

Becs Lockett PhD

## Appendix G: Reflexive Materials

There is a precedent for the use of reflexive and creative arts materials in qualitative research. Altheide and Johnson (2011) emphasised the importance of documenting the research process, making it explicit and transparent. Hoskyns (2013) advocates the use of a reflective research journal to focus on processes such as ‘data gathering, ethics and recruitment’ (Hoskyns, 2013, p.75), and Schenstead (2009) explored musical improvisations and reflective writing to investigate her own practice as a flautist and music therapist.

### 7.1 Dunnock

D1 Reflective Notes in the Room and Cafe before and after 3/10/16

His landscape?

What will his experience be?

My experience, my landscape. These interviews feel like traveling to gigs, rather unknown, an event. A troubadour researcher.

Traveling and musiking.

In some ways it feels like a personal journey, wanting to find some connection with others through hearing their landscapes (multi-model) or playing music.

Will it be jazzy? Will he bring a sax? Or he might not want to play at all? I want to play today, far too much time sitting in-front of a computer. I wish I had my bass today, but it's not practical on the train.

His landscape .....Collecting musical landscapes

D1

Like Parry, Vaughen-Willilams. Collecting folk songs.

Improve interview technique - either remember key things they said and ask deeper questions-

or jump in asking for more detail.

Topic - PhD process, discrimination.

I'm aware that by setting up in interview a contemplative house, its Christian, a room with bibles in it and a children's work room. A room I feel very comfortable in. But my participant may not. It's not really a neutral ground. Over the past hour I have been wondering what he looks like - my preconceptions - i.e., white, heterosexual, young, a musician type.

He may be none of these things. Looking at strangers passing by in the street and wondering if they are D.

Aware of the name, and projecting other D's onto him i.e. ... other people I know.

Wondering who he is?

What his landscape is?

Waiting in the room, with a corporate pen!  
Initial thoughts afterwards

Music -

second instrument and melodica.

I felt a bit anxious - will I be able to play with him - thought this was his feelings?

Maybe he was anxious about playing with me?

Also it felt like he wanted to find more freedom in the music - it felt restrained like he was worried about what I thought. He didn't touch any of the other instruments. My clinical improvisation hat thought about modelling and moving to something else afterwards. I was just about to and stopped playing the melodica. He took this as me stopping playing. And the music stopped.

Thought about pitches and tonality a lot, starting in E, going to G and the Pentatonic.

Again I could feel the pull between just playing for the music sake and holding back to support and contain, be interesting to listen back. In the improvisation I felt like a tutor, even though he has no idea I'm a tutor (I don't think).

He talked about finding a voice (identity), finding (freedom), powerful. Didn't talk about emotions so much. Initial experience, getting away from being judged. Getting rid of shit.

I feel excited, my hunch, there is really something going on here with musicians first starting to improvise! Two instruments.

On way out he asked me where I live -

Talked about being from ...

On reflection he probably recognised my accent!

What instruments do I play?  
Said couldn't bring on train.  
Brass band?  
As walked out the door.

Good not to reveal I'm teaching music therapy. Feels more of an equal footing.

The "thing" I'm researching does exist. But its peoples landscapes, journeys in music.

The thing that strikes me is that he used the word, 'identity', he was moved from a judgemental place, being bullied, large to being a .... a jazz ....  
Talking about experiences with family, as if the set-up, nature of the research interview invites therapy material into the room that is current of these students.

I'm struck by his wanting more freedom, away from the licks, scales, being judged, being critical, wanting 'acknowledgment' from an audience, from dad.

Yet the improvisation to me, my experience of it felt restricted, like he was on the edge of really going for it but didn't. I wanted to mover him on in this, perhaps with my therapy hat, perhaps with my tutor hat, was just about to paly another instrument when he stopped playing. Be interesting to get a first impression, do I still feel like this on listening back.

Aware of my own 'juggling' being a novice researcher and learning on the job how do interviews, constantly thinking in the interview how to uncover more of his landscape. A slightly difference space form other hats. [Playing/therapying or tutoring].

Sense of collecting, musical landscapes.  
The peaks and troughs.

He seemed young, at the beginning of his journey. Enthusiastic, music almost like a religion- a way of creating identity.

## 7.2 Linnet

### **Initial thoughts before L1 - in the room**

I feel excited/nervous. A little daunted. A warm welcome from K, at the ... who is sitting in the opposite room whilst I conduct the interview. The room is functional/warm, although a little noisy with buses and cars rattling outside. I have brought a small selection of instruments in a rucksack:

Melodica, ocean-drum, bells, snake-shakers, doorbell, frog guiro, sweet corn shaker, three egg shakers, clapper, finger bells, two hooters, two harmonicas, glock, recorder, two tin whistles, two maracas, beaters.

Hopefully this will be enough. Interesting carrying a rucksack on the busy train. I was pinned down in my seat!

Thinking about L, her experience?

### **Initial thoughts afterwards - in the room**

It felt very intense, almost like L wanted to talk about these experiences, being given a space to talk. I thought perhaps these experiences are not talked about much at all.

She used the terms 'spiritual', 'emotional' and 'magical'. It felt incredibly easy to play with her, as if we were in that space already.

