).

These new forms of representation are causing a shift in our understanding of the term literacy. Literacy has been defined as "gaining competencies involved in effectively using socially-constructed forms of communication and representation" (Kellner, 2000, p. 249). The computer, by digitizing data, is creating new possibilities for interplay between forms of representation, suggesting a need to rethink what literacy means (Jewitt, 2003, p. 101).

English teachers have been forced to reconsider their notions of literacy as visual images and sound compete for attention. Selfe, for example, has encouraged teachers and scholars of composition to reflect on the role of aurality in contemporary communication tasks (Selfe, 2007a). She feels that sound "... is often undervalued by teachers of English composition", and that this "deprive(s) students of valuable semiotic

resources for making meaning” (pp. 1-2). Selfe calls this new form of representation “multimodal composition.” Other terms used include “multi-literacy,” or “multi media literacy.” Digital storytelling is a related form of representation uses the full range of multimedia (Miller, 2008; Ohler, 2008). Lambert, director of the Center for Digital Storytelling, describes the process of creating multimedia presentations on the computer as “Listen deeply, tell stories” (Lambert, 2002), demonstrating that while tools may change, the listening and sharing of stories, remains. All of these labels are subsumed under the category of Information and Communication Technology, which challenges our conceptions of learning and knowledge.

Students are now arriving at school with a natural familiarity and comfort with multimedia, but are teachers ready for these students? Will their experience have any value in the eyes and ears of the teachers they will meet? Wiggins points out that “music educators and researchers need to understand and value the musical knowledge that students bring into the classroom – knowledge constructed from a lifetime of musical experience both in and out of school” (Wiggins, 2007, p. 465). Composing could provide a way of helping students to bridge the gap between music they experience in the classroom, and that of their own auditory world, as well as providing them with opportunity to reflect on their relationship to the sounds that make up their life. As Wiggins concludes, children “construct knowledge of themselves and their culture by interacting within their material and social worlds” (Barrett, quoted in Wiggins 2007, p. 465).

This suggests the need for teachers to have first hand experience with digitized media (Takayoshi, Hawisher, Selfe, & Pamela, cited in Denecker, 2008) as enormous possibilities open up. As Savage points out: “Ultimately, given a conceptual grasp of this

alternative perspective, it could lead pupils and teachers to engage with and organise sounds in new ways, challenging the very nature of music itself at a fundamental level” (Savage, 2005c, p. 168).

Caught in a paradigm shift over changing notions of literacy, educators are forced to find their way in the face of rapidly changing technology. The plethora of books and articles currently being published attest to this search. *Music Education with Digital Technology* is one such recent book, which explores the role of teachers through case studies in examining how teachers are coping and finding their way (Finney & Burnard, 2007). Recently, a new *Journal of Music, Technology and Education* debuted with an article which summed up the relationship between technology and teaching and learning in a digitally rich music classroom by concluding: “These are issues about which, in music education, we presently have little understanding or consensus” (Burnard, 2007, p. 37).

It is understandable that this will require some exploration for it is not just a question of harnessing digital tools; it is also about finding more engaging ways of teaching, growing out of more engaged images of knowing (Palmer, 1998). Research is slowly coming forward from different parts of the globe. Li (2007), for example, concluded that digital storytelling could be an effective tool in teacher preparation by enhancing the teaching and learning of new literacies in a world of rapid technology advancement. In Norway, Erstad has studied the movement of schools to implement a policy of digital literacy, concluding that it is “transforming the way we create knowledge and meaning, communicate and interact” (Erstad, 2006, p. 419). In the UK, it is expected that teacher training will include at least a minimal introduction in computer and music education.

The majority of studies that I draw on in the field of digital music education come from the UK, particularly the work of Savage (2005b, 2005c, 2007), and his coauthored papers with Chaliss (2001, 2002a, 2002b). Of particular interest is their study conducted with junior high school level children who participated in the composition and public performance of an electroacoustic piece based on their town of Dunwich. Students were given control over choosing what sounds were used and it is instructive to hear some of the students' comments:

Everyone had the chance to contribute. The piece was different and individual. We composed it and no one had heard it before. (Girl, Year 8, quoted in Savage & Chaliss, 2001, p. 145)

I liked how original and contemporary it is. I mean, there is no other piece quite like it and you could never play the exact same piece again. (Girl, Year 9, quoted in Savage & Chaliss, 2001, p. 145)

In another study using digital storytelling, fourth graders in the USA shared autobiographical stories with children in South Africa as part of a Global Classroom Project. One child said:

It required a lot of work even after school but it was worth it because it was cool working with Photo Story, importing pictures and recording. When we go to Blackboard, we talk to the kids in South Africa as much as possible. We learned a lot about South Africa, like their artwork and how they use a lot of earth tones. We also learned how to do a lot of new things on the computer. (Sherard, 2008, ¶2)

These initiatives support the view of McGinley that:

... a creative approach to curriculum planning gives pupils the opportunity to reflect sonically on physical places, their own and others' environments in powerful and authentic ways. These projects represented an attempt to implement technological and pedagogical strategies that enabled "our young people not only to have the opportunity to become soundscape researchers, but [also] soundscape designers (McGinley, 2001, pp. 69-73).

