
FEMINIST

Music of Motherhood: History, Healing, and Activism

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Overview

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Mothering and music are complex and universal events, the structure and function of each show remarkable variability across social domains and different cultures. Although mother studies and studies in music are each recognized as important areas of research, the blending of the two topics is a recent innovation. The chapters in this collection bring together artists and scholars in conversations about the multiple profound relationships that exist between music and mothering. The discussions are varied and exciting. Several of the chapters revolve around the challenges of mothering partnered with a musical career; others look at the affordances that music offers to mothers and children; and some of the chapters examine the ways in which music inspires social and political change, as well as acknowledging the rise of the mom rock phenomenon.

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Introduction

Jennifer Hartmann, Lynda Ross, and M. Joy Rose

The many intersections of music and motherhood

Here I [Jennifer Hartmann] am, in a cold, stark public hospital, waiting to meet the child: a child whom I'd carried for forty weeks and four days, but for whom I'd really waited twenty-six years. The waiting is not mere sitting around in boredom. It's punctuated by a crippling wave of physical and mental reactions to the profound event happening inside my body. Some reactions are expected, like the oddity of overwhelming excitement combined with blinding waves of pain. Some are not. The fear that I had not previously imagined almost immobilizes me at times; it sometimes feels as if my mind hurts me more than my body. When the pains began at 4 am, I took a long shower, all the while reminding myself about my plans to deliver this baby as naturally as possible. I would stay home, labouring peacefully and naturally until my body told me it was time to go. Only then would I proceed to the hospital to deliver the baby in what I had considered the safest environment. But is there such a thing as a peaceful labour? Can the word "natural" even cross a person's lips when her body feels like it's being ripped from the inside out? At some indistinct point during the day, my plans for a natural birth began to seem ill-advised and naive to my labour-addled brain. My body had other plans, too, or so it would seem. I proceeded to the hospital as soon as my water unexpectedly broke at 1 pm, on my landlord's doorstep. Now, over twelve hours later, I'm only two centimeters dilated, and the fear and pain are starting to get the best of me. I had thought I'd be blissfully holding my newborn daughter by now! What if I can't handle this? What if something horrible happens to this creature I've never met, but love so much? What if I'm going to be a terrible mother? At this moment, all I want to do is crawl into my own mother's lap and cry. I breathe and try to forget. My husband smiles through the fear in his own eyes and encourages me to take our thousandth walk up and down the maternity ward hall. We talk about mundane things as we walk. As the pain envelops my body again, my end of the conversation ceases. He begins to time my contraction on his iPhone as I relax my knees and vocalize gently, trying with all my mental might to embrace this immobilizing pressure as the mysterious, feminine force that would allow my baby to finally emerge from my body. With my arms thrust around my husband' s neck, I recall the rhythmic, meditative music of the bellydance classes I had been taking throughout my pregnancy, and begin to circle my hips slowly; the circles become wider as the pain becomes more intense, then become figure eights. He mimics my motions; I don't know whether he does this to support me or to calm his own mind. The pain tries to seize me, but for now, it reaches a barely-tolerable peak and settles. "Is it over?" he asks in a low voice. "Yes," I say, and he continues to hold me as he stops the timer. "One minute long, five minutes apart," he says. "That was a bad one." "I know," I say, "but it hurts less when I dance...it's like..." I struggle for the appropriate words. "...it's like I'm removing myself from the pain enough to let gravity do its work."

The passage above is based on my [Jennifer Hartmann] perception during my labour with my oldest daughter, who came into the world in June 2011. The type of undulating hip movement I described above had become almost instinctual for me, as I had danced through my entire pregnancy, even performing in my studio recital when I was a mere six weeks from delivering. Bellydancing while pregnant and labouring was empowering; for the first time, I felt like my body *should* be on display because of the beautiful thing it was doing. The movement was natural, serene, focused. I found that the music to which I danced—wildly dissimilar from the music I perform as a classically-trained violist and liturgical vocalist—encouraged me to engage a different part of my brain. It stirred up the desire, and even the *need,* to keep my knees unlocked and open, my torso and hips moving, and my muscles relaxed. Not only was this instinctual for me (as well as the several mothers I interviewed for this project), but birth professionals often encourage this type of motion and stance, as it has been known to promote the normal progression of labour and assist in pain relief. Bellydance, specifically, is commonly referenced in both vernacular and official holistic birthing literature, and is used often as a means for mentally and physically preparing for birth.[1]

My experience as a mother who bellydanced through pregnancy and labour is only one facet of my own experiences relating to music and motherhood. As a professional musician, music manager, and ethnomusicologist, the fascination with how motherhood relates to music has consistently struck me as something hugely important to everyday life, but has been left understudied. My own motherhood has been punctuated by musical interludes: I began by singing and dancing through pregnancy and childbirth. I have faced challenges with being a working musician during pregnancy and early motherhood; challenges that range from the very silly (trying to maintain a straight face during a symphony concert, while my daughter rolls over

in my belly during a soloist's cadenza) to the incredibly taxing (struggling to find last-minute substitutes for gigs when my children become ill). I have invented and sung lullabies for my children. I have taught them to sing in our church choir, and to hold and (attempt to) play 1/16-size violins. I have spent my rehearsal breaks and concert intermissions nursing babies. I have demonstrated my instruments to my children's excited preschool classmates. I have spent many late nights scheduling interviews for my research and poring over detailed music scholarship, only to be interrupted by a distressed child crying for a comforting hug after being awoken by a nightmare. Music is so much more than just a performance on a stage; it is shaded with aspects of music business and promotion, writing, research, personal narrative, therapy, and countless others. As the authors of our collection exhibit, motherhood has a unique ability to pull these nuances to the surface, and highlights music as an inextricable part of everyday life.

Christopher Small, author of an oft-cited musicology volume entitled *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, describes it as follows:

> *To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performances (what is called composing), or by dancing.* We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone. They, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance. (9)

Small does not see music as a strict act of performance, but rather as a conglomeration of music-related events happening in a particular place at a particular time. Small broadens the scope of "music" (in its verb form) to encompass everyone in a concert hall, from the concerto soloist to

the janitor, and every action from the tuning of a violin to the conversations held between audience members during intermission. These people and acts inform how the performance is carried out, how it is perceived, and ultimately, how the particular genre of music will develop and grow. The concert hall is only one venue in which musicking occurs; it can occur anywhere a person is somehow participating in an act of music. This, of course, includes spaces relevant to this collection, such as labour and delivery rooms, commercial spaces, schools, and the home. As the connections between music and motherhood do not universally occur on a stage (although some certainly do), it is pivotal to this book to extend our definition in a similar manner. For example, in Chapter 10 of this collection, Jackie Weissman depicts interviewees caring for their homes and families while they were preparing for shows, and presents these activities as part of that person's life as both a musician and a mother. Talking about this home-based ritual provides valuable insight into how a person might manage a busy schedule as a working musician while being a caregiver.

Meanwhile, *Music in Everyday Life* author Tia DeNora emphasizes the importance of studying the context in which music is couched, rather than engaging in fruitless attempts to derive complete understanding from "the music itself." In her work, she aims to "…conceptualize musical forms as devices for the organization of experience, as referents for action, feeling and knowledge formulation" (24). DeNora suggests here that music is a tool for expression, and also for recreating an experience or emotion. "For while music's semiotic force can be seen to be constructed in and through listener appropriations, a focus on how people interact with music should also be concerned with…" (ibid.). Therefore, the intricate meaning of a musical act is not only ascribed to the piece of music, but also to the context and people surrounding it. The perspectives contained in this collection certainly illustrate this idea; they

consider music as a job that must exist around caregiving responsibilities, a tool for healing and coping, an interactive space of social resistance, a site for social marginalization, and a stirrer of powerful memories. The meaning of the music and motherhood experience does not only exist in the music, but rather in the interaction between music and its context (in this case, motherhood).

Hartmann's particular music and motherhood research drew from music, healthcare, anthropology, and sociology literature, as well as personal narrative and historical documentation pertaining to the unique function of bellydance during labour. As the co-editors dove into the many stories told by this collection's authors, it became clear that the relationship between music and motherhood is complicated, and remarkably difficult to define. Therefore, while collecting and editing papers for this book, it was important to us to maintain flexible boundaries for the authors in terms of subject matter, authorial perspective, and writing style. This has resulted in a rich, nuanced collection from scholars, musicians, filmmakers, songwriters, educators, and human rights advocates. We feel this is reflective of the vast shades of both the musicking and mothering experiences that are possible. Our voices are different and our experiences come from many corners of the world, but the one thing we have in common is that we are or have worked with mothers who "music" in one way or another.

Introducing the chapters in the collection collection

As noted earlier, although mothering and music are complex and universal events, the structure and function of each show remarkable complexity and variability across social domains and different cultures (e.g., Egermann, Fernando, Chuen and McAdams; Quinn and Mageo). Music's emotive qualities—including its potential to both express and evoke emotions—are commonly believed to underlay humans attraction to and engagement with music (Pannese, Rappaz,and Grandjean). Beyond the enjoyment of listening, as well as levels of participating in

the making of music, the therapeutic benefits “to improve health and wellbeing, and increase quality of life have been recognised in both Eastern and Western medical practices for millennia” (McCarthy, 1). It is therefore not surprising that studies show us how music has the power to positively influence feelings, but also health, and the mental and physical well-being of pregnant women and their newborn infants (Martin). The literature shows us, for example, how emotional communication and the bond between mother and infant are enhanced through mutual engagement in play songs and lullabies (Creighton). Although mother studies and studies in music are each recognized as important areas of research, the blending of the two topics is a recent innovation. The chapters in this collection bring together artists and scholars in conversations about the complex and often profound relationships that exist between music and mothering. The discussions are varied and exciting. Several of the chapters revolve around the complexities of mothering partnered with a musical career; others look at the affordances that music offers to mothers and children; and some of the chapters examine the ways in which music inspires social and political change. The variety of topics explored in this collection are approached in different ways. Some are based in empirical research, others in personal experience. Whatever the focus or its approach to a topic, each of the chapters in this collection moves the discussion of music and motherhood forward. Though there are overlapping themes in many of contributions to this collection, we have divided the chapters into three discrete sections. The first interrogates topics surrounding the transmission and meaning of music in the lives of mothers and children; the second, explores the therapeutic value of music in pregnancy and postpartum; and the final section looks at mothers as music makers and music as acts of rebellion.

In this collection, the first section opens with Jillian Bracken's Chapter 2, which reports on findings from her qualitative study that looked at shared discourses in families that surround music and about the kinds of behaviours that shape talk and understandings about the value of music. Based on interviews with five families the findings are discussed in terms of parent's and children's roles in shaping musical exposure. Bracken articulates these roles for mothers as 'filter', 'mediator', 'companion', 'guide', and 'model'; and for the child as 'heir', 'originator', 'companion', and 'observer'. She goes on to connect these various roles with the types of talk that surround mother-child interactions in relation to listening to music. This chapter presents a very technical approach to "in-family processes that facilitate the intergenerational transmission of information" that help us to understand the how's and why's of the transmission of musical values, and by extension, values, more generally.

Sally Savage's and Clare Hall's Chapter 3 provides and insightful discussion about the relationship between 'intensive mothering' and music in the lives of children. Savage and Hall open with an overview of intensive mothering theory and discusses the ways in which this ideology can impose on women's lives. Based on a qualitative study of 13 mothers who had attended early childhood music classes for a least 12 months, the authors reflect on the narratives of 'musical mothering' and the costs and benefits of intensive mothering through participation in children's musical lives. Savage and Hall conclude with a brief discussion of the ways in which intensive mothering ideology is unable to account for the gains mothers garner through musical mothering.

Continuing with a discussion of meaning of music in Chapter 4, Lydia Ruth Bringerud presents a compelling personal reflection on a fieldwork experience in the form of a collective ethnography of the St. John's Ukulele Club in St. John's, Newfoundland. Bringerud explores

notions of vulnerability in her research journey through her experiences in the club. In the midst of her PhD studies in folklore, Bringerud takes us on a reflective journey that explores her relationships with her mother, also a musician, and with music.

The second section of this collection shifts its focus away from the transmission and meaning of music education towards an understanding of its therapeutic values in pregnancy and postpartum and its healing properties during important moments in the lives of mothers and children. Cara-Leigh Battaglia begins this analysis in Chapter 5 with an interrogation of music therapy as a respected field of study. Specifically, she focuses on the properties of music as a healing tool for children who have experienced trauma. Battaglia notes that while music has a positive influence on all children, it can have particular efficacy for those recovering from trauma. Scientific research, Battaglia suggests, has lagged behind mothers' 'knowledge' of the healing properties of music. She calls for more attention to be paid by both mothers and professionals to this important phenomenon.

In Chapter 6, Amanda Mehl West continues the discussion by looking at the health benefits of music. She assesses the origins and affordances of singing during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. West looks at the ways that singing can be used as a powerful tool to ease a woman's transition into motherhood. She discusses how the act of singing can bring physical calm, connection, and empowerment to both mother and child. West also talks about the ways singing can build trust and understanding between individuals. In making her arguments, West draws on the work of music therapists, midwives, doulas and educators, as well as on the stories of women who have used singing successfully during their perinatal experience.

This second section closes with Elena Skoko's Chapter 7. Here the author explores the understudied practice of singing during childbirth. She discusses the ways in which singing, or

the modulated voice, is important for the well-being of all individuals and expands upon the ways in which the maternal voice has the potential to affect all humans. Though Skoko's specific focus is on childbirth; as with other chapters in this section, she highlights the importance of understanding the ways that singing can be a beneficial and powerful practice for women.

The final section of this collection focuses on mothers as music makers, and mothers making music in response to untenable social and political contexts. We begin with Rachelle Louise Barlow's work in Chapter 8, which offers readers an engaging historic perspective on the life of Welsh musician and mother Clara Novello. The chapter tells us Clara's story; but it also highlights the marginalization of women in musical practice in Wales, as well as the ways in which women have been overshadowed by men in this field. In the conclusion of the chapter, Barlow brings Clara's historic contributions to the present day through discussion of a contemporary event created to celebrate Clara's musical achievements. However, by all accounts, her work was overshadowed by her son Ivor's achievements.

David Eichert's Chapter 9 is a timely expose that unpacks what it means to be a mother along the border between Mexico and the United States. He notes the ways in which both Mexican and Mexican American mothers continue to find themselves politically and socially marginalised in societies where violence and poverty are endemic. Eichert examines the music of Las Cafeteras and their messages about transborder Chicana motherhood and the ways in which the band and music challenge existing power dynamics of gender-based violence and economic limitations.

In Chapter 10, Jackie Weissman interrogates the contradictions between stereotypical images of female rock stars and those portraying motherhood. Weissman's chapter explores the issues encountered by three indie musicians in their efforts to balance musical careers with

motherhood. Her chapter draws heavily on her research undertaken for the making of her recent documentary film, *Rock N Roll Mamas*. In challenging universal notions of ideal motherhood. Weissman provides detailed accounts of three mother musicians, Kristin Hersh (Throwing Muses, 50FOOTWAVE, and a solo performer), Zia McCabe (The Dandy Warhols) and up and coming hip hop MC, Ms. Suad.

Lori Walters-Kramer's Chapter 11 delves into the music of Michelle Shocked, a musician not normally highlighted as one particularly concerned with maternal issues. Walters-Kramer shows us the ways in which motherhood is in fact a topic that Shocked has continually embedded in her songs in much the same way that her music interrogates other critical social issues related to social oppression. Walters-Kramer argues that through both sound and lyric, employing a feminist rhetorical style, Shocked questions cultural assumptions surrounding motherhood.

M. Joy Rose, continues the discussion of musical mothers and closes out this final section with Chapter 12. In her chapter she identifies the mom rock movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and traces the efforts of 'mom rockers' to affect change. Rose argues how this newly-formed community contributed to changes in the way motherhood was viewed and enacted. Forming organically, Rose highlights the ways in which the movement was empowering and provided a sense of connection, not only for musicians but for all women and mothers. With the contemporary mothers' movement as a back-drop, through the lenses of auto-ethnography and interdisciplinarity, she explores not only the ways in which women's marginalization contributed to the adoption of electric music as a medium for expression but also delves into the relationships between activism and art within a consumerist society.

Conclusion

As a diverse volume of experience, history, scholarship, and practice, our collection serves to weave multiple threads between motherhood and the creation, performance, and consumption of music. It bears repeating that the manner in which music and motherhood are woven together looks very different depending on the perspective of the people involved. Because of the collection's broad scope and multitude of angles, we acknowledge the fact that this work is far from being comprehensive, but trust that the work presented in this volume provide a healthy cross-section of the work being done at the crossroads of music and motherhood. We open this collection with that thought in mind.

