

Editorial

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Special Issue on Peace, Empathy and Conciliation through Music

Welcome to IJCM 12:3, a special issue on Peace, Empathy and Conciliation through Music.

The six articles featured in this issue were initially presented at a collaboratory on the same theme held at The University of Melbourne on September 21-22, 2017. Commencing on the United Nations' International Day of Peace, and bringing together music scholars and people from the community development and education sectors, the collaboratory generated thought-provoking discussion and partnerships between researchers and practitioners. The focus on peace, empathy and conciliation represented the interests of researchers working within the primary host institution – namely, the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions – whose Performance Program investigated the ways in which emotions can be used to power performance. For these researchers, 'performance' is broadly defined to incorporate a wide range of activities, from "staged theatrical and musical performance through to the enactment of social and cultural rituals, some in more formal settings like in the court room or at a public execution site, whilst others have been domestic or religious performances in private, intimate settings" (ARC CHE 2019: n.p.).

Spoken papers and workshops at the collaboratory covered a wide range of music practices. Interventionist peacebuilding and community development music initiatives were considered alongside papers and workshops about music in everyday life and in music therapy contexts, classrooms and universities, church and community choirs, carnivals and festivals. In addition, the ways in which professional composers and performers had engaged with these

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themes in their recent work were also considered. Reflecting the diversity of these contexts, this special issue joins current conversations in the literature on community music, in which the boundaries around the field are being contemplated and redefined (see Bartleet and Higgins 2018). The nine-domain framework of community music practices (Bartleet, Dunbar-Hall, Letts and Schippers: 2009; Schippers and Bartleet 2013; Schippers 2018) highlights the characteristics of musical engagements that distinguish music practices that are read as ‘organic’ from the active interventions often associated with community music activity and, seemingly further still, forms of institutional music-making. This special issue collectively considers community music activities across all of these categories, inviting facilitators and researchers to, “consider how community music practices might move in and through these constructs over time” (Bartleet and Higgins 2018: 16).

If the increasing internationalisation of community music has led to a realisation of the multiplicity of the field, this special issue aims to continue this “deepening, and diversifying” (Bartleet and Higgins 2018: 15). Calls for such moves have been heard from both within and beyond the discipline. A content analysis of the *International Journal of Community Music* found that, although a variety of subjects have been examined in the journal’s first ten years, the most substantively covered topics have involved choral settings, community bands and lifelong music-making (Rohwer 2018). A critique of community music scholarship suggested that, “it would be useful to have more voices and other approaches in community music because the musical lives of individuals and communities are much more multifaceted than it might seem when studying the existing core literature” (Kertz-Welzel 2016: 127). In relation to studies of music and peace specifically, Sandoval’s literature review (2016) questions the “idea of collective music-making as a process of peacebuilding” and draws attention to songs within multimedia contexts, arguing that “songs are just as easily manipulated as propaganda through state and media control (209). Volume 12:3 responds to these proposals, as well as

Rohwer's recommendations that IJCM's future coverage accommodates less common ensemble and musical genre types. The types of musical engagement and activities covered here are both varied and international in scope and include, among others: the music of hip-hop artists and society performers in The Gambia; radio censorship in Thailand; collaborative intercultural ensembles involving First Nations musicians in Central Australia; rock musicians in Mitrovica; and Latino immigrant children engaged in self-directed musical play in the United States.

It is important to note that these activities relate to the field of community music in different ways; that is, "there might not be any connection at all to the concept of community music [...] community music without the ideology promoted by community musicians" (Kertz-Welzel 2018: 127). How might concepts and ideologies of the field of community music be reconsidered, challenged and expanded by "types of music-making [that] significantly predate interventionist approaches" (Bartleet and Higgins 2018: 15)?

At the same time, the diversity of the contributions should not be overstated. Although the musical practices examined span from West Africa (McConnell) to Southeast Asia (Garzoli), and from Southeastern Europe to Northwestern Europe (Howell, Pruitt and Hassler), Australia (Bartleet; Marsh; Reigersberg and Lloyd) and the United States (Marsh), the authorship of the issue's six articles reflects the primarily Australian constitution of the institutions represented at the collaboratory. The relationship between researchers and their interlocutors are brought into sharp relief in community music, where issues of reflexivity and power dynamics are also manifest and wrestled over in the collaboration between practitioners and participants. Questions around definitions in the field, and its epistemological foundations and researcher objectivity, highlight the difficulties here (see Ben 2016; Kertz-Welzel 2016; Kronig 2019). Community music literature embraces definitional ambivalence, partly to address "community musicians explicitly voicing an

objection to defining themselves and being defined”, especially given that “scholars and practitioners are not discursively situated on a level playing field” (Ben 2016: 221-2), and also in an attempt to, “not trap the field down in constructs and words that become fixed and uncritically used and simplified over time” (Bartleet and Higgins 2018: 17).