I used melodica, recorder, tambourine, small drum, sweet corn shaker. Mostly melodica. Trying to find a way of supporting her music. A couple of times I initiated and thought how rusty I was at clinical improvisation. She followed me, I also felt slightly frustrated in that I would have liked to use the bass guitar, as a grounding, supportive instrument. Instead used the bass notes on the melodica, low, breathy intervals. She used a lot of the instruments, the music lasted for 20 minutes.

Ocean drum, important to her, somehow, going 'inside' the music. Tin whistle, snake shakers, tambourine, claves, glock. At the end there was a silence between us, and I patted my heart and said, 'thank you', which felt like an emotional gesture of connection. She in fact went onto use the word, 'connection'. There was a lot of noise outside the room, banging from buses and building works, which provided a kind of strange bass containment and drama to our music. I explained about co-creation beforehand, she seemed to like this idea. The end felt like we had shared something together. I feel excited by the material, and learning about her landscape, by getting to the PhD research interviews at last, what a relief!

It feels tempting to jump in with my own interpretations. Need to keep my own 'Landscape' in mind and ponder hers. I am glad it is just one interview today!

Dived into a cafe to eat a cooked breakfast.

Felt contained.

Intense.

Achievement/ Relief / Post-Graduate/ Researcher/ Surprised by how much music/ A lot to transcribe! / Creative Connection/ Immediate/ Too much caffeine! / Hungry!

First experience didn't happen until music therapy course and ... evening class. How can you not do it as a child, or before music therapy training?

Anxiety, 'not being good enough'. Associated with training in music therapy. A common experience. I was reminded of the Glasgow conference and students expressing anxiety over improvisation training. I wondered if she had been in Glasgow, if she had seen my poster?

Emotional experiences in groups on training courses, formal and informal. Large and small.

Magical - Spiritual

What does this really mean?

Wanted other people in her life to improvise- join in.

(At this point I totally projected my circumstances onto her).

There was not much about what it had done for her as a musician. I used the words, 'follow-on' rather than effect. But even then, I thought was this question too leading? She talked about increased confidence, but it was more about personal and emotional (spiritual?) growth.

Should I have been more probing?

Left it very open

### 7.3 Oriole

It felt like he was talking at a fast pace to begin with trying to find the right pace with him, perhaps he was nervous?

Talking rapidly.

I had to work hard to draw out his experiences- like it was difficult to reflect and I thought about what [name omitted] had said previously. When we did come to the emotional part - he seemed not to find it very easy at all, and I felt I was digging deeper.

Themes: Moving from jazz musician to being an mt. It amazes me how little people connect with music, how it can take a life time to start to express yourself.

The move from structure to freedom. The fear of freedom. Of being out of his comfort zone, of very current experiences.

The personal alongside the musical.

Wanting to find a safe based.

Being stripped! Again!

Not about specific experiences. but a general journey. from jazz to mt. and a different way of being in music. A struggle (my-word) to find freedom.

I sat on the floor at the end - felt like I needed grounding. Felt at times I wanted to reassure him, help him with his journey as a teacher. Music - discussion on the music. I played an E bass note against his Eflat- I played the bass in a freer way - his comment on this. The music - felt anxious at first and the moving to relaxing and more freedom. I felt a natural affinity with him - like it was easy to connect with him - easier than the other two p - perhaps because he was older, a kind of power thing. It was so good to be able to use the bass in this interview- and use my own voice and expression and flexibility.

More about his struggle to develop musically into freedom.

Freedom as a theme.

Technical ..... freedom

Felt like only so far, I could push him about emotions- finding it difficult to reflect perhaps to current/emotional.

Lot about his experience of training as a music therapist.

I feel emotional afterwards, an idea for a song comes to me.

About finding your own song, spirit, soul, song.

Finding freedom, passed the augmented chords and song structures.

Into freedom.

### **Song lyrics Idea**

Help me find my way  
Into the free path  
outside the box and scales into your arms

Living on the way  
Into this freedom  
Take my heart and sing its song along the free path

Walk along the free path  
Take the augmented chords  
Take the scales  
Take the songs  
Blow them away  
And teach me to play  
My spirit song  
My free song  
My freedom song  
Teach me that path  
Teach me that path.

## 7.4 Bullfinch

### B. 4th Interview :)

Consent/ info sheet / give again  
topic  
process – graphic scores  
confidentiality  
consent

Can you tell me about your experiences of learning/acquiring  
improv skills?

Were any of the experiences special in particular?

What role/part have these experiences played in your life?

Feel tell me more I think

Before:

Tired: A good day –

Focusing on clinical/performative

Improv

Re-reading papers

Focus on concurrent  
Bit emotional  
Good to focus on work.

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Initial thoughts- she seemed very young and quiet at first.  
Aware that I was feeling quite low in this interview- a bit  
down, the time of year and personal issues. But was very  
interested to hear her story.

**Voice** - Talking about finding her voice stands out - being  
more confident in other situations- in playing music to her  
Granny - in going to the pub - in social situations-  
in changing instruments.  
Finding playing music easier than speaking.