Notes

[1] It is important to note here that my experience (as an amateur bellydancer) deals with a remarkably general and Westernized genre of bellydance; this particular research project included interviews with women who were not professional dancers, and did not consider themselves associated with any specific style of bellydance, such as American Tribal, Cabaret, Egyptian, et cetera. There is a great deal of work to be done on this topic, and I recognize that there is much more research left to be done on this topic. However, such research is perhaps beyond the scope of this introduction.

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A Discussion of Mothers' and Children's Roles in the Transmission of Music Listenership Values in Families

Jillian Bracken

Abstract

This chapter offers descriptions of listenership roles uncovered by a study of music listening in families. The study examined how five families in Miami-Dade County (Miami, FL) talked about music. Through Internet-facilitated interviews and e-journals, participants responded to questions about music in their family and the listening guidelines that were communicated between members. Study participants included five mothers of similar ages, incomes, and educational backgrounds. Six children participated in the study; they ranged in age from six to thirteen years of age, and included both males and females. The goal of the study was to gain an understanding of the types of discourse around music listening in these families, and to examine the content of shared family talk about and in response to music. Case study mothers and children described several ways in which they fill different roles that shaped their musical exposures and interactions. This chapter details five mother roles observed in the study: filter, mediator, companion, guide, and model. Four children roles are also presented here: heir, originator, companion, and observer. These roles are engaged as counterparts to corresponding mother roles. Discussion weaves together sociolinguistic analysis and descriptive excerpts shared by case study participants; it illustrates several ways in which talk and action work in tandem to create categories of discourse with corresponding behaviors. Further, analysis shows the influential place of mothers and the ways in which their actions and words shape their children's musical landscapes.

Introduction

This chapter reports findings from a qualitative, descriptive case study that engaged five families in Miami-Dade County (Miami, FL). Through Internet-facilitated interviews and e-journals, families responded to questions about the music that was present in their family and the existence of any guidelines that governed music listening. The methodological perspective of descriptive case study examined these five different families in real-life contexts.[1] The goal of the study was to explore the nature of shared discourse within participating families, and to examine how this environment created a collective body of talk around music that shaped family members' understandings of music's value. This study offered evidence to suggest that family members occupy a variety of roles through which they shape and influence one another's music

listening. This chapter focuses specifically on roles filled by mothers and children within the study's five case study families.

An exploration of listening roles within families addresses a need for a descriptive level of analysis as identified by ter Bogt and colleagues. While their quantitative, questionnaire-based study of music listening shared between children and parents found that "music socialization can be proposed as a within-family mechanism for the intergenerational transfer of taste" (313), ter Bogt and colleagues were not able to identify any specific processes by which intergenerational similarities are established. Their study, which focused on observed similarities in reported genre preferences between children and their parents, revealed that:

> It is the parents who provide the first musical climate in their households, and this climate is the sum of the fathers' and mothers' tastes. Parents may actively or unconsciously model the tastes of their children; hence, links may be present between parental preferences for particular music styles that were formed earlier in their lives and their children's current preferences for similar types of music (302).

The question that emerges in response to this research is how intergenerational transmission actually occurs in the family, and what specific roles filled by family members facilitate transmission. The study from which this chapter's research is excerpted identified key discourse processes that facilitate transmission, responding to ter Bogt and colleagues call for future research to "explore the contextualized within-family dynamics that produce such… pattern[s]" (316).

Meet the Families

Each case study family included at least one parent participant and at least one child participant; one of the participating families included two children. The five families are identified throughout this chapter using pseudonyms.

The Alonzo family (Pamela and Alicia): The Alonzo family consisted of a mother, Pamela, and daughter, Alicia. Alicia was eleven years old and in grade five. Pamela worked as a coordinator of a community-based program.

The Cruz family (Lisa and Deborah): The Cruz family consisted of two daughters and a mother, Lisa. The youngest daughter (age three) did not participate. Lisa's eldest daughter Deborah participated in the study; she was eight years old and in grade two. Lisa worked as an arts administrator.

The Morales family (Nancy and Liam): The Morales family consisted of a mother, Nancy, her husband, and two children (a son, Liam, and a fourteen-month-old daughter). Nancy and Liam were the two members who participated in the study. Liam was nine years old and in grade three. Nancy worked in community outreach.

The Santiago family (Brandy and Laura): The Santiago family consisted of a mother, Brandy, her husband, and three daughters (four years old, twenty-two months old, and Laura, who was a six-year-old kindergartener). Brandy and Laura participated in the study. Brandy was a former librarian who now stayed at home full time with her three daughters.

The West family (Amy, Kevin, and Kyle): The West family consisted of a mother, Amy, her husband, and their two sons, Kevin (age eleven) and Kyle (age thirteen). Amy,

> Kevin, and Kyle were the only members to participate in the study. Kevin was in grade five, while Kyle was in grade seven. Amy worked as a teacher.

The group of mothers who participated in the study were fairly homogeneous. All were between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine years of age and had at least a four-year college or university degree. Net household income across all five families was fairly similar when adjusted for household size—all were middle class.[2] Differences emerged in race, religion, and marital status. The six children participating in the study ranged in age from six to thirteen years old, and included both males and females.

Parent Roles

Case study family members described ways in which they fill many different roles that come to shape their musical exposures and interactions. The following section situates the present discussion in literature about parental roles and outlines some of the specific roles case study mothers and children reported filling.

In her study of children's musical landscapes, Campbell observed that "direct or indirect involvement in music by either parent… steered these children to many of their musical reckonings" (211). In her observations she found that even if the parent was not musical, by virtue of their role in the family, they greatly influenced how their children interacted with and came to value music. In a study of shared family music listening preferences, ter Bogt and colleagues found that:

> Parents may model their tastes simply by playing music in the environment they share with their children or they may more actively persuade their children of the value of music by listening or singing together, taking them to concerts, or encouraging them to play an instrument. For most people, music is an important medium and it [is] reasonable

> to assume that parents want to share their enthusiasm for certain artists, bands or composers with their children, resulting in intergenerational similarities (315).

Observations similar to those offered above were also noted by Davidson and Borthwick, who found that parents with no musical backgrounds shaped their children's musical identities as the children learned to play an instrument. They found "that musical beliefs and experiences of the parents… shape the way in which the subsequent generation experience and value music for themselves within the family" (76). The data from the current study appear to confirm this previous research.

A large body of research exists on "musical parenting."[3] In one such study, Custodero and Johnson-Green observed that the "family context may provide a nurturing environment for a child's innate inclination toward music; however, there are many questions about the role of parents' musical experience in raising their children" (103). While their study focuses on both music-making and music listening exposures in families with very small children (four- to six-month-olds), their territory of inquiry brings forward questions similar to those posed by this study of music listening values.

The family's transmission of values, which ultimately influences individual identities within the family, is directly shaped by the relationships shared between family members. Perhaps the most impactful relationship within the family is that which is shared between parent and child. Katz-Gerro et al. found, in their study of the transmission of musical tastes in Israeli families, that "musical tastes are shaped by parents' rather than respondents' social position" (163). Relationships position family members in relation to one other, and involve individuals filling different roles. Of particular interest to the present study is the connection between relational roles and discourse. Roles are ultimately related to discourse—our behaviors shape and

are shaped by the way we interact with others. Stubbs observes that "…'roles' have to be acted out in social interaction" (8). He goes on to state that "…it is principally through conversational interaction, the give-and-take of everyday multi-party discourse, that social 'roles' are recognized and sustained" (8). A role is accompanied by (or sometimes creates) a social orientation which provides guidance for interaction. Particular roles, like that of "parent," can be accompanied by a language register. This register is a distinct body of language used by common groups of individuals. In filling the role of "parent," individuals speak a certain way which helps to define what it means to be and act as a parent.

The ensuing discussion weaves together sociolinguistic analysis and descriptive excerpts shared by case study participants; it illustrates several ways in which talk and action can work in tandem to create specific categories of discourse with corresponding behaviors. Together discourse and behaviors create social orientations (or roles). Further, analysis speaks to the pivotal, influential place of mothers and the ways in which their actions and words can shape their children's music values. In the case of the present study, it is evident that mother roles happen in relation to child roles (and vice versa), even if not a lot of data to exhaustively detail child roles was captured.[4]

Mother and Child Listenership Roles Explained

Five mother roles were observed in the study: filter, mediator, companion, guide, and model. Four of the five roles are active; the fifth role—model—speaks to the implied, passive role mothers fill by virtue of simply being a parent. Four children roles are also presented here: heir, originator, companion, and observer. These roles are discussed as counterparts to corresponding mother roles.

It should be noted that, although the original intent of this study was not to focus exclusively on mothers, the primacy of mothers' involvement in the case study families aligns with trends found in existing literature.[5] Literature looking at the impact of parents' language on children offers further support. Referencing an enormous body of research on parents' language with young children, Tamis-LeMonda and Baumwell found that mothers factor prominently in such studies "because mothers are overwhelmingly the primary caregivers in families" and, citing the work of Huttenlocher et al., hypothesize that mothers are "the main providers of verbal input to children" (414).

Table 1 below lists the mother and child roles, identifies the individual in the family who initiates talk or introduces music which results in the mother filling a particular role, describes the role as active or passive, and clarifies who is in "control" when it comes to introducing music or initiating talk about music. All of these roles involve both listening to and talking about music.

Table 1: Listenership Roles Explained

Mother role	Child role	Who initiates talk or music exposure?	Who's in control?	Passive or active process
Filter	*Heir*[*]	Both Child and Parent	Parent (in establishing filter); child can also be seen as control if they accept, understand filtration	Active
Mediator	*Originator*	Child, external source	Negotiated; can fluctuate during mediation	Active
Companion	*Originator*	Child	Child	Active
Guide	*Companion*	Parent	Parent	Active
Model	*Observer*	Parent	Not applicable	Passive

[*]*Heir is used here a common gender noun. It is used to describe and include both male and female children.*

Case study mothers fill different roles in response to a situation or in anticipation of a situation (as is the case with the aforementioned listening guidelines which parents sometimes preemptively implement). Filter, mediator, and guide represent active processes where the mother takes an active role introducing or talking about music, to which the child responds. The mother role of companion also represents an active process, but the child (acting as guide) introduces or initiates talk about music. The final mother role—model—is a passive, implied role assumed by the mother just by virtue of the parent-child relationship**.** It should also be noted that these roles are not as clearly demarcated as the above table and following discussion may suggest. Family members may switch between roles as a situation changes or a new musical exposure is introduced.

Discourse within the family around music listening involves expressive (about feeling), directive (influencing behavior), referential (conveying information), and metalinguistic (focusing on specific words) talk. When mothers occupy roles, the roles are defined by both their actions and the types of talk they put forward. These types of talk are listed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Connecting Mother Roles with Types of Talk

Mother Role	Types of talk involved	Description of talk
Filter	Referential, Metalinguistic	Convey information, based on specific words and guidelines, that limit music listening.
Mediator	Expressive, Referential, Metalinguistic	Use feelings and discourse to influence behavior and convey information.
Companion	Expressive that may become Directive	Share listening experiences that may involve discussing feelings that can influence values of music.
Guide	Directive, Referential	Purposeful exposures, some of which are accompanied by discourse intended to influence behavior, convey information.
Model	*Passive role*	*Passive role*

This next section further examines each of the mother and children roles outlined above by connecting them to interview and journal excerpts offered by the case study families. These roles are filled by different mothers at different times, and it should be noted that not all of the participating case study mothers talked about all identified roles.

Filter (Mother), Heir (Child)

In many situations, case study mothers reported acting as a gateway to their children's musical experience. The idea of mother as filter was introduced by Lisa Cruz in her family's first interview:

> I have to work as a filter. Nowadays, just because it is considered a "cool" song doesn't mean that my daughters will listen to it. For example, Gangnam Style. Just because everyone was dancing… There are plenty of songs that have a similar beat as Gangnam Style but doesn't have anything to do with, uh, an artist saying a bad word. It doesn't necessarily have to be a cool song (Cruz, 3 Mar. 2014).

Lisa described her role as limiting some music, while deeming other music permissible. In this role, the mother places limitations on some musical listening—letting certain things pass through—and enforces guidelines that restrict some music. Filtering involves both referential and metalinguistic talk through which mothers convey information and guidelines that may limit music listening. Acting as a filter is about establishing guidelines (the "size" of the filter's holes) which determine what goes through and what "impurities" are suspended or blocked. How porous the filter is varies from parent to parent, and from situation to situation. Differently sized holes in the filter represent differently sized restrictions around the suggestive topics and specific "bad" words.

Amy West talked about her role as a filter when it comes to downloading music that her sons request, discussing how it allows her to make sure she gets the "clean versions" of songs—those that do not violate her guidelines:

> When I download the music for them, I try to get the clean versions. But like, we went to a party and his friends, [Kyle's] friends, they played the dirty versions and I was like, "Come on! You're going to play the dirty versions?" And then that song has so many curse words that you can't even hear the beat, it was like "beep, beep", it doesn't make sense (West).

Filtering works together with the next role to be discussed: mediator. Filtering establishes rules before the fact; mediating is about responding to situations—the process of changing the "size" of a filter's "holes". Though these roles seem quite similar, they are subtly (but importantly) different.

In response to the mother acting as filter, a child acts as an heir. Their listening environment is often preemptively shaped and sometimes limited by the enforcement of music listening guidelines. In the filter-heir role dyad, mothers tend to exercise more active control of a listening exposure and the child is left to inherit the information and music that is allowed to pass through the parent-created filter.

Mediator (Mother), Originators (Child)

Case study mothers acknowledged in many different ways how they cannot control the entirety of their children's music listening. As a mediator, mothers respond to what permeates or bypasses their filters. Mediation often involves mothers responding to unexpected exposures and music (often unknown to the mother) to which their children have been exposed outside of the family unit. The mother acts as an intervening agent, engaging different situations and

responding to music whenever challenges arise. As mediators, mothers are engaged in expressive, referential, and metalinguistic talk. Often times, mothers talk about how a piece of music "makes them feel" as a way to explain why a restriction is in place. Mediation involves offering clarifying information as part of a responsive negotiation.

Filter and mediator are similar roles that are still subtly and importantly different. As a filter, a mother sets guidelines in anticipation of exposures. As a mediator, the mother responds to what passes through or challenges an established filter/guideline. The difference between these two roles is the time of implementation. Filters are established prior to an event—in anticipation of an event—while mediation happens in response to an exposure, and can result in renegotiation or redesign of the filter. The relationship is actually a cyclical one, where mediation results in filtration, as captured in Figure 1.

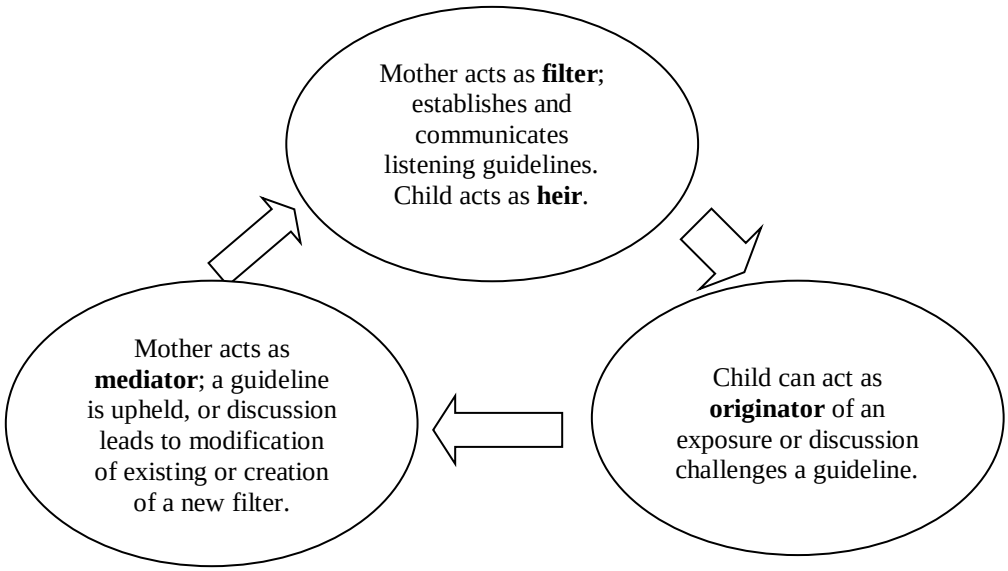

Figure 1: Illustrating the Interplay of Filter and Mediator.