Leaning into the tensions between varied institutional agendas and privileges, Rohwer (2018) proposed that IJCM should encourage joint-authored work and mutual mentorship between content-expert practitioners and academicians. Volume 12:3 delivers this, with Reigersberg and Lloyd, and Howell, Hassler and Pruitt’s articles working towards the cultural model that Rohwer recommended. Beyond researcher-practitioner co-authorship, the special issue aims to inquire into the abovementioned tensions within community music through the methodologically reflexive topic areas discussed. Bartleet’s article works to explicitly addresses the affirmative construction of the community music projects with which she has been involved, problematising her own discursive orientating of the projects’ outcomes in relation to notions of ‘love’. Reigersberg and Lloyd’s article questions the potential for decolonising community music practice and scholarship in terms of the demands of academic publication. Marsh examines collaborations between schools, communities and tertiary institutions, including a multi-arts secondary school production and a music education service-learning program at a conservatorium. Ethnomusicologists McConnell’s and Garzoli’s analyses of societal musicians in The Gambia and radio censorship in Thailand bring interdisciplinary and international perspectives to notions of ‘community’ through music. Albeit indirectly, their articles question the “neoliberal [notion of] ‘individuality’ and advanced-neoliberal notion of ‘community’” (Kronig 2019: 21) within which community music has been charged with operating (see Kronig 2019).

In addition to inviting readers to reflect on how ‘community’ is constructed, defended and/or imposed in each of these case studies, we are aware that the journal’s emotive themes of

peace, empathy and conciliation neatly align with “semantics that [are] the order of the day” (Kronig 2019: 32). Elsewhere, we have written about the normalising role of emotions, problematising their political functionalisation in the pursuit of peace and conciliation:

The affective turn in the disciplines of international relations, human geography, sociology and political philosophy (to name a few), has signalled an increasing recognition of the central role that emotions play in macro- and micro- sociopolitical spheres. As demonstrated in our discussion of empathy this recognition can lead to emotions gaining currency, commodified in such a way that automates application and discourages interrogation. Another danger of emphasising emotional experiences or objectives in peacebuilding contexts is that the focus becomes too individualised, with the systemic aspects of conflict or political division evading attention. But [...] emotions are at the core of society's structural and institutional operations, too, demonstrating that there is a place for emotions at all levels of analysis and practice. (Dieckmann and Davidson 2018: 40)

Responding to the above, Volume 12:3 should be viewed in light of, “the fact that understanding detailed, specific local contexts of violent conflict is crucial to thinking through music’s potential role in such situations, and whether it can be one of peacebuilding or further violence” (Sandoval 2016: 212). With this in mind, the six articles featured here provide such details, drawing on varying definitions and sociological frameworks of the key themes and illuminating different understandings of, processes of working towards, and outcomes related to using music for peace, empathy and conciliation.

The Articles

The special issue begins with an article by Kathryn Marsh (Sydney University) and uses ethnographic case studies involving newly arrived forced and voluntary migrant children and

young people to explore Lederach's (2005) ideas about the aesthetic and creative dimensions of conflict resolution. Marsh examines how children's playground singing games enact shared experiences, co-ordinating a sense of affinity and – in the case of her participants – facilitating witness to trauma. In re-enacting migratory passages from Mexico to the United States through musical play, Marsh argues that, "these children are performing resilience, reconciling their past selves with the new" (*page number*). Marsh contrasts these self-directed musical engagements with socially integrative music activities organised by collaborating institutions, including a secondary school Intensive English Centre (IEC), a Sierra Leonean youth group and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Brydie Leigh Bartleet (Griffith University) investigates compassionate love as a concept, arguing that love demands a willingness for responsible interaction, and crucially, a turning toward otherness, rather than a turning away. Her article discusses how social connections are amplified when these acts of love occur through music making. The work draws on examples from Bartleet's own experiences as a White migrant living and working with First Nations peoples in South Africa and Australia. Her music practices/research and her relationships with co-musicians, co-researchers and informants are used to highlight music making as expressions of love as intimacy, interaction, trust, respect, dialogue and ethical responsibility. Most importantly, the article raises crucial questions about understanding intercultural music making in this way, and the troubling political underpinnings and implications of such a conceptualization.