**Connection.**

**Popular music**

**Band work**

**Guitar**

She chooses to play piano at the end, tentative, trying to  
find the right pitches, unsure.

Pause

Melody in C

E

C

**Transformative** - the course in the improv. The path from  
singing and making up songs as a child to making up on the  
guitar, out of songs/scales to free improv in mt.



Felt hard to gain her thoughts—like the words wouldn't come easily. I had to dig a little hopefully didn't ask too many leading questions.

The music felt very gentle and expressive, intimately connected by the end.

It's a very disarming, intimate act to play music with a stranger.

She said, 'you get to know somebody'.

Interactions in music help social non-musical things.

Voice

Louder

Music – first listen back.

I felt I couldn't get tonality at first. Lovely tone, piano and bass. Like it wants to go somewhere, but perhaps I play too much at first – not giving her enough space? (My tiredness?). In my eagerness to play, I'm not thinking about techniques, but feel and connection.

Beautiful—gentle piano music.

Pause.

I think, 'I need to listen more carefully'.

Then we connect.

I keep simpler.

A little melodic dialogue in C.

E

C Grounding to F

Back to C

Then she stayed in **C**.

I was waiting for her to change, I wanted to change the chord, but kept with what she was doing.

Played **E/F** and **C** to vary it – still kept to **C**.

Gentle, expressive.

Quite contemplative Music.

Almost as if.

The music reflects our dialogue which was faltering at first and then found its way through.

2nd time of listening

44:19 – I can hear my own disconnection in the music.

Playing too much and didn't listen enough to begin with.

Painful to listen to!

then

48:20 Simple 50:35

Piano – emotional

much more still

I'm still pushing her to move chord – I miss last note initially, intensely personal.

See figure 5.1, reflective writing and drawing.

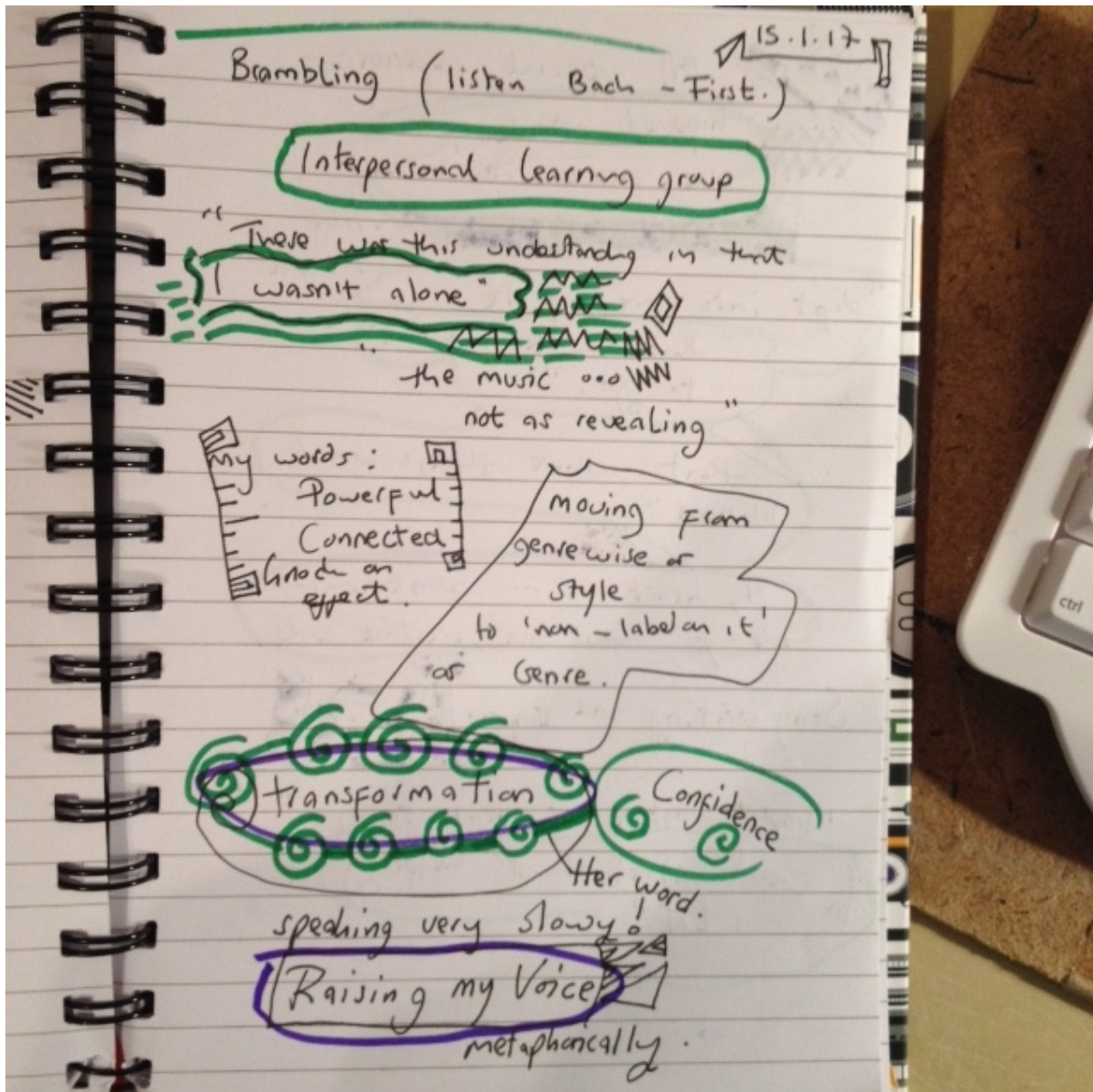


Figure 7.4: Bullfinch – initial written and drawn notes on listening back to the interview, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

## 7.5 Wren

W5

First listen back and transcription

Reflective comments

11/5/17

(some is out of order because I listened to the music separately).