I am excited by the possibilities the computer holds for composing sound documents when I hear that "...students also note that their audio compositions sometimes have an advantage in capturing a more emotional, personal, and immediate response to various issues than their written essays" (Duffy, 2008, ¶14). The importance of this to the future of teaching is underscored by Eisner: "The kinds of minds we develop are profoundly influenced by the opportunities to learn that the school provides" (Eisner, 2004, p. 8).

However, while computer technology and music software hold great promise, my research led me to concentrate on aspects that transcend the technology used. The technology serves the more traditional artistic goal of highlighting human experience, which makes it at once both compelling and universal. I have found the human qualities of collaboration, of attention, of knowledge and love of music, and the ability to discover a subject indispensable to this process.

Conclusion

My thesis began the day I played "Tamara's Dad" in my class on Creativity, in which it was asked what it took to do this kind of work. Just as teachers can provide students with a new vocabulary for a more developed articulation of experience (Ramsay, 2004, p. 69), so the experience of recording and producing sound documents can offer insight into lived experiences in sound, providing teachers with different ways to think about their teaching. Savage points out that any understanding of innovative practice in music education also requires the teacher to find new ways to represent his experience.

I find myself agreeing with Kushner (Kushner, 1993, p. 39) that in order for true educational changes to occur, both my pupils and my own life experiences should become the context from which educational understanding will emerge. Whilst I recognize the importance of reflecting on my own subjectivities, perhaps the principles should be extended to our pupils (Savage, 2007, p. 200).

I am reminded of something Foucault said:

What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals and /or to life-that art is something specialized and done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? (Foucault, quoted in Aldridge, 1993, p. 17)

Through discussion, reflection, and analysis, I have identified the qualities of curiosity, attentiveness, and acceptance-collaboration as being important to help produce the two sound documents.

1. Curiosity. Provided me with a starting point, a motivation.
2. Attentiveness to sound, to the truth embedded in what people are doing and/or saying. Ordering of sound as a form of narrative development, layering as a way to see the world itself as multi layered. Both help to provide a *thick description* of the world around us.
3. Acceptance-Collaboration. An acceptance of the other person is an invitation to collaborate. The work I have done grows out of this kind of relationship.

In Implications for Education, I identified the following emergent themes:

1. The Teacher: knowledge and love of music.
2. Acceptance and collaboration.
3. Social implications.
4. Discovering a subject: The Writing process.
5. Digital literacy.

I discovered that this list has a resonance and a consistency with the skills and qualities that are considered good teaching practices, such as described on the BC Ministry of Education's (n.d.) website:

1. The benefits of students interacting directly with sound
2. The importance of acceptance and collaboration in education
3. The qualities or properties of the teacher

The relationship of my work to the field of teaching was pointed out to me in discussion with Allan MacKinnon (2009). Listening to me discuss my research, he observed that my varied work of recording guitar solos, producing songwriters, and composing sound documents, could all be viewed as a living symbol of the teaching process, which has a recursive aspect to it. In this view, the teacher is viewed as an *accompanist*, who draws out the lived experiences of the student.

To teach, we first need to hear the song the student is *trying to sing*. The curiosity that the teacher brings with him to his job can help to awaken curiosity in his students. By attending to the world around him, a teacher can point the way for others to attend to the world. By accepting himself, and allowing himself to be truly present, he encourages his students to be present and accepting. By understanding that teaching is about providing a space for another person, we create the possibility for a student to feel a little bit more, and hear, or see a little bit more. Here is a memo I wrote:

With my clients, I feel like I am a teacher and a student. I encourage them, I help them focus their vision, offer possibilities for their song and, of course, I feel like I am always learning at the same time.

As one of my informants said, "In a broad sense, what you do is to facilitate creativity. You focus on emergent qualities, the possibilities, and always find them. It

might just be in a sound, a rhythm, or a word” (My notes). My varied work teaches me the truth of comments made by Buber: “The teacher must show the pupil the direction. He must point the way. But the pupil must make the journey himself” (quoted in Hodes, 1971, p. 125). When another hopeful songwriter comes to my door, I will recall Buber’s method of teaching. “He looked for faces that were struggling for form and shape. Then he helped them achieve identity” (quoted in Hodes, 1971, pp. 128-129).

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Appendices

Appendix A.

CD-ROM Data Appendix

The CD-ROM, attached, forms a part of this work.

The two audio files can be opened on a computer with iTunes, QuickTime Player, Real Player, or played on conventional CD player. If playing from computer, it is recommended that the files are first dragged or placed on your desktop (hard drive) and then opened using either the above programs or the program that you use to play audio files.

Files:

- Track 1: "Talking Blues" (39.2 MB)
- Track 2: "Tamara's Dad" (51.2 MB)

Appendix B.

Screen Shot: 'Tamara's Dad'