Mediation can be necessary if exposure to an unexpected or unknown song occurs (by way of the radio, for example) while the mother and child are together. The mother is put in a position to

mediate the experience for and/or with the child, through the lens of their relationship. Changing radio stations is a particular type of active mediation which often is accompanied by discourse. Instead of restricting a music exposure, mothers put themselves in a position to mediate content by changing the station if a song comes on that violates one of their guidelines. Lisa Cruz describes how her process of radio mediation involves both changing the station and conversation:

> Well, I try to convince them, but it is hard because "my best friend listens to this music" or "my neighbor listens to this music, how come I'm not allowed to?" So basically I speak to them and I tell them exactly why I think it's bad. And when I listen to the radio, I try to change it without them noticing. Since they don't notice, I can literally change it to another station. But when they notice, I tell them that I don't think it's a cool song (Cruz, 3 Mar. 2014).

This excerpt demonstrates not only Lisa filling the role of mediator but her also acting as a filter. Lisa explained her mediation using expressive language intended to persuade her children. As was the case in this example, the roles of filter and mediator often work in tandem because filtration and mediation are part of a cyclical process through which mediation can result in the establishment of a filter. The situational enforcement is achieved through mediation which results in the creation and implementation of filters.

The child role identified in response to parental mediation is that of originator. A child can originate or instigate a musical exposure or discussion about music that requires mediation on the part of the parent. It should be noted, however, that children are not the only originators of content that may require parental mediation. External music exposures, like the radio, can also fill the role of originator.

Companion (Mother), Originator (Child)

In the role of companion, the mother participates with their child in a child-instigated listening experience or music-related discussion. In this interaction, the mother offers support and encouragement, often acting as audience. A mother fills the role of companion when a listening exposure or discussion does not violate or challenge an established guideline (which would then require mediation in response.) Companionship involves both listening to music and talking about music, and often puts mothers in a role where they learn something from their child and/or are exposed to certain music for the first time. Parental talk in this role is directive and referential; the focus is often on conveying information and sometimes on influencing behavior. In this role, a mother is in a position to accompany their child's discovery and/or sharing of new musical content. In addition to acting as a companion in these situations, the mother may also end up filling the role of mediator, should the content challenge any listenership guidelines. The following interaction, taken from the Alonzo family's first interview, is an example of a mother (Pamela Alonzo) filling a companion role:

> Alicia: Like, if I really like a song… if I really want to hear it then I go on YouTube and hear the song and watch the video. Like "Happy."
>
> Pamela: I hadn't heard that one. And that one, you called me over to watch it together. (Alonzo).

Alicia led her mother through a listening experience which Alicia herself initiated. She acted as the guide for this shared experience and her mother, Pamela, acted as her companion.

The role of companion is one that seems to be more available to mothers when their children are older. Several case study mothers reflected on how the roles they filled would

change as their children aged, allowing them to modify or remove listening guidelines. The absence of guidelines would allow them to fill the companion role more often, lessening the time they spend actively filtering or mediating. Mothers Laura Santiago and Lisa Cruz both discussed this outlook in several journal entries, commenting on how age played a major part in the roles they filled in their children's lives. Lisa reflected on her relationship with her daughter, stating that "…as Deborah grows, and with my guidance, she will be able to make her own judgment calls" (Cruz, 28 March 2014). Age transforms not just the child him or herself, but the relationship the mother and child share, and the role the mother plays in guiding music listening, among many other things.

The child role often filled in response to mothers acting as companion is that of originator—the same role discussed as bringing about a mediation response from mothers. Children initiate listening experiences or music-related discussions that elicit parent response. If the child-instigated listening experience or discussion does not violate or challenge an established guideline, the mother often responds as companion. If the exposure or discussion challenges an established guideline, the mother fills the role of mediator. In both of these situations, the child acts as originator.

Guide (Mothers), Companion (Child)

Mothers can also guide their children's listening with directive and referential talk. When acting as a guide, mothers facilitate direct, purposive listening or guide discussion in response to a particular musical exposure or topic. In terms of the nature of the response, when acting as a guide a mother is not focusing on implementing a guideline. Rather, these exposures are more focused on transmitting cultural and/or religious beliefs, family memories, and family values. When acting as a guide, the mother is in control and offers music exposures and discourse that

shares their experiences, often intended to influence and persuade. When the mother acts as a guide, listening and talking about music take place. This is an active process, contrasted with mother as model (the last role to be discussed), which is a passive role.

Nancy Morales commented that sharing music in her family has, at times, been done with a specific goal in mind. She described acting a guide for her son Liam by sharing what she called "decent" music with him:

> We started, like, brainwashing him. We told him about the Beastie Boys. And, uh, and then I overheard him talking to a friend about the Beastie Boys. And it made me feel so proud. Something decent (Morales).

Nancy described exposing her son to music that she liked and valued. In her role as guide, she purposefully played certain music for Liam with the hopes that he, too, would come to like it as much as she did.

Pamela Alonzo also commented on sharing songs with her daughter Alicia, including searching for her old favorites on the Internet:

> So I think that I've shared songs from when I was little, right? And we looked up, um, some of my favorite songs from when I was little online (Alonzo).

Pamela described engaging her daughter Alicia in music listening and dialogue whereby she purposefully exposed her to music that held meaning in Pamela's childhood. The Alonzo family spoke, at length, in their journals about songs that Alicia had come to appreciate through ongoing instances of mother-guided musical experiences.

When the mother acts as guide, the child fills the role of companion. This parallels the earlier discussion where the mother acts as companion to child-instigated discussion and music-listening but the roles are reversed.

Model (Mother), Observer (Child)

While companion is an active role filled by the mother, being a model is a role that all mothers fill simply by having a child and cohabitating with that child. Cohabitation puts mothers under almost constant scrutiny—children see (and hear) how their mothers act, what they do, and of interest to the present study, how mothers talk about music and what music they choose to listen to. Mothers model ideas and behavior, sometimes without even knowing. Just by virtue of the relationship between child and mother, and the common living situation which they share, by virtue of exposure and relationship, ideas are influenced.

In response to mothers as models, children act as observers. Again, by virtue of the shared living situation and relationship, children are witness to mother actions, conversations, and discussion about the music they like and listen to and, even when not actively processing what they witness, are impacted by that which they observe.

Conclusion

This study of music listening in five families addressed a gap in the existing literature regarding information around specific in-family processes that facilitate the intergenerational transmission of information. It offered rich description of ways in which five families engaged with music, and how they formed opinions of what music they listen to, value, and subsequently pass between generations. This chapter demonstrated how the family serves to socialize and enculturate its members; through shared discourse and experiences, members learn different roles that facilitate interaction. These interactions are first modeled in the family unit by way of listenership role dyads discussed earlier in this chapter. Parents, filling the roles of filter, mediator, companion, guide, and model, and children, filling the roles of heir, originator,

companion, and observer, take on different social orientations. Discourse is shaped by and through roles which determine discourse contents and types of interaction.

In some ways, this examination of roles that facilitate the transmission of music value has provided evidence to suggest that discourse around music as reported by the five case studies is also a way in which families transmit more general family values. Music listening and talk about music are vital components of each family's music value script—the body of information that is established in the family and, through exposures and discourse, shared within families. It serves as a blueprint or touchstone for evaluating and experiencing music, and provides information about what roles individuals can take when it comes to making sense of music listening exposures. But listening and talking about music also provide information about other family values, relationship, modes of conduct, and roles that may transfer or influence other areas of families' lives. Examining how some of the findings in the present may apply to other areas of families' lives in future research could provide valuable insights on many different topics.

Limitations

While it was not an initial goal of this project, this study ended up revealing more information about parents, specifically mothers, than it did about children. This is not to say that the information herein presented about mothers is not important; rather, this limitation illuminates the need for more balanced research that focuses equally on mothers and children, or perhaps future research that responds to the present study with a similar examination of only children. This study's design and analysis may, unintentionally, be to blame for the unbalanced data gathered by the present study. The way that families responded to the study's design, with mothers talking more in interviews and being the ones who administered the journal prompts and typed up responses, resulted in mothers offering more feedback than their children.

The lack of child responses is a limitation of the present findings, and the few child-centric findings reported here in response to their family's music listening guidelines should be built upon by future research. The lack of child responses may be as a result of the power dynamics that characterize the family talk environment. In addition to this, children's responses to discussed music listening guidelines were mostly positive. A question remains as to whether or not children felt comfortable speaking out if they did not agree with the guidelines. The authority that parents yield which allows them to enforce guidelines and influence their children's opinions may also restrict children's ability to voice their opinions. This is not to say that parents are knowingly or purposefully oppressing their children—rather, this may have illuminated a shortcoming of this type of study, or, even more specifically, the design of this particular study.

Notes

[1] Roulston (2006) explains how "the aim of descriptive studies is detailed accounts of events, experiences, activities; new perspectives on familiar phenomena; participants' views of processes, groups, settings; and subjective accounts of phenomena" (p. 156). A descriptive case study is one specific type of descriptive approach. It is a "comprehensive research strategy" (Yin 2003, p.14) that guided and defined data collection and overall study design.

[2] The five families participating in the study are representative of a similar socioeconomic status or class—they are all members of the middle class, with the Santiago family belonging more specifically to the upper-middle class. This is indicated by similar household incomes and mothers' education level. The case study families represent a fairly homogenous group with similar incomes and education. Four of the mothers work outside of the home; the fifth mother (from the Santiago family) currently stays at home with her young children but has a college education and, previous to having her children, worked outside of the home. Leondar-Wright (2014) comment that membership in the American middle class is usually indicated by at least a four-year college education, homeownership, and moderate economic security where members are employed but employment is necessary to pay bills. Middle class people differ in terms of culture, political beliefs, values, and race, but are, for the most part, white. Upper-middle-class people tend to possess more wealth usually from higher incomes (they still work), allowing them more luxuries and travel opportunities than middle-class families.

[3] See Bergson & Trehub, 1999; Custodero & Johnson-Green, 2003; Davidson & Borthwick, 2002; Ilari, 2005; Ilari et al. 2011; Malloch, 2000; Papoušek, 1996; Parncutt, 2009; Trevarthen, 2008; Young, 2008.

[4] Limited literature exists that examines roles children take in family discourse (see, for example, Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Gillen, 2003; Hoff, 2003; Hoff-Ginsberg, 1998; Hoff & Naigles, 2002; King & Fogle, 2013; King et al., 2008; Messaris, 1983; Yamamoto, 2001). The limited relevant literature and limited data gathered in the study speak to the need for more research on children's roles in music listening environments, including that of the family.

[5] See, for example, Trehub, Hill, et al., 1997 and Fuligni & Brooks-Gunn, 2002.

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Thinking About and Beyond the Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood through Musical Mothering

Sally Savage and Clare Hall

Introduction

In this chapter we discuss intensive mothering and concerted cultivation in relation to mothers' music practices. Based on a small-scale study of a group of Australian mothers and their experiences with their children's formal early music education, we question how and why mothers participate in music with their young children. Early childhood studies have well documented the benefits of young children learning music (McPherson) and sociology has long discussed the intensive labour mothers employ to mobilise their children's social positioning through education (Reay, "Class Work"). But few studies investigate the particular contributions and experiences of mothers in regards to their children's musical lives. This study contributes to growing critical discussions of intensive mothering (Ennis) by bringing into focus mothering and music. We argue that the forms of pedagogy performed by these musical mothers reinforce and complicate the cultural contradiction of intensive mothering.

Intensive mothering through music

Intensive mothering practices have received great attention from research in the past twenty years. The term "intensive mothering", first coined by Sharon Hays, describes the kind of mothering that is "child-centred, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labour intensive, and financially expensive" (8). Expanding on this conception, Golden and Erdreich explain:

> Intensive mothering with its cultural definitions of care and the labour it requires in regards to fostering children's development and education has evolved as a dominant cultural model for women in western middle-class families (266).

Intensive mothering manifests in a belief in "'nurture over nature' and an understanding that each decision made would impact on their child in some way, thus raising the pressure to make the right choices" (Shirani, Henwood and Coltart 29). While this pressure is often seen to be detrimental to mothers' well-being, creating anxiety and stress for mothers and their families (Golden and Erdreich; Hays; Lareau; Reay, "Class Work"), this form of mothering has become normative amongst those seeking mobility in neoliberal societies (Vincent and Maxwell). Neoliberal ideology, which lauds competitive individualism (Reay, "Class Acts"), feeds the parent deficit paradigm of intensive mothering and women are deemed inadequate unless they adopt this approach. The "professionalization of parenting" (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 94; Perrier 657) makes mothers approach mothering like a project management task where they are responsible for their children's outcomes. This dovetails neatly into neoliberal ideology that diminishes governments' responsibility to provide equitable access to society's resources. Music is an important cultural resource, and the authors' wider interest in musical mothering is to investigate how music education and the ways mothers operate within this field can be "a mechanism through which social inequality is maintained and reproduced" (Bennett, Lutz and Jayaram 131).

The core work of intensive mothering is the sacrifice of women's own desires whereby the investment in their children's accomplishments becomes central to mothers' aspirations and sense of self, therefore "the focus is not exactly on the child anymore, but rather on the parenting process" (Paltineau 134). Hays identified the contradiction between mothers' selfless nurturing and self-interest in "creating a thriving child who is distinguished as unique, more fundamentally, over the many long years to adulthood, set to achieve a similar or better place in the social hierarchy compared with his parents" (Milkie and Warner 68). This ideology does not

view that children may thrive on their own accord, hence children are often involved in myriad organised experiences out of the home in addition to schooling. A form of connoisseurism manifests in the search for the "best" extracurricular activities taught by those with either real or perceived expertise. Much research exists to show the attraction to group music classes and instrumental tuition as a means of developing academic and social skills, such as creativity, independence and confidence, that are believed to be a valuable investment for the child's future (Irwin and Elley "Concerted cultivation"; Lareau; Savage "Understanding"; Vincent and Ball). Furthermore, participation in extracurricular activities is seen as an essential means to "generating their children's biographies" (Vincent and Maxwell 5) in order to develop the child as part of the mother's autobiography as a "good" mother.

It is women and mothers who continue to dominate the educational care of children and, while shifts in fathering practices are acknowledged as significant (Palladino), it is predominantly mothers who continue to orchestrate and manage children's lives. A practice of intensive mothering is the systematic nurturing of children in a concerted fashion to develop certain talents, a process referred to by Annette Lareau as "concerted cultivation". "This parenting logic involves the institutionalization of children's leisure time in order to stimulate children's development, cultivate their cultural and social skills and maximize their potential" (Perrier 664). Involving children in the arts continues to be a popular means by which middle-class parents perform this kind of institutionalisation (Reay, "Class Work"; Vincent and Ball; Wang). High levels of knowledge and skill in culturally sanctioned forms of music has long been the domain of the middle class and we make connections between social class and musical mothering by bringing into focus the mothers' aspirations, values and practices regarding their children's musical lives and imagined futures (Hall, "Masculinity"; Savage, "Intensive"; Savage,

"Understanding"). Although mothers from all social categories seek the best for their child, the capacity to accumulate and exchange capital for the family remains strongly influenced by structural contexts and gendered and classed resources (Bennett, Lutz and Jayaram; Irwin and Elley "Parents' hopes"; Lareau; Vincent and Maxwell). Middle-class mothers are more able to pass on social and cultural capital to their children and early music education is used as a form of cultural investment for those with higher levels of economic and cultural capital (Irwin and Elley "Concerted cultivation").

Musical mothering as pedagogical labour

Based on the authors' twenty years of experience in the field of music education, the participation of young children in organised music activities between the ages of 0-5 years is increasing in Australia, and these musical activities are predominantly the domain of the mother and her child(ren). While previous studies indicate the importance of the music and the arts as a socialising practice in children's early lives (Bourdieu; Hall, "Masculinity"*;* Irwin and Elley, "Parents' Hopes"; Reay, "Class Work"; Savage, "Understanding"), little empirical research exists that focuses on early-years music making as a site for intensive mothering. This chapter reports on a small-scale investigation of mothering and music by questioning how and why mothers participate in formal music classes with their young children, and what costs and benefits are attributed to their musical mothering. Before discussing some of the findings from the study, we introduce our particular conceptualisation of musical mothering in order to unpack the relationship between music and intensive mothering.

We relook at musical mothering through a sociocultural lens with the aim of extending common conceptions of mothers' music making with their children as an innate form of mother-child intimacy and expression of motherhood (Mackinlay). For many mothers, music is an

integral part of how they nurture and care for their child and for some their dedication and absorption in their child's musical development is extremely time consuming and requires a dedicated application of specific knowledge and skill. The focus of our research is on the ways women use music in their mothering as a form of intensive labour, which we suggest is a form of intensive mothering par excellence. The aim is to reveal the role music can play in mothering repertoires for women with young children. What does this look and sound like in relation to intensive mothering? Mothers' musical repertoires include making music with their children, facilitating their children's music making and planning, organising, and strategising opportunities to support their children's musical development over the long term. This includes a wide range of musical and extramusical activities such as purposefully curating their children's CD collections and concert going, finding spaces and places in the family routine to regularly include music-making together such as singing in the car and at bath-times, using their social networks to seek out expert teachers to provide tuition, supervising practice and participating in music classes with their child. The latter is the main focus of analysis in this chapter.