Xylophone children's I had one in my bag which he immediately wants to play.

1:57 Using the term 're-play'.

'All of the instruments that I know'

2:00 I thought, how many instruments does he play?

'Re-play' an interesting use of language – used to think about reproducing something by ear.

2:43 Relationship musical with mum playing her favourite rock songs. Thinking about where he is from – a musical city.

My projection of other people I know from that place onto him.

I noticed I am being much more direct in my questions, to do with the change in me.

3:00 I ask about how he came to study music – this reveals my schema for a musical journey in education and the fact we are in an educational setting. But I could have asked more about music in his family at this point or with peers. I was trying to elicit his musical story and get a sense of him – but revealed something of myself. I was also very aware

of being in [place omitted], [information omitted for confidentiality] thinking of my own experiences.

He calls university - 'school'.

A different use of language than I am used to. 3:41

4:00 Studying music - 'to better myself as a person'.

He strikes me as having a lot of self-awareness.

4:20 He alludes to a rough background which I don't press him on. I still feel that the question about music education was my own personal stuff, being in [place omitted]. And his story of moving to [place omitted] mirroring my own rough background and bettering myself with music education.

Minute four: I'm very interested in his undergrad course, sounds fascinating. Which you can notice in my 'lovely' response.

5:15 Funny he used the word, 'traditional' for extended techniques. I love extended technique ideas - he has me engaged!

5:48 He uses the word, 'traditional' again, but this time it is about the usual ways of playing. His use of the words is sometimes different to how I use them.

6:00 Still looking at music education outline, when will this interview get to the improvisation experiences?

6:45 I immediately pick up on his talking about being in a box a very direct question- again I notice how direct and straight my questions are. I think this also coming from the teaching, honing their skills of getting people to think about their music.

7:09 He talks about the keyboard, as having the notes laid out in front of you - I could identify with this.

Telling me about his technical skills and learning of instruments. I then relate this to different ways of self-expression. (8:10).

Perhaps too leading, or too much of my own ideas?

8:30 He talks about his music as self-actualisation and realisations, he seems mature very aware of his relationships to music - I think he would make a good music therapist.

8:33 'Lifestyle back then'. Should I have pressed him on this more? Too early in the interview.

8:42 'The writer and the player' this is how he describes himself.

9:09 He provides me with a summary of his journey, mapped out in instruments.

9:26 'Songs helped me understand myself.'

9:34 'Detached' as a youngster listening back I think drugs and alcohol, abuse what was it but? I never ask, it feels like too personal and maybe off the point.

9:37 'Music was the one thing that kind of kept me attached'.

10:22 He explains how keyboard is taught in school, I've no idea about this.

12:47 'Measuring the keys'. I think he is talking about measuring the length of piano keys, he is talking about tonality, it is just he uses a different language to describe musical processes. I think he notices my confusion and expands further until I understand.

13:05 After I ask a question he says, 'definitely'.

13:53 At 16 he was living independently; you can hear this in his voice. How much to press into these kinds of issues or not? I only just met him.

14:00 It sounds like he had a tough time, I feel for him. Or and relate to him.

14:22 He alludes to the difficulties in his life and without music he 'doesn't know what he would have done with that energy'.

14:28 Cathartic (improvisation as cathartic?).

14:33 I say about music holding him together- but really, I am talking about myself!

14:41 Working in community music - I think at this point - gosh I really respect this guy.

15:19 'Musically eared' Another idiosyncratic aspect of his language.

16:53 Oh listening back I hear. In him the pride at doing university and now on MA - from the rough and early days, asking, 'what are we going to do with life' and later on in the interview he talks about his course being the best in the country, pride, stronger sense of self through doing this?

16:57 I say, 'your thing', which I think is a bit disrespectful, he used the word passion, I said thing.

17:00 I still can't help identifying with his story.

From rags to riches, type narrative, especially since we are in [omitted], which has such connotations for me. Also later in the interview I experience that feeling in the present, I was at [place omitted] now a researcher. I have the same feeling. Does some of this come from him as well? Is it transference? I feel some of it was, mixed with my own personal -powerful experiences.

17:02 Yes! This is definitely coming from him. His voice becomes softer, emotional when he says, 'studying masters



song writing.' Need to be aware of my own story in relation to his.

18:36 He talks about going to London for an audition, and not having any commercial songs. I wonder why he wants to write commercial music, putting my own values on him.

19:40 I ask the specific experiences question. It took longer with him than other participants, more to say perhaps?