Gillian Howell (Griffith University), Lesley Pruitt (Monash University) and Laura Hassler (Musicians without Borders) investigate music projects that have explicitly sought to bring people in divided cities together through community music activities. They focus upon three cities where strong ethno-religious positions territorialize and sustain political and institutional division and are known to be highly resistant to peacebuilding efforts. Exploring

the practices adopted in the Pavarotti Music Centre in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Mitrovica Rock School in Mitrovica, Kosovo, and Breaking Barriers (a pseudonym) in Belfast, Northern Ireland, music-making is revealed as a promising strategy for engendering a will for peace. This article draws on qualitative data from ethnographic fieldwork, lived experience, and knowledge derived from practical first-hand engagement with peace activism and the implementation of peace-focused music programs. Examples show how the musical interactions offer both functional and symbolic contributions to the task of transforming an ethnoscape into a peacescape. Context-specific practices and discourses that are deployed are shown to seek out routes around the local constraints on inter-communal cooperation, and make strong contributions to the broader goal of building peace.

Bonnie McConnell (Australian National University) focuses specifically on song as a site for negotiating understandings of conflict and working toward conciliation. She investigates the practices adopted in the Senegambia Region of West Africa, where musicians have long played a central role in social conflict mediation. The paper explores smaller-scale interpersonal conflict and associated musical practices. Analysis of the strategies used to address interpersonal conflicts within families demonstrates that musicians adapt their musical material and song texts to manage the emotions of their listeners. Musicians articulate a sense of responsibility and recognition of the special role that they play in promoting forgiveness and encouraging their listeners to overcome feelings of anger and jealousy. That is, the songs they generate demonstrate insight into the way conflicts are conceptualized and show preferred methods of mediation that can inform dispute resolution strategies in the region. These examples also demonstrate the limitations of universalizing theories of music and conflict and highlight the need for situated analyses of musical practices as they are understood and experienced in particular social and cultural contexts.

John Garzoli's (Monash University) article explores how music was enlisted to shape the emotional register of the grieving process when King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand died in October 2016 and the country entered an official period of mourning. Garzoli observes how government-controlled media actions were exemplified in the broadcasting of the police-run radio station in the north-eastern city of Khon Kean. The station repeatedly played only a small number of structurally and aesthetically similar popular songs that shared themes of praise for the late king and emphasised national solidarity. Garzoli articulates how in this case music influences emotions and behaviour, and how it became a central plank in the institutional response to the king's death by modelling the emotional register expected during the mourning period. He argues this was achieved through two processes: i) re-configuring the ontological status of songs originally composed to glorify the King and valorised Thai traditional culture, but now used to reflect and shape the national mood of mourning; and ii) distributing them in a way that foreclosed the emergence of counter narratives. Garzoli argues that the process by which these songs were selected and broadcast was not only consistent with 'new censorship', but may count as evidence of its effectiveness.

Muriel Reigersberg (Open University, UK) and Jessie Lloyd's (independent artist) article is based on their musical and social experiences when co-presenting their workshop at the Melbourne Collaboratory on *Peace, Empathy and Conciliation Through Music* in September 2017. Jessie Lloyd is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musician whose research on the secular music of Australian Aboriginal missions has received critical acclaim. Muriel is a Dutch applied ethnomusicologist. Together Muriel and Jessie had decided to teach workshop participants religious and secular songs from Australian Aboriginal missions while discussing how the collecting and performing of these songs influenced their own perspectives on conciliation, empathy, collaborative research and performance. In this article, the authors explicitly explore the tensions that exist between the politics of academic authorship in the

modern-day academy and how the act of writing about collaborative musical performances may or may not assist conciliation agendas in Indigenous Australian contexts. It is suggested that a carefully-negotiated middle ground to writing may exist, provided that researchers remain mindful of how the academic practices of authorship, publishing and other forms of knowledge dissemination can still operate in ways which exclude the participation of Indigenous people, thereby hampering the road to conciliation.

Conclusion

This Special Issue has captured some of the diverse community music initiatives, papers and workshops presented at the September 2017 collaboratory. The articles have asked us to consider whose interests are at stake in peacebuilding and have questioned the promotion of music-making as a sure-fire process of attaining that objective. They have challenged the value of the work in community contexts with a range of different cultural sub-groups in order to evaluate and address theoretical questions relating to the roles of affect, ideology and power dynamics on outcomes. One answer to this challenge has been to ‘scale up’ interpersonal understandings and relationships to societal norms and institutional governmental structures, making the political personal and vice versa. However, the articles also draw attention to the dangers of such an approach. The research practices and methodologies themselves have also been the subject of enquiry, addressing how these have impacted not only research as it is disseminated, but more importantly, the living practices and people involved. As a collection of investigations, they have considered how community music practices are constructed and might work further to achieve the affective goals of peace, empathy and conciliation.

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