Intensive musical mothering is characterised by a maternal investment in the needs and activities of the child's musical life that takes priority over other things, including the mother's own desires. Intensive musical mothers' aspirations for their children can become so entwined with their personal desires that mothers' own social and cultural lives are lived through their children's musical activities. Intensive musical mothering is also characterised by a focus on using music as a form of pedagogy that is at once educational and pleasurable. Early socialisation is the key to later educational success, consistent with intensive mothering ideology that holds the mother responsible for enriching or supplementing the child's education using the home as a pedagogical space. Informal musical mothering in the home can take many forms, as

mentioned, and often this is strategically used in the home for the learning in and through music that is inherent in these exchanges. Music holds a key for some mothers to give her child a "head start" in dispositions considered valuable for the educational market, such as an ability to sit still, concentrate and self-regulate—prerequisites for discipline—and to acquire cultural expertise, such as a taste for "good" music. In this sense, musical mothering can be a significant means by which children are enculturated in society's cultural codes and how to play by the rules of school. The mother's self-interest can therefore be considered in relation to the sense of achievement in the educational outcomes and social mobility she enables for her child through musical development.

Intensive mothering ideology can also be seen in musical mothering in the vast reserves of emotional labour required to orchestrate musical lives over a long term; managing and coordinating an optimum musical environment takes much care, concern and forward-planning. Savage ("Intensive") highlights a cost of the pedagogical labour involved in developing a musical child is often emotional pressure because of the anxieties and responsibilities to make the "right" choices for success. In contrast to discourses of mother-child music making as a psychosocial phenomenon (Barrett; Gerry, Unrau and Trainor), we investigate the instrumentality of musical mothering as a form of social action whereby society articulates in mothers' musicking and musical mothering speaks back to society. For instance, our concerns are how gendered and classed practices find expression in musical mothering but also how mothers use music as a form of agency. In other words, musical mothering is about what music does to mothers, and also what they do with music. We question whether the cultural contradiction identified by Hays is a useful way to interpret the selfless concerted cultivation involved in musical mothering as being in tension with what mothers gain from this mode of

mothering, but first we must look more closely at what it is that intensive musical mothering affords women.

The affordances of intensive mothering through music are not restricted to English-speaking countries. There has, however, been less focus on intensive mothering in the global South and East despite some interesting findings coming from studies of mother's involvement in music education in particular. Youm cites mothers' main aims for attending early years music classes in South Korea include learning about child development and how to interact musically with their child, and for their children to develop an appreciation for classical music. Concerted cultivation is most prevalent amongst middle-class South Korean mothers where music is a means to reinforce and promote their family's social standing, and enrichment activities formulate children's extensive resumes in a competitive school market (Cho). Youm's study illustrates that another key reason for mothers' involvement in early years music education is to develop their musicality for their own sake. The key finding that we pursue further is the possibility that intensive mothering through music has personal benefits for the mothers beyond the needs of the child.

Methodology

The research was undertaken by the first author in a suburban area of an Australian capital city. The research participants were thirteen mothers who had attended early childhood music classes with their child for a period of twelve months or more, which was considered a commitment to music rather than a passing interest. These music classes were facilitated by the researcher-educator, which helped to establish a deep relationship with these mothers over time and level of comfort to discuss their experiences. All participants are women with tertiary qualifications. Three mothers are music teachers, either working in a school, privately, or both.

Three of the mothers were born outside of Australia, but have lived there for a substantial time. All mothers are in a heterosexual partnership or marriage, and most were in their thirties when having their first child. The subjects are mostly stay-at-home mothers and mothers working part time, although one of the mothers interviewed works full time and one mother studies full time. Eleven of the thirteen mothers studied music as children, often to intermediate or advanced levels, although most are reluctant to say that they are particularly "musical". The names of all the participants in this study have been de-identified with pseudonyms.

This small-scale project adopted a narrative case-study methodology with data generation and analysis pursuing themes from the cultural sociology of education. Semi-structured interviews, up to one hour's duration, were conducted in the individual participant's home or place of their choosing at a mutually convenient time. This was consistent with views on making participants at ease, as well as accommodating child care needs and work commitments. The women were asked to share stories about their experiences of music within their family life and the formal music class and why they chose to become involved in early years music classes. The sample used in this research is relatively small, and represents a localised view of a group of mothers and their experience of early years music education. The researcher acknowledges there are issues concerning being the teacher of the participants' children. As a middle-class, white, educated Australian woman, the researcher's subjectivity attracts people who are comfortable with, and who may identify and value the researcher because of this, therefore presenting a limitation on the diversity of possible participants.

The following section discusses the narratives of seven of the women's musical mothering experiences with a focus on their participation in their pre-school children's music classes.

Narratives of musical mothering

Andrea works diligently to cultivate her children's musicality through intensive mothering. Andrea's musical mothering involves vast amounts of pedagogical labour where she tutors her children in the manner of the specialists; actively sitting in on lessons, creating a home conducive to practising music, setting aside time to practice with her child, and attending a range of musical activities provided in the community. Participating in her children's music classes provides Andrea opportunities to learn how she can optimise learning in the home:

> I learn…just talking to the other mothers…what do they do; you exchange ideas…I see what you're doing in the group and now we sort of do the same style at home, so that I know what to do. I think if I didn't actually go to your classes or any of the other ones for that matter really, I wouldn't really know how to promote music at home…I kind of know what to do [laughs](Andrea).

The professionalization of Andrea's mothering is illustrated in how she manages the family's schedule with calculated efficiency. Andrea uses participation in early childhood music classes as a learning tool for herself through which she becomes the expert tutor for her children to replicate aspects of formal learning in the home. For instance, she tells how she adopts the use of soothing classical music for calming her children, singing instructions rather than speaking to pique their listening for transitioning and other musical techniques for behaviour modification similar to those used in our classes,

> Dinner time it's not songs, it's (classical) music…it's our way of calming them down I suppose…Sometimes we play the game where, when you sing "sit down on the ground" [we sing] "everyone to the table" [sung in same notes] and they sing back to me "okay, mummy" [laughs]. So it comes through in so many ways at home (Andrea).

Andrea uses music as part of her domestic mothering work and as a way of combining the skills learned in class to meet her parenting goals. Much of mothers' work in fostering the desired skills in children is subtly embedded into family practices early in a child's life; the routine of such activities becomes an accepted practice and what Ilari describes as "aesthetic conditioning" (181). Ruby, a mother of three young children, also fosters an appreciation for music as part of her children's aesthetic conditioning. Unable to learn music as a child herself, she has resolved to make music part of her life and that of her family. She says in regards to her children that,

> I would like them to grow up and have music in their lives…go to concerts…'cause that's another thing we do a lot too. I take them to Playschool concerts, the symphony orchestra…'cause I enjoy it but I want them to also have that…I want them to, when they're grown (up), go "ah I'd like to go to a concert" and enjoy it, it is a lovely part of life and I'd like them to sort of appreciate, yeah (Ruby).

The development of aesthetic conditioning, as seen through Ruby and Andrea's practices, highlights how "the home becomes a site of pedagogy…through trips to the theatre, art galleries or concerts, "exposure" to high status cultural activities…in an organised, interventionist approach to child-rearing" (Vincent, Rollock, Ball and Gillborn, 430). Such pedagogies give the appearance of incidental acquisition, adhering to gender-based assumptions that mothers are natural carers and children's talents are innate, rather than nurtured through their mothers' "domestic cultural training" (Bourdieu 46).

Ruby's pedagogical care of her children utilises her own educational capital to introduce her children to the "right" kind of music where her children learn to participate in high status music activities that require embodied capital in the form of etiquette and behaviour in order to

appreciate. She converts this know-how into cultural capital for her children, reinforcing the family's affiliation with middle-class dispositions. The mother's role is critical in the family's accumulation of cultural capital, as Bourdieu suggests, and the role of music in these processes, particularly as a resource for social agency in children's early years, is an under-researched field. The researcher is complicit in these women's cultivation of their children by alerting mothers to these concerts and activities through our classes. As Ruby speaks there is a shared understanding of what is meant by "going to concerts", implying an appreciation for Western art music, attendance at concert halls and prestigious theatres with others "like us".

Exposure to a vast array of cultural activities may appear less interventionist, however high amounts of cultural and economic capital are required to orchestrate this approach successfully. Early years music classes, in their customary child-centred, play-based approach, do more than help mothers and children pass time in an enjoyable way; they can assist in introducing children to the structures of Western music education and induct mothers on how to continue this education in the home as shown above. This is a critical difference between other popular early years activities such as ballet or gymnastics, where the adults' participation is either not expected, not permitted, or secondary to the children's involvement and is not expected to occur outside the context of the class. Early years music classes, however, will usually promote parent-child interaction through music as fundamental to the experience, and home practice is often encouraged, if not expected. Making the learning visible through strategies such as student performances and "homework" activities, is part of the appeal of formal music classes to intensive mothering. However, it is the mothers' "hidden curriculum" that is perhaps far more complex. Not only are the mothers preparing their children with prerequisite skills for musical futures, but using music as a means of shaping their personhood.

> I'd like him to learn how to dance and be involved in music a bit…were not putting pressure on him. I'm not wanting him ever to be on X Factor or anything like that – I just want him to have music in his life and dancing too just to have some fun, you know, and it's quite nice for a boy to be able to dance (Julie).

Here we get a sense of how early in their children's lives these mothers are fashioning their children's futures without wanting to appear as intervening. Julie, like the other mothers, narrates her children's choices as "free"; however, the mothers' work to encourage and expose their children to particular opportunities is how they regulate the choices their children have access to. We also get a sense in Julie's comments of how her son's projected future personhood includes his imagined gender identity, clearly something more than "just fun". His mother's comments show her desire for her son to become a dancing boy, which in Australia is an extremely counterhegemonic form of masculinity,[1] and so by exposing him to music and dance early in life, she hopes this will become a durable inclination in his later life. This kind of investment in the symbolic gendered meanings of participation in the arts is consistent with other research on masculinity and music that shows the significance of singing as an important means of shaping gendered subjectivity in early childhood and the influence of the family (Hall, "Gender"; Hall, "Masculinity").

Monique's comments are another example of how the sociality of music is perceived to afford an aesthetic conditioning of superior moral standards, which is emphasised in her frequent use of the word "good",

> I thought it would be a good way to meet new people, for the children to meet new people, and I believe, just from my experience at school and seeing kids at school, that if they learn an instrument at school that gives them a lot of confidence, it gives them a lot

> of social skills and a good group of friends. I thought down the track that that's something I'd like them to be involved in…if they're interested in…I wouldn't push it…so this might be a good grounding…and it has been. My ultimate goal is so that they will not be tempted to mix with the wrong people or do anything that's you know, not safe. If you're in a band when you're older, it gives you a whole social group that have similar interests and requires some kind of commitment so you don't have loose, random time that you're going to try and fill with anything (Monique).

Monique, who has not had any formal music education as a child and is a stay-at-home mother working occasionally as a primary school teacher, constructs a binary between right/wrong people, good/bad friends, much/little aptitude, good grounding/baseless, safe/unsafe, and productiveness/unproductiveness. For her, music represents everything to do with the positive side of this judgemental binary, which is a pattern among the other mothers' narratives. Monique's desire is to produce "good" children through music and she is relieved that music classes are giving her children so much "goodness" – here music conflates with the social. We get an image of the engaged, committed musician as an embodiment of this imaginary exemplary person. The use of music to productively "fill up" time is constructed as a meaningful way to develop a work ethic similar to the study by Vincent, Rollock, Ball and Gillborn, whose participants saw spare time negatively because children could potentially get up to no good. We suggest that this indicates a middle-class orientation to time because working-class parents are less likely to perceive the arts as the most valuable way of instilling a productive work ethic in their children.

Musical mothering through concerted cultivation and intensive mothering practices is a seemingly selfless pursuit invested in advantaging the child, however we argue that it is also an investment in mothers' own emotional futures, which the next section explores.

Affordances of musical mothering

Intensive mothering is known to generate serious costs to mothers in terms of emotion, time and energy (Hays). Intensive mothering can produce "an extensive range of emotions in relation to their children…guilt, anxiety and frustration as well as empathy and encouragement" throughout their involvement in their children's activities (Reay, "Extension" 572). There are "constant worries about getting things wrong, about failing the child, about mistaking priorities, about not finding the perfect school or right university" (Ball 171). For the mothers in this study, there is a willingness to endure the costs because of the potential benefits music offers their children, which is consistent with the self-sacrificing aspect of intensive mothering. Here Hannah weighs up the benefits against the costs of going to music classes with her child:

> If you could see the benefits that were happening for your child, you'd maybe go…For me, I think it would be more outweighed by what was happening for the kids, so if they were getting benefit and they were happy, I would probably put aside whatever thing I was having (Hannah).

As mentioned this group of women devote much of their resources to their children's pursuits at their own personal expense. All had successful careers prior to motherhood, and many suggest that they are ambivalent about the transition to motherhood with several having difficulty coping with the drudgery of stay-at-home domestic life and the relentless demands and guilt of mothering. Music class is a space to escape this temporarily, as Penny describes:

> I got to spend dedicated one on one time with them for that time without feeling like I still had the washing and the ironing and everything else that was dragging out and had to be done…music was on and we were there… (Penny).

While participating in music classes with their children can be viewed as an extension of intensive mothering and therefore another potential cost to these mothers, it also represents positive affordances that go beyond Hays' conceptualisation of mothers' self-interest as ultimately child centred. What is important to highlight about the women in this study are the benefits musical mothering has also brought for the women themselves outside their mother subjectivities. Andrea, for instance, finds being a co-learner with her child in music class satisfies an element of her unrealised dreams of being more musical herself that she connects with a strong sense of self-contentment.

> I think it's your responsibility to develop your talents…and flourish with them 'cause that's what will make you happy (Andrea).

One recurring theme in the women's stories is how music classes helps to replenish depleted emotional resources. For example, Olivia had weeks where she could not even face leaving the house, but coming to class to make music with her child helped her to cope with her difficulties at the time.

> I hope you understand how important us coming to your classes is. Like there's been so many times when I've been about to lose the plot…I don't have to go to music and then I think, "I do, I do! I have to go to music", like that's the best day of the week!
>
> Like it's so important. Maybe it's for me as well (Olivia).

An important dimension of the emotionality of this musical context is the relationships the mothers form with the other adults. The mothers discuss being "enriched" by the class beyond

music itself, which is consist with research that shows the impact music-making, particularly singing, has on personal growth, a sense of belonging and wellness through enjoyment, self-realisation and positive relationships (Hurst).

> As a stay at home mum, you need to have some other stimulation apart from playing Barbies and reading books all day, you've got to be able to get out and do those things to feel enriched (Hannah).

In a sense another form of musical mothering is the mother to mother sharing of knowledge and reassurance about their mothering through musical interactions. While this could be regarded as another way intensive mothering manifests in a project of self-improvement through music in order to become an even better mother, we argue this music class is an important space that the women seek out to cultivate themselves alongside their children for their own benefit. This pedagogy of the self affords these women self-knowledge, new musical capacities, confidence and reassurance in their mothering in a supportive environment.

The teacher is critical in facilitating this environment by addressing mothers' concerns and promoting empathetic interaction through music. The main mode of interaction in these classes is through singing, which is encouraged to promote well-being and life enhancement (Judd and Pooley) and to create a "relational consciousness – a deep sense of connectedness with others and within oneself" (Mellor 194). The effect singing can have on health, well-being and a "shared sense of belonging" (Mellor 192) are important findings that may explain why some mothers, like Penny, find leaving their child's music class so difficult.

> It's actually quite sad for me because this is the last day of music…it impacted me far more than it impacted him because I said, you know, this is my ritual. This is what I've

> been doing until the kids went to school…that was sad that I didn't get to go anymore. What am I going to do with my Mondays now? (Penny).

Mothers' participation in their children's early years music classes and enriching their family's lives through music not only advantages the children educationally, it contributes to the women's well-being and desires as individuals, which complicates the construction of intensive mothering as allowing little space for the mother's best interests.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the collective narrative of these mothers show music is an important resource in their conceptualisation and practice of "good" mothering. We argued that the musical mothering of these women is a form of pedagogical labour that has multiple purposes that require elaborating past theorisations of intensive mothering. Consistent with previous discussions of concerted cultivation, these women deploy musical mothering as a means of maximising their children's educational potential in and through music. We illustrate how the mothers use music-learning and music-making to shape their children's lives as well as their own. Participating in their children's early music education capacitates the mothers with pedagogical know-how that they use in the home as a space to further cultivate their family. Here the cultural contradiction of intensive mothering is highly apparent in the ways these mothers attempt to construct their musical mothering as disinterested, which they do by narrating the freedom of their children's musical choices and emphasising the many benefits of musical mothering for the child as opposed to themselves and their family's social position. This is in tension with the significant interventions the mothers make for the child to have a "good life" through music at the cost of her time, energy and money. However, intensive mothering ideology does not account for the intrinsic personal affordances of music making that are distinct from the

costs/benefits that this form of pedagogical labour represents "professional" mothers. We argued these women strategically utilise their children's music learning as a pedagogy of the self whereby they concertedly cultivate their own musical capacities, emotional reserves, support network and well-being through music for their own betterment. Finding such counter-narratives of musical mothers' agency within intensive mothering may help to locate and advocate change in mothering ideology and promote the power of music to compose motherhood in a different key.