20:05 It feels like he doesn't know how to answer this question.

20:06 He means a key, as in a graphic score, not a tonality key. Again cross-language. MacDonald and Wilson. Different tribes of musicians use different languages.

20:24 'What I really, really love is natural [pause and quieter] when you don't necessarily have to be a really skilled musician'. This is interesting, improvisation across skills.

20:00 He explains what sort of moments he likes - bedroom/studio 4, boys, nice social time.

21:27 Recognising it's all about him, again great self-awareness.

21:46 Sloboda improvisation flow in informal settings. Another group setting.

22:20 I am direct again, I can strongly feel my teaching skills feeding into the research skills, supervision skills.

22:33 'mid-flow'.

22:36 'This is nice'. Not very strong language- which is curious, different from his other expressions, to do with language and emotions?

22:39 Contrasted with 'just a moment of like infinite stillness'!

22:48 He videoed the moment, it was important.

24:34 Was it me or them? 'The moment'.

24:57 'Magic moment'.

26:28 All about publishing - on a different page from me. I perhaps should have asked about what role that experience played. How it affected him but didn't and then the interview drifted a bit.

26:42 'What course is aiming me towards' feels like a line from somebody else, a module handbook, justification - aim at course, but why should that be a bad thing?

26:46 Feels like a connection about the music, not knowing where going, making me laugh.

26:53 He doesn't like to call himself a musician, I sit on my thoughts, of course he is!

27:11 Explaining why he doesn't feel like a musician, thinking it's about technical knowledge.

27:00 Emotion in the music, something happens. 'When the music plays for you.'

29:20 I wanted to tell him he was a musician, and this did come out. I'm laughing too much, maybe too relaxed.

30:11 He explains his understanding of improvisation to me and I agree.

Imagining his life as a 'screen play'

44:00 Giving a narrated, musical version, instruments to retell the story.

44:00 Xylophone

'Acoustic instruments, metaphysical properties to music'.

45:36 'Child-like states. Going into something which is his own, picking out a tune'. Xylophone and I was worried about bring childish instruments.

'Rattles, sounds and meditation'. An energy to the dialogue, trying out the different instruments. Childlike exploration. Slight, hesitant unknown playing together.

Piano, he plays me something, a song. Bass is terribly out of tune, I have to stop playing. Move to ocean drum and egg shaker.

Demonstrates a high phrase.

'I'd melt'.

'1980's power ballad, high strings'.

piano

ocean drum/ egg shaker

'I could just play around for hours'.

Full on piano broken chords and music.

Switch to melodica, little bit easier. A minor, but still out of tune with the piano. Predictable chord sequences. Figure out what this is. 'The music drawing you in'.

Laughing.

He thinks about tapping the music stand.

Asks to play the Bass.

Sharp minor, another riff.

I fumble a bit trying to find the right key, eventually I get it.

52:54 I suddenly get it then we are away.

Joint energy.

53:18 Demonstrating then I would say, ok, explains his song writing process.

33:00 Talks about rapping as a cathartic and healing process.

33:00 the rapping song writing process, reminds me of after lark song writing, keeping us both healthy.

34:28 I wonder about him being so 'self-aware' that this study would attract people who are self-aware – want to talk? Their reasons for taking part, the agenda, should this be part of the questions? Why have you agreed to take part?

34:50 Talks about not performing – I think this is sad.

35:48 I am surprised he does not have vocal coaching already.

37:34 'It was the music that gave me that constant communication as a child.' A lovely quote – very rich.

38:54 Is he talking about musical timbre here? Or class with reference to classical music?

39:37 'Rebellious music'.

39:38 'An identity'.

42:36 This is the bit I wondered about, how would a non-mt respond to being asked to play music to reflect?

42:54 Why o why do I refer to my bag of instruments as 'this stuff'. Trying to be casual about it? To put less pressure on him.

42:55 I get the instruments out of the bag, why do I do this? To make him feel more comfortable.

43:06 At first, I don't get it, how interested he is in the glock - but later realise it is an important part of his story and in bringing in 'childhood' instruments I have evoked memories of his childhood with the glock.

43:41 He plays on the glockenspiel, I talked over, I think I thought he was picking out a tune. But he was, but re-creating a moment in childhood, I didn't get this immediately.

43:40 He explains his music, his musical story as a 'screen play'.

44:11 'instruments to re-tell this story'. His way of understanding interpreting my instruction to 'reflect'.

45:21 I was reluctant to mention music therapy, didn't want to influence him, that I am a music therapist.

46:19 He seems very playful and childlike at this point.

46:33 I was bass noodling as we spoke, it was deliberate to put him at ease and to encourage him to play.

46:33 It does feel like a very casual part of the interview, perhaps too casual? An enjoyment of the exploration of the instruments and discussion but also his accent I projected close friends onto him.

47:09 I am struck by how engaged he is with the instruments looking through them, and I had been worrying about his response.

47:22 Seems a bit flummoxed by the melodica! And thinking what to do next.

48:32 Emotion.

50:04– 51:39 This is the most sustained moment of playing so far. I support with a high melody, joining with his chord sequence on the piano. It feels like a formula rather than a present musical expression.

52:33 It takes me time to figure out his key.

52:53 I get it (F sharp minor) – in fact after doing the graphic score – it is B minor.

52:11 – 53:14 Sustained moments of playing are really short (1 minute).

56:24 He describes song writing in a flow state, when the best songs happen.

59:09 I think he means the transcript, not reading through the whole research, he means the whole dissertation, cross wires here.

1:00 A very humorous end, as he sounds the bell.

## **7.6 Graphic score reflection**

**5/3/18**

I am feeling that this maybe the graphic scores are not helpful to the research – having major doubts about them today. They feel so/are so abstract- other than helping with my thought processes about the music / participant- do they really help with the member checking. Maybe the main thing is the/my own thought processes and knowing the music well – perhaps that is what transcription does? It feels good to



be able to focus on it this morning – but sometimes it doesn't feel like real work – I should be writing, on the computer– not drawing. I can only keep going with them and see what happens. I don't always know whether to provide a key or not – perhaps I will. It is as if building up a repertoire of visualisations of music – awareness of how I visualise music –

I can't get away from the melodica being green or the bass sounds purple. I think the purple may be that was because I like the colour – me on the bass etc. But in this music my participant is playing bass – so it must be to do with timbre?

I feel like I want to draw or play music.

## 7.7 Examples of free reflexive drawings



Figure 7.7: Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016.



Figure 7.7.1: Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens, 19th July 2016.



**Figure 7.7.2:** Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016.



**Figure 7.7.3:** Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2016.



**Figure 7.7.4:** Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016.



**Figure 7.7.5:** Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016.



**Figure 7.7.6:** Free reflexive drawing, fibre pens 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016.



## 7.8 Extracts from reflexive journal

Reflective journal writing, – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015

An interesting week, I spoke to Colin Lee on skype. He suggested possibly using a graphic score in conjunction with extracts of a traditional music text to express and transcribe the improvisation. He also wondered how much I would be involved musically in the improvisation – what sort of musical role I would play. How active will I be? ... The graphic score idea is extremely interesting to me ... I am thinking about transcription of the improvisations. Colin Lee, John Strange both express (and Gary Ansdell) the importance of having music in writing, and I have often felt this has been left out of many case studies etc. It's almost as if showing music – makes you more vulnerable as a writing – a bit like talking in a rehearsal, you can hide how you are feeling, but when you actually start to play with each other your vulnerabilities are revealed. The music reveals self. This is a PhD about music, it would be good to have some music in it. The verbal is just as important

as the music. The music is another form of data – that can be used for understanding the topic.

Reflexive journal writing – important moment inspired by David Inshaw, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015

David Inshaw – a moment in time. The past couple of weeks have been a success story as far as writing is concerned. I was feeling stuck and procrastinating a lot, but then went to see a David Inshaw exhibition at the [place omitted] museum. This is a room in the museum in which they have a turnover of art. It's always quiet, and like a magical place, a hushed room at the back of the museum and a private gallery.

David Inshaw is a national artist, but he lives in [place omitted] and has extensively painted [place omitted] the vale. The paintings drew me in. It's like he paints what I feel about the landscape. He seems to capture that feeling in his images. He is obviously another person that fell under the spell of [omitted] vale. So the paintings feel personal.

I was interested to find out that he did a doctorate in Thomas Hardy's use of visual language to describe Wessex and this is what drove him to paint here there. It's encouraging that a doctorate can be part of an artist's life, and part of the creative process.

What happened – after I had been to this exhibition – in the evening, I started to write, I felt refreshed and the words poured out from my fingertips – it's been so for 2–3 weeks, the pictures are inside me, and also in the card form on my desk. I bought the card of the image, 'she did not turn' and later read that amongst other things this painting is about, seeing a 'moment', not a before or after, he also draws attention to things that are important. This painting wasn't in the exhibition, but it was the card I was attracted to, and I didn't know that was the theme when I bought it. When I look at it, it feels like it's me in the painting, walking, but standing as the researcher noticing, it speaks to me about the nature of research, noticing observing in moments. It feels powerful.