Notes

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) figures on Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities indicate that 3.5% of boys and 27.1% girls aged 5-14 years are involved in organized dance. This compares to 16% boys who learn an instrument and 2.5% who are involved in singing and 19.3% of girls who learn an instrument and 7.9% who are involved in singing aged 5-14 years. http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4901.0Apr%202012?OpenDocument

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A Vulnerable Observer & a Circular Gift: Personal Reflections on the St. John's Ukulele Club[1]

Lydia Bringerud

Mary's ukulele (Lydia Bringerud 2014)

When was the last time someone said to you, "I don't want to study that topic, because I won't enjoy it anymore?" Often as academics, when we spend time in the deep analysis of a topic, its initial mystery dissipates, and we are left with yet another paper neatly explaining a facet of someone else's life. What are the topics that we choose *not* to study, and what anxieties keep us from studying them? Furthermore, how do our choices not to study a certain topic (or to examine what it means to us) affect our complex subjectivities as ethnographers?

Historically in the ethnographic social sciences, there has been a spectrum of options for authorial voices. We have at one extreme the removed, authoritative academic who pretends to have perfect objectivity, and at the other extreme, the fieldworker who has "gone native," so deeply involved in a culture that he or she can no longer be "objectively" extricated from that experience (Pratt; Tedlock). I see both of these extremes as motivated by anxiety—on the one hand, the fear of getting too close and not being taken seriously, and on the other hand, anxiety over how to reconcile deeply meaningful experience with study. Today, we try to mediate these

anxieties with reflexivity—the efforts to respect our collaborators and to be aware of how our presence affects them (Hufford; Lawless). What is less frequently discussed, however, is how collaborators affect us as ethnographers (some exceptions include Behar; Meyerhoff; and Narayan). Sometimes all the reflexivity in the world cannot prepare us for deeply emotional experiences in fieldwork. Anthropologist Ruth Behar asks, “How do you write subjectivity into ethnography in such a way that you can continue to call what you are doing ethnography?” (6-7). I offer here a personal reflection on a fieldwork experience that I had recently, which made me anxious.

In the winter semester of 2014, I attended a course called “Advanced Ethnography” as a requirement for my PhD at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). There were three other students in the course, and we were instructed to do a collective ethnography on the St. John’s Ukulele Club. [2] One of our number was an ethnomusicologist, but the rest of us were folklorists, unaccustomed to approaching music academically. This discomfort, however, made me aware of just how complex my own subjectivity was in relation to music as a research topic, and I became, in the words of Behar, a "vulnerable observer” (1). Behar uses this expression to refer to certain ethical dilemmas faced by ethnographers. She writes:

> Loss, mourning, the longing for memory, the desire to enter into the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight, a sene of the utter uselessness of writing anything and yet the burning desire to write something… (3).

For me, studying music became an emotional topic because of the legacy of musicianship in my family. My experiences coloured my subjectivity in documenting the St. John’s Ukulele Club such that the only way I felt I could write about this group was through autoethnography. Mullen writes that it is much easier for a scholar to admit subjectivity than to be aware of the “hidden

assumptions" he or she might have (133). This was certainly the case for me; I knew my gaze affected my conclusions in fieldwork, but my unexamined assumptions were the ones which caused my deepest reactions. Rosaldo writes that ethnographers, as positioned subjects, are "prepared to know certain things and not others" (170). In the false sense of security this creates, it is the unexpected which can undermine our preparatory measures. On the other hand, these slippages reposition our gaze and can serve to make us awake to some of our hidden assumptions.

Folklorist David J. Hufford has suggested that in ethnographic writing, the scholar is always the subject of his or her own text, and those being studied are passive objects of that text; oftentimes, we learn more about the author's worldview than the topic of study. By choosing autoethnography as my medium, I can demonstrate how my own positionality affects my fieldwork conclusions. In terms of writing about music performance in particular, ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice points out that "experience is not an inner phenomenon accessible only via introspection to the one having the experience. Rather, experience begins with interaction with a world and with others" (157). This is especially true if we consider the nature of participation in performance. A key aspect of my vulnerability in studying the St. John's Ukulele Club was just that—the dissolving of the line between observing and participating.

Behar writes that "The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to" (14). Using my own fieldwork experience as a case study, I ask, why do we study the particular topics and groups that we study (and not other topics)? How are our own subjectivities quietly embedded in the questions we ask? This becomes pertinent for ethnography in the twenty-first century when social scientists increasingly

turn to their own backyards for fieldwork. In my case, I study North American converts to Eastern Orthodox Christianity because my own family became part of this community when I was in my early teens. As an apostate, I use my "insider-outsider" status to delve into why people choose this faith in the twenty-first century and the personal experiences that keep them there. I believe that my personal relationship to my research, however, is complicated both by my relationship to my mother and my relationship to music. Unexpectedly, my feelings about my mother, music, and Orthodoxy cropped up in my observation of the St. John's Ukulele Club, forcing me to re-examine my limitations as an ethnographer and a human being. The following paper alternates between my fieldwork in the ukulele club and my memories of music growing up. In this way, the reader can begin to see how my subjectivity is constructed, both in terms of the conclusions I draw and my presentation of self as a narrator.

Two Ukulele Observations at Hava Java

The first time I attended a meeting of the St. John's Ukulele Club, there were only four members present, and one did not play the ukulele at all. The presence of four graduate student ethnographers was a glaring one in this context, and I think it made the ukulele players (and their one groupie) a bit self-conscious. I told Sam, a gangly high school student with a bleach-blond coif, "We're some weird people from MUN who are observing," to which he said, "I'm observing also…I'm not particularly musical, but I like to listen" (Sam Feb.). He first heard the ukulele in his junior high school when Mr. Grant, the math teacher, coached a ukulele club. Sam liked to hang around them too, because, as he put it, "I like the people, and I like the music" (Sam Feb.). Sam had been coming to the club meetings at the Hava Java, a downtown coffee shop, only a few times, but he intended to pick up a ukulele at some point. For the moment, he sang. In fact, the first time my classmates and I visited, he did all the vocals for the group's rendition of

"Toxic" by Britney Spears. The others present were Maryanna, a friend of Sam's from school, Lauren, an undergraduate who came for the first time, and Matt (a.k.a. Mr. Grant), the club's leader. I think part of the subdued quality of this particular meeting was related to the fact that Lauren was new, and though she had been playing the ukulele for a few years, she was unfamiliar with the group's songbook, and time had to be taken in between songs for Matt and Maryanna to explain chord progressions to her.

The second meeting I attended was completely different. Our little group of ethnographers was easily in the minority, surrounded by ten players (one of whom brought her two grandchildren), Sam, knitting a hat this time, and a few sundry passers-by. Like the meeting I attended a month earlier, this one opened with a Britney Spears song, "Oops!...I Did It Again." I got the impression that Sam was a fan, because he not only sang the words to the song, but when the ukuleles petered out in the middle, he continued to sing, even when they showed no signs of continuing their accompaniment. Matt leaned forward and said to him, "Hey, we're done," to which Sam replied, "Well *I'm* not!" which was met with laughter all around.

Second meeting I attended of the St. John's Ukulele Club above Hava Java.
(Lydia Bringerud 2014)

One of the first words that comes to my mind in trying to describe the group meeting is warmth. It might have been the space—a bright yellow room above the Hava Java coffee shop, hung with original portraits of musical legends. Lauryn Hill, Outkast, Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, the Doors, Bob Dylan, and others presided over us benevolently as some of their songs were reproduced on comically small string instruments. Beneath these portraits, I romantically imagined this informal group participating in a musical lineage of people who just did it for the love of sound. There was a sonic brightness in the hum of ten ukuleles being strummed in unison. The color of the space, its cozy size, and the cushy bench with pillows along the wall gave the room a kind of intimacy, as though we were in someone's living room. Perhaps most importantly, I perceived warmth in the interactions among players. Laughter shuttled between players, weaving together tones from ukulele strings and vocal cords. The meeting appeared to

be easy and comfortable. The group's art was a patchwork quilt of singing, ukulele, laughter, play, non-verbal interaction, and above all, music-making, none of which were mutually exclusive.

Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino would describe this musical event as participatory performance. According to him, in these events, "…one's primary attention is on the activity, on *the doing* and on the other participants, rather than an end product that results from the activity" (28). Furthermore, the quality of the event, or the music, has less to do with this end product and more to do with how many people participated and how those participants felt. It almost does not make sense in this context to observe detachedly. Turino writes that "…in fully participatory occasions there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants. Attention is on the sonic and kinesic interaction among participants" (28). This kind of interaction can be described as bonding. Building relationships through the music seemed more important than how beautiful or technically correct it was. This, in many ways, is the opposite of what we are trained to do in academia. It was certainly the opposite of what I was trained to do with music.

My Family, Music, & Church

This was fieldwork for which I felt unprepared. I knew very little about ethnomusicological observation or ethnography, and even less about the ukulele. I do, however, come from a musical family. My mother and grandmother both have graduate degrees in music, concentrating in piano performance, and my grandfather (the same grandmother's ex-husband, about whom she says, "Two pianists cannot ever be married.") has a double master's in piano and violin. I minored in vocal performance in my undergrad, however this, too, was mostly restricted to Western classical music, and in my case, art songs and operatic repertoire. My musical

background gives me an understanding of harmony, timbre, and artistic collaboration. What it does not prepare me for is an appreciation of informal musical settings. In many ways, this is what the St. John's Ukulele Club seemed to be all about.

Reflection: I can't recall how many times, before I started college, people asked me if I was going to major in music, like my mother. They were mostly church people who asked. After all, my mother was our church choir director, being by far the most qualified individual for the job, and both my father and I were valuable singers in the ensemble (being music-literate and able to match a pitch was all it took). Some people at church knew that I was taking voice lessons privately, and I did sing for a year in my high school choir. For at least six years, I had taken piano lessons, in the past, and I dabbled in violin as well. When people asked me if I would major in music, I told them, "I don't want to, because then it won't be fun anymore."

What the people at church didn't seem to know was how much pressure there was in my family to perform music perfectly. As child taking piano lessons, I would get up early before school to practice for at least half an hour. I always tried to be as quiet as possible so that my mother wouldn't wake up and tell me what was wrong with my playing. My hand position might not have been curved enough, or I might have missed a note or, more likely, I misread the rhythm in a phrase. If I was bored or exasperated enough, I would try to stop practicing sooner, and I was rarely let off the hook for that either.

Outside our home, there were other musical pressures. When I played the piano, I was asked to play for family members at gatherings, for church Christmas events, and once or twice at school. My piano teacher held mandatory recitals for her students. Thankfully, this teacher was not my mother, because as we later learned, the pair of us were a disastrous combination on the same instrument. In high school, when I took voice lessons, I was asked to sing in similar

capacities. By this point, however, we had converted to Orthodox Christianity, and as all liturgies are *a capella*, choral participation was essential (read: *my* participation was essential—or at least I was led to believe that).

Before my family became Orthodox, we had been part of a self-contained charismatic[3] Christian group, one that composed its own music (the group formed in the '70s, and there was a lot of hippie energy in there) (Bringerud). Singing was unstructured—there were written scores, but no one adhered to them seriously, because so few people read music. Harmonies were frequently improvised, and it was common for people to get "lost" in song—eyes closed, hands raised, swaying sometimes. A family friend of ours used to call it "singing in the spirit." When I remember being a child in those moments, I remember the air feeling "thick" with music. I was little, no higher than anyone's waist, and it was as though I were swimming in an ocean of sound, the harmonies like currents swirling. Few people in the congregation were formally-trained musicians, but many had nice voices all the same, and they blended well. On top of that, there was intense emotion poured into the singing: it was wild and alive, and I believed at the time that God became present among us. J.R.R. Tolkien described an angelic race of beings, the Valar, in his book *The Silmarillion*, and in his mythology, these creatures sang the world into being. It seemed so much like we were doing that in the charismatic church days—singing God, or something filled with him, into existence.

A Sense of Community

Matt, the leader of the ukulele club, pointed out to the newcomer Lauren that there were many ways to play chords. He emphasized, "There's no wrong way to play chords, as long as you can get it out." A theme that came back again and again throughout the ukulele observations was the concern for accessibility. Both the first and second ukulele club meetings I attended involved

participants playing song intros for as long as necessary to make sure everyone was on the same page. In waiting for Sam to sing, Matt instructed the group, "Just strum until Sam is ready to come in," no matter how long it might be. In addition, if Sam could not sing a song in its written key, group members were often willing to transpose it so that he could participate. Matt, by contrast, sang pretty unselfconsciously, regardless of his key or whether he could hit pitches. The group's accessibility seemed dependent in some sense on its informality—you didn't have to be a great singer, you just had to be able to contribute your part to the greater whole. Players, likewise, were willing to help one another become better contributors to this greater whole.

In the second meeting in particular, I observed mentoring between ukulele players—discussing chord variations or helping one another through difficult passages of songs—usually preparing for the next one to be played. This created a sonic atmosphere in between songs that was not unlike the expectant sounds of an orchestra tuning. There seemed to be a kind of otherworldly ambience to tinkering ukuleles accompanying mundane conversation about the Winter Olympics and *Star Trek*.

Sam speculated that people were drawn to play the ukulele in the first place because it could be learned relatively easily. As he put it, "It's fun…it's not, like, serious…you can casually play it" (Sam Mar.) He conceded that some people took it "really seriously…taking lessons and stuff," but he believed that the St. John's Ukulele Club was more laid-back than that.[4] Members did practice, but they didn't come together to make something polished. Maryanna, Sam's friend and classmate, said the club "forces you to practice playing the ukulele," and that was its primary purpose for her (Maryanna Feb.). Matt recounted,

> That's originally how the group started. Just a bunch of random people…if we peer-pressure each other, then we're forced to learn! And [back] then, none of us knew any

> chords, but between all of us we knew all of the chords. So we carried on until we could jump back in. (Grant)

In this way, the club was less about producing a clean, professional sound, and more about creating community. In the beginning, no single person could play an entire song, but with group effort, they could. Matt elaborated, saying that in the club's early days, "People used to come in and ask to play a certain song, and we'd be like, 'I don't know that song,' and then they'd start singing it, and we'd be like, 'Oh!' and then we'd just play it [by ear]" (Grant) By belonging to the club, members challenged one another to get better and to expand their repertoires. The second time I attended the meeting, I was sitting by two people who were maybe in their sixties. Mary, nearest to me, joked once or twice, "Play some songs the old people know!" However, she told me later that she had learned a number of new songs by contemporary bands as a result of being a member. Exchanging songs in the ukulele club context was also a means of exchanging cultural capital. There was shared group context, but there was also the exchange of pop culture references.

Maryanna explained to me that, in her experience, "A lot of nerds play the ukulele." When I asked her to expand on this, she said, for example, that people who are drawn to the ukulele are into "comic books [and] comic book culture" and also identify as "science nerds" (Maryanna Mar.). I wondered if this might not be connected with Matt, being Sam's and Maryanna's high school science teacher as well as the one who introduced them to the ukulele. Maryanna said that any club she was ever a part of was "full of nerds," such as "chess club and the *Settlers of Catan* Club" (Maryanna Mar.) Beyond familiarity with specific interests like comics and chess, I took Maryanna's use of the word "nerd" to have another meaning: being

willing to be quirky or silly. For me, somehow, the act of being silly contributed to my vulnerability as an observer, and I found that I was unprepared for what that meant.

Becoming Vulnerable with Ukuleles

I know that when I was documenting the ukulele club, I started singing both times. The first time I attended, I was quiet, and tried not to be intrusive. The second time, when I heard songs I knew, I didn't hold back. It was the Simon & Garfunkel that did it. The last line of my notes read, "It's 7:39, and I've completely gone native." I wrote this jokingly in reference to the taboos of early anthropological literature, which praised distant removal from the subjects being studied (Pratt 38; Georges and Jones 81; Briggs 293). Indeed, there was at one time a fear that becoming overly empathetic with those being studied would lead anthropologists to "behave as native," thereby erasing the class line between "us" and "them" (Tedlock 70). Of course this term is no longer used by serious social scientists, as it is not only pejorative terminology but a pejorative way of thinking about those whom we study. In writing this joke in my field notes, I recognized my own anxiety; I had crossed a line from observation to wholehearted participant observation. Indeed, I began to participate with enthusiasm, starting with "The Boxer," during which I felt the need to create canon sound effects in imitation of the album recording. After that, I was simply looking for opportunities to sing, improvise a harmony, and turn digital pages for Mary, struggling with an iPad beside me. If I had not been as familiar with the songs, I know I would not have become involved in this way. However, even when I listen back to some of the video recordings I made that second time, I can feel something deeply emotional welling up inside of me. I don't like knowing that I can become vulnerable in the most unexpected circumstances.

Reflection: Looking back, I wonder at what point I succumbed to my maternal family's musical perfectionism. I know that music was something that attracted my parents to the charismatic Christian movement, but I cannot imagine how it was that my mother could set aside her professional musicianship long enough to embrace something so unstructured. When we became Orthodox, everything about it became rigorously structured, from the liturgy to the formation of a choir (with rehearsal times), to the singing style. My musical participation at church became more of a job than a spiritual experience.

Still, the free kind of singing expression I had enjoyed previously did not end completely with our conversion. Every summer from the time I was eleven, I attended church camp. There were at least three singing times a day, and plenty of other opportunities for musical expression besides. During singing times, everyone had books with the charismatic music, and we would sing, with unselfconscious abandon, to the accompaniment of three or four guitars. The church camp had gone on for years during the church's charismatic period, but even after the church's conversion to Orthodoxy, the daily structure of the camp changed very little, and we continued to sing almost all of the same music. As with many other kinds of charismatic Christian contexts (Lawless 1988; Titon 1988), the music was an integral part of experiencing God, and I saw many people (both long-time and new campers) have emotional and spiritual experiences connected to this music.

I have plenty of memories of camp that were not enjoyable, like not fitting in socially or struggling with messages I heard about God and morality. The most powerful memories I have of that time, however, are those that involve music. I struggle with this, because I am suspicious that the music was a means of manipulating my emotions (I don't think this was conscious on the part of the campers or counselors—I think it is inherent in the tradition of charismatic

Christianity). What I cannot ignore is that when I hear that music today, or more pertinently, music which reminds me of it, I become emotional. Just listening to my field recordings of the ukulele club caused me to weep. I often wonder how I (or someone else) would hear these musics differently if I did not have these particular emotional memories. All I can think is that there are layers to this experience—there is a layer of music itself, and what that might mean to me, in terms of the act of singing, which I seldom do these days. There is a deeper layer here, though. This is the layer that disturbs me, as Sunstein and Strater might say (2011). The very experience of singing in an informal group context, most especially with strummed instruments that resemble guitars, touches something in me that I identify as spiritual.

Sitting above a coffee shop, surrounded by ukuleles, I felt as though I were in the midst of something more than warmth. It sounds cheesy to say it, but all I can articulate is that I heard what I identified as the sound of love. The group of ukulele players takes people as they are. If Sam is not ready to play the ukulele, but wants to sing, he can, even if his pitch flounders. People build each other up, and they wait for one another to be on the same page before starting a song. What I saw in the St. John's Ukulele Club was the love people had for their instruments, for playing together, and genuine fondness for one another. I felt joy in that room, and I believe I was not alone in that. I can analyze this and connect it to my religious background and the role that music played in it. I recognize this as significant in my experience, and to ignore that would be foolish, however, I do not think that this discounts my experience of something which I felt was profound.

No one asked me to sing, but when I responded to the singing around me in kind, I felt welcomed into it for whatever I had to give. I wasn't being judged on the quality of my contribution (at least, I don't think so). This, more than anything, was what connected me back to

those experiences of charismatic singing at church and church camp. In those times, I felt like my musical contribution was valued unconditionally just because it was mine. My conflation of musical experience and emotional experience made me feel that God loved me unconditionally for offering something that was imperfect, but uniquely mine. When my family became Orthodox, and singing became a job, I think I lost that window, feeling as though I could be loved for my imperfection. This scenario is not cut-and-dry, because I started participating more professionally in classical music around the same time as the conversion, and I was applying that new lens to all musical experiences. I was very proud of my musical training, and I did like the music we sang in the Orthodox Church. My teenaged and young twenty-something selves were, however, far more likely to judge my neighbor for his or her untrained singing and become completely consumed by that. I thought of worship as presentational performance, defined by Turino as "situations where one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music" (26). I may have even thought of God himself as part of this audience, silently judging me on the accuracy of my pitch and breath support as I judged my neighbors. Much of our music had been composed by such accomplished artists as Sergei Rachmaninoff and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, and it was impossible for me not to constantly compare our humble, musically-untrained church choir with majestic recordings I had heard of the same repertoire by professional choirs. When I felt the overwhelming beauty of those professional recordings, I was full of awe, and I think I was (completely unfairly) resentful that our church choir could not reproduce this awe for me. The lack of awe (and my irascible frustration with musical performance) was probably what led me to leave the choir, and then, the church altogether—but that is a different story.

In the charismatic days, by contrast, the music we made was different in style. I did not yet have my elitist classical standards, and I could appreciate the communal, egalitarian genre; no single voice could be extracted from it, and sour notes were covered up by a small instrumental ensemble. It seemed as though there was no wrong way to sing the music. We were just expressing what we had to express, and no one was there to measure its quality or authenticity. My memories of this kind of singing connected me to the ukulele club in that the accessibility of participation through singing was, for me, an invitation to participate in joy. This is a circular gift. It gave me joy to participate, but I felt as though I was contributing to the creation of joy by adding to the musical body. I felt like I was sharing a life-giving, creative experience with others around me.

I wonder whether or not ethnography can be a kind of circular gift in this way, or whether it is more one-sided than that. Lawless has coined the term "reciprocal ethnography" to refer to her own process of giving her research back to her interviewees, dialoguing about representation and interpretation, and then including that dialogue in the final scholarly product (311). This is an ideal scenario, however, as many scholars know, it does not completely erase the power dynamics between the authorial voice and subjects' voices (Hufford). Perhaps this is why I gravitate toward autoethnography. Scholarly analysis is still involved, but the personal remains as a great equalizer between author and reader; a relationship is built on shared human experience. I wish for ethnography to achieve what a ukulele club can—empathy, not taking oneself too seriously, and relationship building. Turino discusses "sonic bonding" that occurs between people who make music together, experiencing "a feeling of oneness with others" (3). Sometimes, "in-group solidarity supports the dehumanizing of other groups—that is, overvaluing difference and undervaluing the basic sameness of people" (3). Turino cites this human tendency

as a reason to study expressive forms from cultures outside our own. Even in ethnographic scholarship, however, there can be anxiety in seeing ourselves in those whom we study. Ethnography is often a presentational performance rather than a participatory one. Indeed, we even build a sense of self-worth on the distance between ourselves and those whom we study.

There have been very few times in my life where I was not afraid of rejection and failure: for being "weird," awkward, not pious enough, technically skilled enough, competent enough, or smart enough. I chose to become an academic, which in some ways can be a giant competition for intelligence, creativity and networking. I am energized by this environment, but it does create a sense of insecurity—I must keep moving so that the others don't get ahead, or so that the others don't find out that I'm not as smart as they are. It is no secret that ours is a culture of criticism, where a good portion of our academic prestige is based upon how well we can find the flaws in others' work. How often do any of us hear, "*You* are enough," or "Your gift is beautiful because it's *yours*"? How often does anyone say to you, "Take your time. I will play an intro chord for as long as necessary until you are ready to come in, however you are ready to come in"? It does not have to be the place of our jobs to give us this kind of affirmation. I do hope that my meditation here shows how important it is to have sources of affirmation and meaning outside of our respective disciplines. We do meaningful work as ethnographers, but one of the most direct uses of those ethnographies is to further us in the game of career success. As in all games, we win some, we lose some. For me personally, the most meaningful part of ethnography has not been a professional end goal; it has been human connection. In my experience, personal interviews are a platform like none other to delve into other people’s perspectives, values, and even, sometimes, their hearts. When I teach Introduction to Folklore, I find, increasingly, that students struggle with making these kinds of connections with other people, especially in person, as opposed to a

digital medium. I tell students that I do not expect that any of them will become folklorists after taking Folklore 101, but I do hope to give each of them a tool kit to take with them in other career paths and life in general. This is a tool kit for deep listening, asking questions, and paying attention in the world. Some students surprise themselves; they thought they really knew their grandmothers or friends, or what leatherworking is all about. They begin the interview process for a class project, and they learn entirely new stories about people and topics they thought they knew.

Not unlike my students, I thought I had a good grasp on ethnography. I thought I could separate my scholarly and personal voices—to be authoritative with my analysis and yet reflexively human in my subjectivity. Hufford writes how tempting it can be for a scholar to pretend that his or her opinion is authoritative simply because he or she happens to be an academic (74). After all, we certainly have our biases. Hufford writes that "in addition to the pursuit of truth we are in pursuit of tenure, promotion, prestige, reassurance, personal affirmation, empowerment, and so forth" (64). To be truly honest about our scholarly and personal voices, we must admit our limitations and become comfortable with uncertainty. My experience documenting the St. John's Ukulele Club brought me right to the edge of that uncertainty. How could I document this group with any authority even as it revealed to me my own wounds? How could I be a scholar at all if I could not write objective ethnography?

The St. John's Ukulele Club taught me that if there is not a place we can go, a thing we can do, where being ourselves is enough, we will go mad trying to feel good about ourselves by performance alone. We must find places where we are loved in the midst of honest imperfection. I do not mean to essentialise the St. John's Ukulele Club as a utopia of unconditional acceptance. I am certain that it is many things for many people. I know that if I were a professional musician,

a ukulele player, an ethnomusicologist, or even a regular member of the club, my experience would have been different. I would have become a perfectionist about musical quality, or more analytical about social interaction. Paradoxically, I think it is *because* I did not become a musician like so many others in my family, that I was *able* to have the kind of meaningful experience I did at the St. John's Ukulele Club. The option of valued, imperfect participation was available to me, and I took it.

I do not believe that all music is joyful. Certainly not all music invites participation. The St. John's Ukulele Club, however, offers both. I have no doubt that different people will experience the group and its musics differently. Some might strongly dislike the ukulele or the particular genres they play. These too, I recognize, may play a role in my perceptions of accessibility or what is meaningful. I still think that there is something valuable—perhaps profoundly so—about people getting together to make music and share it with others in love. Maryanna told me, "I think all people should learn to play the ukulele" (Maryanna Mar.). If playing the ukulele, or at least becoming involved with a group that does, means sharing laughter and bringing light into the world, then I agree with her. Maybe I should buy a ukulele too.

Conclusion

I made a conscious decision not to pursue music professionally because of my emotional baggage toward my family. When I study my family's faith, I avoid (some) potential emotional baggage by avoiding a discussion of music. Not all fieldwork is of our choosing, and being assigned to observe the St. John's Ukulele Club brought me face-to-face with some of my deepest discomfort. I could not have predicted the emotions that it would spark in me, or the way in which it would connect with my other research. Sunstein and Chisari-Strater (2011) ask

fieldworkers to address what surprises, intrigues and disturbs them when they write ethnography. In my case, it was disturbance that made me a more vulnerable observer than I have ever been.

Notes

[1] Thanks to Jillian Gould's Advanced Ethnography class, Maile Graham-Laidlaw, Molly McBride, and Hadi Milanloo for their feedback on this paper.

[2] St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

[3] I use this word to refer to Christian traditions that believe in gifts granted by the Holy Spirit. In the case of this particular community, this might mean speaking in tongues, or it might mean gifts of prophecy or spiritual knowledge. Music facilitated heightened emotions in these services, which contributed to the expression of these gifts and, thus, proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

[4] This was in contrast to the St. John's Ukulele Orchestra, which Marianna laughingly described as "a cult." This was the group that did public performances, in contrast to this group which met for informal practices.

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Healing Music, Healing Mothers: An Auto Ethnographical Journey of a Foster Parent Using Music for Therapeutic Care Children

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Abstract

Remember that iconic image from the ‘50s and ‘60s of mom holding baby in a rocking chair and singing? That image embodied safety, security, comfort, healing, love, and a sense of home for several generations. Lullabies were a common part of soothing children at bedtime or during illness. Those women were just being moms. And yet, perhaps they were doing much more than soothing those babies. Now, science and technology are validating what moms already knew. Music affects the brain and the heart, both literally and metaphorically. Music can be a positive influence for all children, but can be an especially healing influence on those recovering from trauma. It can be an educational, psychological, and healing tool. While science is beginning to verify that music has a healing effect on medical and emotional damage to body, mind, and heart, mothers have instinctively been using it to foster social and emotional healing. We have many (too many) damaged and broken children in America today. They silently slip between the cracks in a system which caters to stressed budgets and broken legislation. Most have experienced abuse and neglect that has fractured their minds, bodies and spirits. Mothering with music effectively changes and heals children who have experienced trauma.

Mothering as a Healing Art

Mothering is more than giving birth to a child, or raising a child with love and protection, or the legal responsibility of caretaking. It has also been called an “art.” The word “mother” is used as an adjective, noun, and verb, and embodies the characteristics of affection. As Sara Ruddick proclaimed in “Maternal Thinking,” as early as 1989, mothering need not refer to a female. Or, as Martha Joy Rose states in her thesis on mothering and motherness, “mothering has historically been enacted by women, but in the twenty-first century, *birth* via a man (a male-mother as in the case of a trans man) is not unheard of, and perhaps in the future things like artificial wombs will continue to blur the boundaries.” The intention here is to point out that we are defining mothering beyond gendered limitations. Such is the case in Ruddick and Rose’s

analysis. For the purposes of this paper we are including an expansive definition of mothering, including but not limited to, other mothers, adoption, caregiving etc. (Rose 29).

Mothering can be very different for people in different situations and societies, and has been undervalued as a healing strategy. In America, we have the folk remedies of mother's chicken soup healing colds, or a kiss healing a "boo-boo," perhaps because mothering is also a form of healing. In a Nursing as Caring subheading of the dictionary entry on "motherhood" on Dictionary.com which includes an excerpt from *Nursing As Caring - A Brief Overview of The Theory of Nursing As Caring* ,"Anne Boykin and Savina Schoenhofer state: "Nursing has long been associated with the idea of mothering, when mothering is understood as nurturing the personhood of another." Mothers have long been healing children, not just by nurturing and nursing, but by engaging with music. Remember that iconic image from the '50s of a mother rocking baby and singing? That image embodied safety, security, comfort, healing, love, and a sense of home. Lullabies were and still are a common way to soothe children at bedtime, and a way for mothers to engage with music, using it to comfort and teach. While what we sing may or may not matter (a nonsense piece, an ABC song or an operatic solo), the close proximity, the sound, and the repetition all play a role.

We know, and history tells us, that sound is important from prenatal experiences to educational and medical uses. Indigenous people worldwide use drums, rattles, and chants for healing purposes, from Native Americans to Tibetan monks. Likewise premature babies thrive when relaxing music is played. In a study from Utah Bally Regional Medical Center, two 20-minute doses of vocal lullaby tapes each day slowed preemies' heart rates and increased the amounts of formula and oxygen they took in. Any song with a soothing melody and steady rhythm can calm a colicky or teething baby, says Rosalie Pratt, a music professor at Brigham

Young University who oversaw the research. Instrumental music is soothing, but a human voice will make babies feel more secure. “A parent's voice is best,” says Pratt, “even if you can't carry a tune or...make up the lyrics” (Cordes). In southwestern Virginia, I studied the private journals of pregnant mothers in Lamaze class. Every woman independently recognized that sound was important. All commented that their fetuses reacted to sound and music, and they spoke to and sang to them in utero, played music, and documented reactions. They assumed they could hear them, and they could. “As early as the second trimester of human development, children can hear...their mother’s heartbeat, digestive system, and voice vibrations. Even the sounds outside the womb entered into an unborn child’s ears – human laughter, dogs barking, traffic, conversations” (Shenfield).