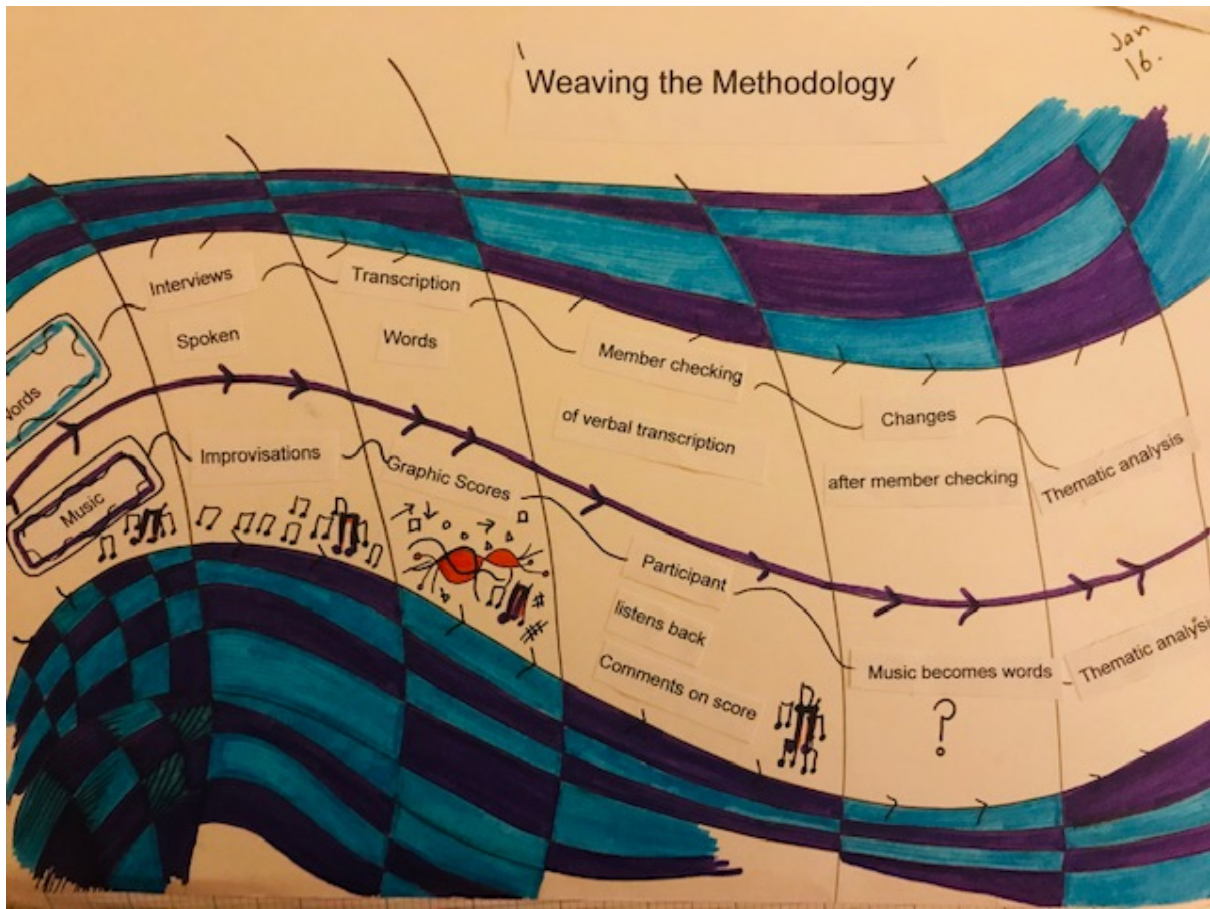


Figure 7.8: Extract from reflexive journal – visualisation of method- music and words in partnership, January 2016.