In fact, music has been identified as a healing phenomenon throughout history. “In the Middle Ages, the study of music became a mandatory part of a physician's education...In his book *Awakenings*, neurologist Oliver Sacks writes of patients who went from being catatonic to fully functional when music was added to their environment” (Janis). While the medicinal and neurological treatment “awakened them, it was music which helped them to move, Using music for healing has been explored by physicians, philosophers, music therapists and psychologists. Now, in 2016, music therapy and the acts of creating, performing, moving to, or listening to music are educational, psychological, and physical tools for trauma recovery. While science has been verifying music’s healing effect on medical and emotional damage, mothers have long been using it to foster social and emotional healing. I am a mother. I am not a psychologist, social worker, music therapist, or musician. My work using music in mothering-to-heal is anecdotal and not officially therapeutic from a scientific point of view. I use music simply because music soothed me through a long, painful recovery. Later, I adapted that tool as a teacher,

administrator, and therapeutic level foster parent since the 1990's in Central New York. I worked for a national children's charity in a residential therapeutic center for severely abused children. I fostered traumatized children in my home and adopted one. Fostering and adopting neglected or abused children is a path to motherhood that is often misunderstood. In America, these mothers and children may be constrained by social, educational, cultural, government and religious cultural expectations, and must negotiate and resist constraints and assumptions. These include assumptions about parenting and relationships with birth parents, assumptions about financials, and assumptions about needs. Many of the therapeutic-level children suffer from physical, emotional and mental problems that require medical, psychological, or spiritual support. They are not "easy" children to mother. Motherhood means advocacy, education, healing and building societal bridges. It may mean constant conflict with family, peers, authority figures, academic and social failure, or socially inappropriate behaviors. It may mean a bankrupting stream of medical professionals, evaluations, and therapies. It may include post-adoption visits with the very birth parents that traumatize the children.

Mothering children with medical and emotional damage requires more than mainstream beliefs. It requires another level of personal soul searching. Mothering to foster children who require social and emotional healing of PTSD, starvation, effects of poverty or pre-natal drug abuse, physical or sexual abuse and degradation is a different commitment than loving, feeding, clothing and raising a child. Often, adoptive mothers hear, "No child comes with a guarantee at birth." Truly, any child may fall into societal traps or face medical challenges. But children adopted from long-term therapeutic foster care are guaranteed to have deeper wounds that may or may not heal. The harsh reality is that we have too many broken children in America; abuse and neglect has fractured their minds, bodies and spirits. These children are often misdiagnosed

or overmedicated. Schools are quick to label them, but youth suffering from PTSD or anxiety often demonstrate physical, emotional or social behaviors that mimic other symptoms or are triggered by invisible sounds, smells, words, sights or actions. Their symptoms even mimic the same symptoms as ADHD, autism and Asperger's Syndrome. The difference is that they are environmentally specific. Someone with any of those medical conditions, such as ADHD, cannot turn it off. Schools and other institutions and professional environments have yet to catch up with trauma-informed care, and therefore do not recognize or respond to it. Children from multi-generational poverty or abusive environments often don't respond to typical motivations. They silently slip between the cracks in a system catering to stressed budgets and broken legislation which is inconsistent in responding to children's needs and rights. As therapeutic foster parents, we worked with multiple agencies and facilities, and children improved in our home. We adopted one. As a mother, I loved them all, "mothering" them, and providing food, clothing, safety, and security. I met needs. But the biggest differences emerged when I used music and meditation as strategic tools.

Music evokes memories, emotions, and energy. In his book Musicophillia, Oliver Sachs describes the "Inexpressible depth of music," as identified by the composer Schopenhaur who wrote that music is "so easy to t understand and yet so inexplicable, is due to the fact that it reproduces all the emotions of our inner most being." (Preface, page xii Musicophillia). He goes on to explain how "listening to music is not just auditory and emotional, it is motoric as well: 'We listen to music with our muscles' as Nietzsche wrote." (Preface, page xii Musicophillia). As any mother who has used the "clean up" song with a two-year old knows, a singsong tune can motivate kids to participate. Preschool teachers use such methods daily with kids who find it difficult to follow directions, by adding rhythm, making up simple tunes, or singing directions to

the tune of another song. I've always found certain music to be soothing, and other music effective for studying or writing. As a teacher, I explored music's effect on journal writing, and the effect musical components had on student writing. Music focused students and allowed them to explore ideas and express themselves. In fact, we used all kinds of music, from classical to punk, heavy metal to New Age, and jazz to Broadway. Students often related different feelings to different music. In my classroom, I used warning bells, chimes, and music to signal transition, and to calm and refocus after high-energy events. For example, when students entered my room, I often played music and they'd take their seats and respond to a journal prompt on the board. ~~Is~~ Sometimes they just listened. Five minutes before the end of class, I'd ring a bell, signaling that it was time to finish up and prepare to leave. Particularly after high activity such as coming into the classroom after physical education or lunch/recess, the quiet time was welcomed by the children (and eliminated my need to speak in commanding tones in order to quiet them down). Such transitions and warnings became equally important in mothering foster children.

As an educational speaker, I'm often asked about student challenges. Often it's the foster mother, not the educator, who identifies chronic trauma affecting students as an unrecognized factor from the educational perspective. Educators don't know how to respond to these students. Few schools train teachers in this. However, Joyce Dorado worked with San Francisco Unified School District through her "Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools" program. "While educators sometimes see a misbehaving child as a 'bad' or 'mean' or 'oppositional' kid, Joyce helps them to see a scared kid (whose) behavior is the result of chronic exposure to traumatic events" (Dorado). In addition to impacting behavior, trauma can wreak havoc on a student's ability to learn. Scientists have found that children "subjected repeatedly to

trauma suffer from other social, psychological, cognitive, and biological issues, including difficulty regulating emotions, paying attention, and forming relationships" (Dorado).

Dorado explains the effects of complex trauma as:

> a vinyl record. When a song is played again and again, a groove is worn into the record. If, when playing a different song, someone knocks the record player, the needle will skip across the record and land in the deepest groove, playing that song again. Even when you reach the end...sometimes the groove is so deep the needle skips back. Like a needle on a record player, complex trauma wears a groove in the brain. So when something non-threatening happens that reminds us of a traumatic incident, our bodies replay the traumatic reaction—mobilizing us to either run from or fight the threat, while shutting down other systems that help us think and reason. If this happens over and over, we become more easily triggered into that fear response mode, never giving our bodies time to recover. After awhile, as we adapt to this chronic triggering, our behavior can seem crazy or rude when taken out of the context of trauma...In a classroom, something as simple as the teacher raising his or her voice to get everyone's attention or accidentally getting bumped by another classmate can steer that child into this groove. When triggered, the child's out-of-proportion emotional and sometimes physical reaction often makes no sense whatsoever to the teacher, making it difficult for the teacher to respond appropriately (Dorado).

Educators can mitigate the effects. Dorado recommends that teachers create calm, predictable transitions between activities, which often "trigger a student into survival mode. That feeling of "uh oh, what's going to happen next" can be highly associated with a situation at home where a child's happy, loving daddy can, without warning, turn into a monster. Some teachers

will play music or ring a meditation bell or blow a harmonica to signal transition. The important thing is to build a routine around transitions so that children know: a) what the transition is going to look like, b) what they're supposed to be doing, and c) what's next" (Dorado).

As I worked with children like these, I sought to relate to childhoods which bore little resemblance to my upper middle class upbringing. Though traumatized, these children are neither weak nor victims. These are survivors, with strength and resilience. They size up adults quickly and lash out first before you, like other "caretakers," hurt them. They are smart, strong and resourceful. What they lack are resources. When music becomes a resource, it brings educational, social, psychological, emotional, and physical benefits.

At one facility, I met Kim Draheim, who has had a 25-year residential care career. Incidentally, Draheim is male. As previously stated at the beginning of this paper, the act of mothering is not viewed as gender-specific to a female. Single fathers and male caregivers also 'mother' these children by nurturing, healing, and elevating these children to a place where they can find their voice and move forward successfully. Teachers, nurses, daycare providers and other care-giving professionals (male or female) mother children daily. Draheim is also a rock musician, first with Static Cling (25 years) and currently with Infrared Radiation Orchestra. At the Center's school, as part of an extracurricular attempt to reach youth, he turned to his own passion: rock music. Now labeled a recreation specialist, music-making is 40% of his job, but 100% of his success in empowering youth. Draheim chokes up telling stories about *his* kids, and his Youth Voice Band performs throughout New York. His stories include the young man who refused even to speak, who'd never played an instrument, but picked up a guitar, and is now a music major in college, to the one who couldn't read music but improvised by ear and is now featured in his school's jazz band.

Originally he taught kids to play well-known songs on instruments. That evolved when Draheim listened to one boy's criticism: "You're doing it wrong. Instruments are great, but help us make our own music that expresses our thoughts and feelings." He followed the boy's advice. Four months later, they recorded their first album. Draheim notes:

> The way youth engage with music varies; some are never going to play again, but while in therapy or care, they found respite, escape or a way to express themselves and gained experience. Some will be musicians the rest of their lives. Some are finding their voice, literally and figuratively, by expressing themselves artistically and expressing emotions in a healthy way.

Although Draheim is not a music therapist, he uses music as a therapeutic aid to healing and nurturing.

Psychologically, songwriting with kids from traumatic backgrounds "is about the real stuff," says Draheim. "Sometimes lyrics are a gifted poet's contribution; sometimes multiple kids contribute, but all songs are kid-generated." The titles on their recent CD aren't preteen pop in nature; instead, "Christmas in a Place That Isn't Home," written by a child in care for 8 years, is poignant and sobering. "I'm Gonna Be Me" expresses the frustration of a young man forced to be someone he isn't. Song titles like "Can You See Who We Are?," "The Misunderstood," and "Monster" reflect their reality (Draheim). As these children find their voice through music and lyrics, they heal and learn in a way that allows them to embody their strengths and vent their frustrations. The less formal aspect of the experience presents them with a new level of freedom and empowerment that is conducive to healing.

Like Draheim, we found lyrics were a key breakthrough while fostering "Lizzie," a wild child with deep-rooted anger, who felt unsafe and angry at adults who "lie and don't take care of

children." We began using all types of music to decompress after school and home visits, and as a privacy option when people "got on her nerves." She gravitated to different styles depending on mood and emotional upset. Eventually instrumental music combined with nature sounds soothed her, along with movie soundtracks that told a story. Like Draheim's children, the lyrics resonated with her experiences. Initially she couldn't stop escalating behavior, but once I realized her need for control, I made her quiet time and choice of music her decision. Her behaviors escalated when she perceived control was in adult hands, and she has become a master manipulator. Eventually she began to value her control, deciding when to meditate, and regaining balance, self-control, emotional control (or release), and privacy. She couldn't invoke a decision to meditate in order to escape a reprimand or consequence, but could recognize and avoid a situation heading in that direction. Respect and privacy, empowerment, control and decision-making, and praise for her choices, were new to Lizzie. We also shared stories set to her choice of quiet, soothing music (she could neither fall nor stay asleep) and eventually eliminated sleep medications. But it was words and lyrics that broke through to her. After school, transition time helped her decompress from social stresses; she'd color, write and draw to music, selecting lyrics about strength, control, survival and family. Supervised family visits were an emotional vortex, and post-visit readjustments were an emotional tight wire; for these transitions, we chose music with reassuring lyrics. Often though, music was a mirror of her own emotions. If she was angry, she chose loud, raw music about fighting. If she was hurt, gentle, peaceful, quiet sounds with no lyrics. But she literally found her voice through singing, began copying lyrics, then writing her own words, and finally using her voice to talk through problems, confess information, talk about what she had hurt or confused her. It was ultimately lyrics that led to her greatest breakthroughs.

Draheim discovered, as did I, that lyrics were a positive tool. “Studies suggest that exposure to pro-social lyrics increases positive thought, empathy, and helping behavior. The message in a lyric...may be able to reach more people than all of the psychotherapists in the world combined” (Friedman). Whether in a band or a family, music is a connecting experience that builds relationships and communication. Research clearly demonstrates that improved social connection and support can improve mental health outcomes. Thus, any music that helps connect people can have a profound impact on an individual’s mental health (Friedman). Our anecdotal mothering experiences indicate we can use music to evoke, induce or control mood and emotion. We know memory improves when people are in a positive mood, ”(Thaut and McIntosh) and “we might someday use music to retrain emotional and psychosocial competence—not in the traditional music therapy sense of improving well-being, but rather as a functional goal in cognitive ability” (Thaut and McIntosh).

Music also brings a social benefit, which Draheim calls “the cool factor: when they go from being nobody to lead guitar in a rock band. Often, these kids are suddenly faced with their first chance to be ‘cool’ when others notice their talent; they finally feel they have something to offer.” Listening to music is also tied to identity: their likes, dislikes, trends, and way of dressing can be tied to music preferences. So beyond that social status, he notes, “There’s also a sense of camaraderie in working together as part of a band and belonging to the team. Kids learn to respect musical talents and each other. They begin to relate to each other. They discover a new, improved identity through the creative act of making music, and the pride of ‘I created this.’ It’s real.” As one boy told Draheim, I “can hold on to this for the rest of my life.”

In my experience, music always impacts behavior. We found it worked with every child placed with us. Draheim found it worked in residential care. “Residential youth are often labeled

antisocial, but it gives them an outlet," notes Draheim. Kids learn that to participate in his music program is a privilege and responsibility. Behavior simply improves "because they're happy. They're able to express what's inside, and it's fulfilling, so they don't need to be aggressive." Oliver Sachs identifies this and suggests that, "much of what is heard during one's early years may be "engraved" on the brain for the rest of one's life." (same page as previous citation). The acts of creating, performing, moving to, or listening to music can be considered paths for healing if only for the reason that it is a resource given to kids who have had none. Whether listening to or creating music, children do not need talent; they need an emotional outlet tailored to their specific needs.

However, music is not a miracle cure for them, but rather a step forward on a healing path. Often behaviors will regress. Draheim tells of a drummer who had been doing well until a classroom rampage that left the classroom and its furniture and computers demolished. When asked why he became violent, the boy said he chose to hit computers instead of people. However, he took responsibility, made restitution, and continued to attend rehearsals He believed he would not be allowed to perform, but he knew the band needed a drummer for practice. Draheim asked him, "Six months ago this wouldn't have happened. What's changed?" The boy answered: "I have." And so he had, by showing that although he had been unable to control his emotional reaction, he had grown enough to take responsibility for his actions and didn't want to let his bandmates down.

As most of us know, music makes you feel good. Period music from our youth makes us nostalgic. Memories are associated with songs. In my experience, teens and angry youth initially prefer harsher, more discordant music. They have told me it mirrors their internal feelings of

upheaval and anger and resentment. Just because it's not meditative music does not mean it isn't soothing. It's a very individualized perception and reaction.

The act of making music can be nurturing because the act of making music is self-soothing. Draheim says "music can be a path to change a proclivity from a negative choice, such as resorting to violence, to a positive source of soothing." Often kids, when they feel bad, turn to destructive or socially unacceptable options. Learning to turn to something that feels good-like playing a guitar- is a new, powerful lesson. In a situation where the fight or flight response has been triggered but cannot be acted upon, music can provide an appropriate release. Music puts us in touch with our emotions, and laughing or crying are forms of release. "Learning to run toward something that feels good or to pull out of that bad feeling" is a new internal emotional resource for these troubled youth, according to Draheim. It's also a defense or escape mechanism that's socially acceptable. "I try," says Draheim, "to foster that when you're down, you play music, rather than turn to violence. I like to think I'm not just teaching them to play instruments. I'm infecting them with a love of music that's nurturing, fulfilling, soothing in many ways, and like a virus, they can't get rid of it."

Janet Cook identified in her 1981 article *The Therapeutic Use of Music: A Literature Review* that, "music as a healing tool has been used throughout history." (Cook) Some scientific studies have identified the ways in which the brain is impacted by music. One Stanford Medicine study found that "Music moves the brain to pay attention." For example, "The research team showed that music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying attention, making predictions, and updating the event in memory." (Baker). Studies have also demonstrated that infants in utero are also impacted by auditory signals (Skwarecki). However, much more work remains to be done to quantify the neurological, psychological and psychiatric effects for the

therapeutic effect of music on foster youth.

Informal programs like Draheim's continue to provide qualitative success. One 2012 online article in Parenting Magazine explored an Austin, Texas program, Kids in a New Groove, which connects foster children and music. Founded by Karyn Scott, the program provides music lessons to foster children recommended by foster parents, court-appointed advocates, or Child Protective Services. The children learn skills, develop focus, "and a sense of self-worth." Scott recognized "an unfulfilled need" and the opportunity for "a one-on- one mentorship between teacher and student." Mentors have a different relationship than teachers do; they nurture their students in a one-on-one way more like mothering than teaching in the bond it creates Music," she notes, "is a nonverbal positive influence for kids in foster care. It can help break through barriers and help them trust an adult...(for) kids who have behavior problems at school or in foster homes, music motivates them" (Villalpando).

Religious and spiritual healing can also be considered for their healing properties as well. Foster motherhood often means advocacy and education, as well as healing and building societal or cultural bridges. Often addressing lifestyle traditions or ethnic differences in food, language, and ways of living must be considered as well. Healing help for these children, when their spirits have been broken, can be a difficult and painful journey. Mothering children with medical and emotional damage to body, mind, and heart requires more than mainstream religious beliefs; it requires personal soul-searching which often challenges and can force a foster parent to put aside previously held beliefs and tenets.