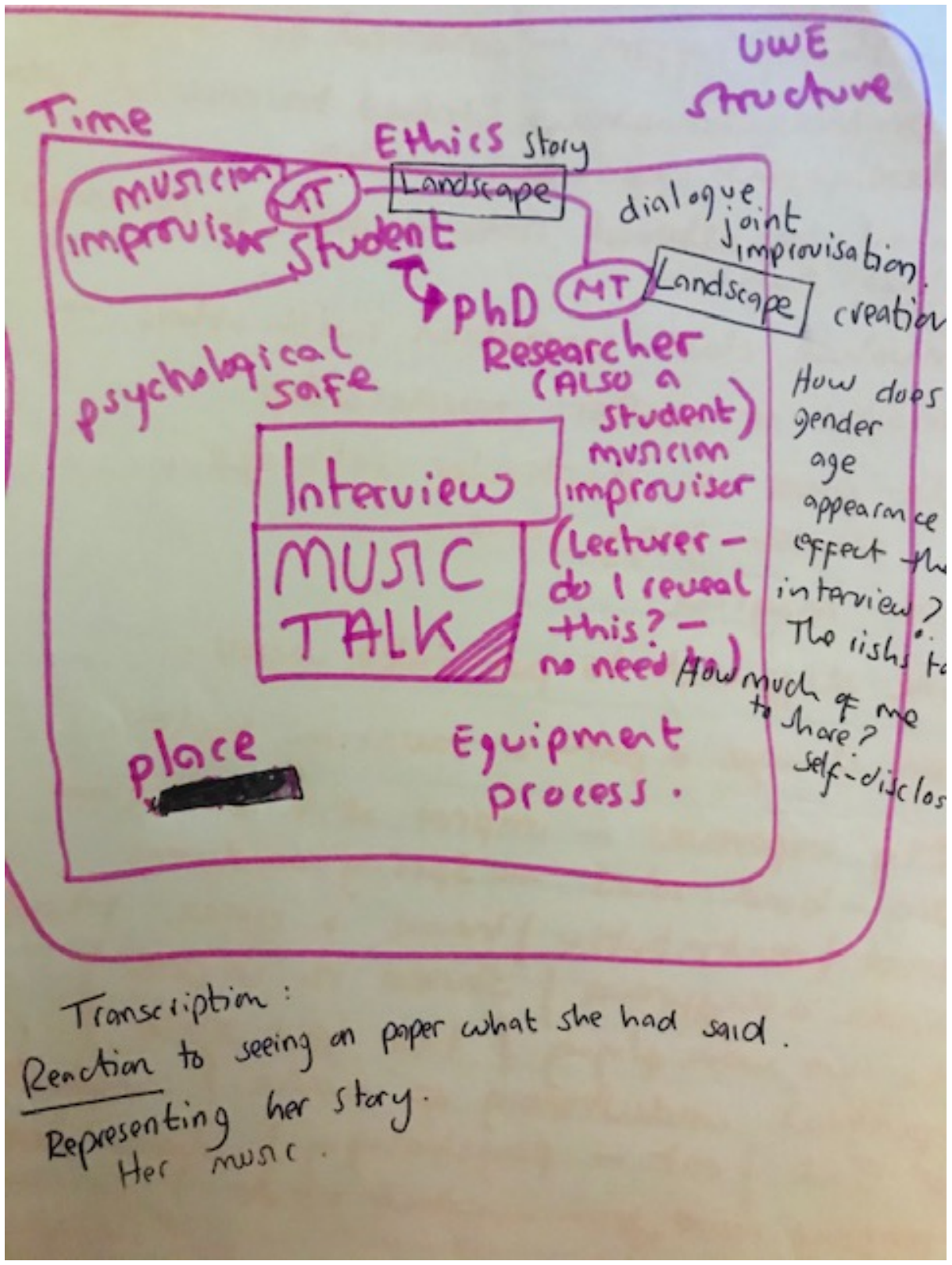


Figure 7.8.1: Reflexive journal, visualising elements of interviews, October 2016.

## 7.9: Extracts from research blog

<https://skylarkarts.wordpress.com/>

Skylark arts, performative and reflective blog, 5<sup>th</sup> February

2017.

The reflexive researcher.

An aspect of research I have grappled with is developing a 'reflexive' stance. As an experienced arts therapist I am familiar with the practice of the 'reflective practitioner', using self-awareness to understand the experience of others. But according to Etherington (2004) reflexivity is about a deeper process, moving into our inner core of responses, and highlights the hidden places of our thoughts and feelings when working with others in research.

In phenomenological research, whilst working on data, we are asked to 'bracket' off thoughts and feelings, putting them to one side (Moustakas, 1994). An important question is whether it is possible to successfully 'bracket' personal responses and maintain these as separate. Through doing interviews I realise that my experiences are interwoven with the PhD project. It is inevitable that personal responses will become part of the research, for me it is important, if not ethical, to acknowledge this.

My methodology is a combination of reflexive thinking with 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). In a heuristic circle the emphasis is on 'interpretation', the researcher tries to understand the inner world of the participants, how they are experiencing their lived world. A useful comparison for musicians is it could be like playing Beethoven. Beethoven provides the text, and the performer creates the interpretation, trying to understand the inner world of Beethoven, the music becomes a co-creation between Beethoven and the performer.

I have taken detailed reflexive notes on personal responses to the interviews, a skilled practice developed as a music therapist. Before beginning the analysis, the reflexive notes are present, but put to one side on the desk, as the analysis process starts. My understanding is that the reflexive notes and analysis eventually become merged in an interpretation of the participant's lived world. There is a possible 'interaction' between my material and the participant's which could be revealed in the writing. How much I reveal remains to be seen, but the aliveness and spark of working with participants to create something new, speaks to the creative musician in me, who is constantly seeking connection with others through the joint making of sounds, only this time it is words and sounds in a research frame.

References:

Etherington, K. (2004) *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Our Selves in Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publisher.

Moustakas, C. (1994) *Phenomenological Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., and Larkin, M. (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

# Skylark arts performative and reflective blog, 27<sup>th</sup> September

2017

## Music Improvisation and Research Interviews

A question that arose during the recent progression viva was, ‘why use musical improvisation within phenomenological qualitative interviews?’

In my project I am combining semi-structured verbal interviews with improvisations, talking and also playing music with my participants. The examiner questioned why I should want to play spontaneous music with the interviewees, what was the point exactly?

I pondered a bit, this was a good question, and something which I had not articulated before. What was the point of improvising with my participants? It seemed like such a natural and obvious thing to do; I had hardly questioned it before. I considered Langer’s (1942) philosophy, who described music as ‘modes of feeling’, as ‘presentational’ symbols of communication touching beyond the verbal, getting in-between spaces in our heads and hearts and making emotions audible. Then I thought about explaining, when you improvise, it is like you come to acknowledge another intimately, you feel you know something about the inside of them, without the need for external information and etiquette (all the usual social questions such as what work you do or how old are you?). In my typical ‘mixed media’ approach, I then fell onto Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of art (1964), in which he said that art is, ‘the inside of the outside and the outside of the inside’. A painting has the potential to literally expose and reveal a painter.

Kandinsky Improvisation 28 – What does this painting reveal?

So, if music and art have the possibility to reveal ‘inside’, then my question is; *why not improvise with research participants?* There are more forms of communication than recorded and typed words, this is something we know strongly and personally as artists and musicians. It seems so important to use artistic skills in research to try to get to the core of the moment of connection and what is being expressed in the research encounter.

## References:

Langer, S.K. (1942) *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art.* (3rd ed). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964) *Eye and Mind: The Primacy of Perception.* USA: North Weston University Press.