As a parent, I expect a baby to cry when they wake from their nap. But an infant who was neglected and never removed from their bed does not cry when they wake. That infant does not cry because there is no expectation-no FAITH- that the adult will come to pick them up and care

for them. It's a deafening silence for a parent who understands why that infant is silent when another baby would scream. Children suffering from physical, emotional and mental problems require additional medical, physical, and emotional support from their mothers. They aren't "easy" to mother, or sometimes even to love, because healing isn't linear, but cyclical.

I chose to adopt my child after four years of fostering him. I had no idea what to expect when it came to the long-term damage he'd experienced which manifests itself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I have had to re-examine every previously held belief: religious, spiritual, and even meta-physical. Music is one of the only things that has offered consistent reprieve and healing for both of us.

Parents often undergo a change in their own spiritual beliefs (as opposed to religious beliefs). These children may explore several established religious structures or attend one church. But often their inner spiritual search calls for more than a societal religious structure and more of an internal philosophy and personal source of faith, hope and strength. When birth parents have not provided the safety and basic needs, a patriarchal or matriarchal religious figure does not automatically comfort the child. Our search for meaning and significance in life changes, our approach to relationships changes when we have to support and work with the abusers who harmed these children, our perspective on why bad and good things happen can change when the abusers have more legal rights as birth parents than the children have as victims. My spiritual beliefs were re-examined and evolved by travelling this path and by having this different experience. All that matters is that my child finds a source of faith and comfort and finds a way to believe in something greater than us. It no longer matters if he goes to church each week. It matters that he has the inner fortitude to visit with his birth parents (per court mandates) when that retriggers his PTSD and anxiety and causes night terrors. You cannot see, hear and live with

the atrocities that have happened to children like any of the many children I've worked with or fostered without comparing their experiences with a child who was mothered in an environment of love, comfort, and safety.

For many, religion is a source of comfort, with repetition, rituals, hymns and prayers. Religions around the world have long recognized that music relaxes and heals. From the mantras of monks to prayers sung in the Catholic Church, music is part of a sacred healing structure. For youth who are jaded, repetition and routine can be comforting, but spirituality may be more important than organized religion. Let me add that I believe in organized religion. But my experience is that religion is based upon a community of people who share similar experiences and beliefs based on similar moral codes. To believe, one must have faith. These children aren't quick to believe blindly, seek comfort in benevolent authority figures, or respond to a heaven/hell dichotomy. Often before these children of trauma can take comfort in religion, they need to develop the "internal feeling that there is something more...Spirituality results when one's faith has been activated." (Patheos) In my experience, fostering faith first, through basic needs, then emotional, prior to religion has been important. Fostering spirituality, instead, is an act of nurturing and mothering. Giving them control over their body, mind and spirit, while finding safety in routine and repetition are key. Regardless of our own background or beliefs.

I have found that as a mother, it is my job to help my son explore faith, respect, and strength as concepts. But I also need to guide him in the discovery of finding peace—something he has no familiarity with-- before he can learn to be peaceful. Meditation and music can be a spiritual bridge to both religion and healing. Music can enhance children's ability to meditate, attend classes, and explore quiet time. My children (fostered and adopted) and I have tried various medication classes: some were guided (recorded or live), some were informal, and some

informal. Like music, the meditation had to mirror the children's needs. We experimented with styles, moods, music, and exercise. I have used gongs, drumming, rock and jazz, multi-cultural compilations and stories, depending on whether we needed to stimulate, calm, heal, or escape. Two things always happened: first, the children picked music based on the need triggered. Secondly, they did so voluntarily. If they became upset or lost control, they could escape. They sought out the opportunity to decompress, release negative emotions, and seek healing. They transitioned from slamming doors to calmly turning on music. They gained self-control, self-awareness, healing, and found comfort in music. I admit to bias-I originally thought all youth would accept meditative music as a soothing influence. I was wrong. It doesn't matter what kind of music the children used. In fact, we encouraged exploration of all types with humor, but inevitably found that even the most severe ADHD youth would find their own type. Children left our home with the CD that was best for them. The music was as individualized and unique as the children themselves.

Mothers are already using music to foster social and emotional healing. However, it would be naive to think that music and love are enough to heal these children. And we must not equate healing with permanent change (although transition occurs). In my experience, even without formal therapy, therapeutic mothering with music can effectively change children who experienced trauma. It doesn't matter what sound or music is used. In my own meditation studio, I have found that classical and meditative music can help improve test scores, decrease learning time, improve memorization, synchronize brain hemispheres, improve clarity and critical thinking skills, or achieve deeper sleep. My students report decreased insomnia, increased focus and achievement, in academics, work and life, and fewer headaches. For exercise-based

meditations, or physical or emotional release of negative emotions, fast, modern rock or alternative music can serve as a safe release.

We were often asked by professionals in charge of foster children, whether we had a magic wand. This was because they placed the most severe cases in our home as a "last chance" and we always seem to get positive results. I used to think love would make the difference. Now I think it was the music that made a difference, along with many other supports, of course, but the influence of music on the physical, mental and emotional changes in these children cannot be ignored. Neurological research demonstrates that music has positive effects on both the body and brain. We know that it can positively affect mood disorders (Raglio et al.). It can also produce direct biological changes, such as reducing heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels (Friedman). In the PBS documentary, "The Healing Power of Music," Spencer Michels reports on the power and versatility of music therapy in medical settings, but the difficulty of quantifying its effectiveness. He states that "when former U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords returned to Washington for (a) State of the Union address...she had made a dramatic recovery after being shot in the head. Her family credits music therapy for helping to get her voice back. While much more research on the neurological effects of music therapy is needed, what is known, is that listening to music activates multiple regions in the brain. And scientists say the brain responds to music by creating new pathways around damaged areas. Michels noted, "music is now being used to help patients with a wide variety of illnesses (and)...a growing number of studies do suggest music can aid healing in various ways. One recent scientific paper out of Harvard showed music therapy helped stroke patients regain speech...other studies found music may improve heart and respiratory rates and blood pressure, as well as anxiety and pain." The article *Effects of Music and Music Therapy on Mood in Neurological Patients,* as previously cited, also

corroborates evidence that music may potentially effect a wide variety of illnesses, including epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson's disease (Raglio et al.).

Music can even help youth with ADHD. According to Dr. Tali Shenfield, "In 1985, half a million children were diagnosed with ADHD. Today, that...has increased to between five and seven million." Schools in particular are quick to label any child with focus, eye contact, or learning issues. Regardless, music appears to be a solution.

> When music is played, it produces a... neuro-feedback loop...Playing a musical instrument requires three motor control functions: Sequencing, Spatial organization...and Timing. Music can spark the synapses, increasing the brain's dopamine levels. It is this...that is responsible for motivation, working memory and attention regulation. ADHD brains have low levels of dopamine. However, listening to music increases dopamine levels, and can help...patients to better function (Shenfield).

Music therapy was developed by psychologists at the University of Michigan in the mid- 1940s "...to treat war veterans suffering from psychological issues such as PTSD" (Shenfield). It also works when applied to ADHD, because kids thrive on structure and routine. "Music has structure, and ADHD minds need...structure to go through the daily activities of life. Music gives them...organization to help them strategize, forestall and respond to the things around them" (Shenfield). According to music therapists, certain tones, rhythms, and vibrations can help treat medical and behavioral problems.

"Brigham Young researchers found that when...kids with ADHD listened to three 40-minute recordings of classical music a week, their brain waves moved to higher levels that allowed them to focus more...70 percent continued to show improvement six months later."

Rhythmic music can help kids without ADHD settle down, too. Don Campbell, author of The Mozart Effect, says “rhythm is perceived differently by the brain, so kids are more attentive when you say things musically” (Cordes). While Campbell’s original research was sometimes misconstrued, it is now widely recognized that music does affect brain development and it is being explored in healing Traumatic Brain Injury survivors. Music also can activate the attention network on both sides of the brain, which can help overcome attention problems (Thaut and McIntosh). Music influences mood, reduces impulsiveness and restlessness, and alleviates anxiety and stress (Shenfield). All of these are traits of kids with ADHD or PTSD.

Some experts in the field are even questioning whether music also heals emotional suffering. According to Dr. Mike Friedman the evidence suggests it does.

> Research says yes. We now know through controlled treatment outcome studies that listening to and playing music is a potent treatment for mental health issues. Research demonstrates that adding music therapy to treatment improves symptoms and social functioning (and) demonstrated efficacy as an independent treatment for reducing depression, anxiety and chronic pain” (Friedman).

This proves true in my own experience. My adopted son’s overcome a tremendous amount of neglect and trauma, but is still triggered by different stressors. His stress level determines which music he chooses to play. He is now 10, but even as young as age 5, his choices ranged between Steven Tyler’s screams to soft meditation music sung in Hindi. The more stressed he is, the quieter the music. The happier he is, even if angry, the more he leans toward rock music that he will sing.

Researchers are discovering how music affects the brain, helping us to make sense of its emotional and social power. Music impacts us in ways that other sounds do not, and “...using

MRI technology, they're discovering why music can inspire such strong feelings and bind us tightly to other people" (Suttie).

"Music affects deep emotional centers in the brain," says Valorie Salimpoor, a neuroscientist at McGill University. "Basically, when people listen to music with a familiar beat, they anticipate emotional peaks and enjoy it more." In many cases, teaching these children of trauma to anticipate emotional peaks is a key part of teaching them to control those same emotions. The dopamine release comes from having their predictions confirmed; this combination of anticipation and intense emotional release" may explain why people love music, yet have different tastes (Suttie). Ed Large, a music psychologist at University of Connecticut, agrees that music releases powerful emotions. He studies how variations in dynamics—slowing or speeding up rhythm, or softer and louder sounds resonate in the brain, affecting emotional response. He identified that musical rhythms directly affect brain rhythms, and brain rhythms are responsible for how you feel. That's why when people gather and hear the same music, it's a shared emotional experience (Suttie). Your brain literally synchronizes with the music. Perhaps that's why we were able to help our kids slow down their emotional reactions.

Rhythm and those dynamics were a key part of mothering "Daniel" with music. He was a brain- injured teenager with OCD, ADHD, and other issues. Though his home was stable, his single mom needed a break. When placed in weekend respite care, he was angry, volatile, had allegedly harmed others, and had developed a fire fascination. He could not watch TV without pacing in circles after three minutes. He had emotions, hormones, and pent-up energy in body and mind. Add the social, academic, and physical stresses of teen life, and he was pushing the limits of society and authority figures. He had frantic bursts of speed, so I began with rhythm. We kept a steady pace while walking, hiking, and geocaching, listening to music in order to set

that pace, and always giving him something to do with hands and feet simultaneously. We had one rule: keep a steady pace—no lagging behind or running ahead. He was responsible for walking the dog and throwing balls. Since I had a younger child in the house, it was necessary to impose a nap-time, so Daniel lay on his bed, listening to music while tossing a ball to the beat, slowing him down, and giving him an activity that was a repetitive break from pacing. He began opting for quiet time outside of nap-time. I focused on turning "things that made him different into strengths as we sought rhythm- based activities. I taught him golf, which requires a steady rhythm, not too fast or slow. He struggled until I taught him to sing a version of Johann Strauss' Blue Danube waltz while swinging, and found that the rhythm of his swing, timed to that tune, was not too fast or slow. He made the golf team, playing in tournaments and gaining peer acceptance.

So while mothers know music can be a positive influence for children, foster mothers and other mothering caregivers know it can be an educational, psychological, and healing tool for kids recovering from trauma. While science is beginning to verify music's healing effect, mothers are already using it to foster social and emotional healing. "Scientists need ... to pay more attention to research that will benefit children, and to focus on disorders in which neurologic music therapy lacks rigorous study so far" (Thaut and McIntosh). Scientists, it seems, need to listen to their mothers.

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The Power of Singing during Pregnancy, Birth, and Postpartum

Amanda Mehl West

Abstract

This paper presents the idea of singing as a powerful tool to ease a woman's transition into motherhood. In pregnancy, the birthing process, and the postpartum period, the act of singing can bring physical calm, connection and empowerment to both mother and baby. Additionally, it can build trust and understanding between individuals (i.e. the mother and her baby, partner or birth assistant), or within a community (a mother's family, birth team, circle of friends, spiritual community, etc.). The transition into motherhood can be physically, mentally and emotionally challenging. Music counteracts these difficulties and acts as a pathway for liberation and healing by connecting mind, body and spirit, releasing endorphins, focusing thoughts, and forging deeper emotional and spiritual connections. As scientific research continues to demonstrate the physical, psychological and emotional benefits of singing, there is a growing field of birth professionals and women consciously using song to facilitate the transformation into motherhood. This paper surveys current world-wide work in the field including that of music therapists, midwives, doulas and educators. Additionally, examples are offered of stories in which the act of singing successfully supported women in their pregnancy, birth, and/or postpartum experience. Hope is expressed that increased awareness of the benefits of such singing will lead to its practice becoming readily accepted, supported, and simply commonplace.

Introduction

In the beginning of every human life a single cell divides into two, dividing again and again, soon forming an embryo with a tiny heartbeat, pulsing in rhythm to the music of life. "If you can walk you can dance, if you can talk you can sing," goes an old saying. Such creative expressions are an inherent part of our human birthright. It is only fitting, then, that singing and song offer a powerful tool during the time of life's beginning: a woman's transition through pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and into motherhood. This tool has been used for millennia in various ways to accompany women into motherhood, but is now blossoming in a renaissance of interest around the world.

For three years I have been co-leading prenatal singing circles in Santa Cruz, California. I am a musician by profession and my co-leader, Megan Jacobsmeyer, and I are both trained

doulas, as well as mothers. During our time leading these Womb Song circles we have witnessed firsthand again and again the power of music to inspire, uplift, connect, ground, and empower the women who employ its use. We had done minimal internet browsing on the subject and knew we were not alone in this work, but I wanted to take the next step and formalize the information now offered in this article. As with any topic of research, this one has felt like gazing into a microscope -- the closer one looks, the more there is to see. I have been inspired and amazed but not surprised by what I have found, for it is clear that this form of medicine (for that is what it becomes), should be offered in every woman's journey into motherhood.

The Magic of Singing Together

A National Public Radio story from July 2013 presents the findings of musicologist Bjorn Vickhoff who, along with his team from Sahlgrenska Academy in Sweden, measured and charted the changes in choir members' heartbeats as they sang. The researchers were surprised at just how quickly the singers' heartbeats united, as the tempo and phrasing of the music guided them into a shared rhythm. The synchronizing of these heart beats is one of the core elements in the power of shared music. Rituals around the world involve singing or chanting together. Consider most any church service, or something as simple as singing "Happy Birthday." Singing together allows participants to experience a momentary sense of unity. Researchers have recently discovered that the "fetal heart rate… changes with the physiological and psychological state of the mother" (Ivanov et al.). So as a singing mother comes into that experience of calm and connection with a greater whole, so too does her baby.

Origins

While song has been used throughout human history, the origins of modern day prenatal singing can be traced to France in the 1960s, and a French classical singer and vocal instructor

named Marie-Louise Aucher. Aucher developed an approach to singing she called "Psychophonie," and began to notice positive benefits in her pregnant students, extending into birth and the postpartum time (Potel, "Psychophonie in English"). In 1976, Aucher connected with a young Michael Odent, the now famous French physician, author of fifteen books, and leader in the field of obstetrics. Odent invited Aucher into the maternity unit of a French hospital where he was working at the time, and so began the first modern day weekly prenatal singing workshops. Odent believed that women give birth more easily in the company of people they feel comfortable with (Kitzinger 184), so he had the idea to include not only the pregnant women and their partners, but also the nurses and midwives at the hospital (Dawid). That same year a midwife trained by Aucher created a prenatal singing group at another maternity hospital, Les Lilas, near Paris, and these groups continue today (Potel, "Psychophonie in English").

Marie-Laure Potel, who also studied the Psychophonie method with Aucher and has worked musically with pregnant women for over twenty years, has written a book entirely devoted to the subject of prenatal singing titled *Le Chant Prenatal*, currently only available in French. Many prenatal singing groups continue in France today, and are gaining popularity in the rest of Europe and around the world. A simple internet search will uncover singing circles happening currently or within the last few years in Canada, Scotland, Australia, China, England and across the United States (Beaumont; Gil; Rich; Plourde; Vilar; Waldman; "Womb Song U.S.").

The internet offers an easy way for ideas to spread globally. Many of the online writings on this subject are from within the last few years, and many cite a single video for their inspiration: a woman, Temple Cundall, calmly singing with guitar and vocal harmony accompaniment by her husband, just before the home birth of their ten-pound son. This video,

uploaded in December 2007 and viewed well over two million times, was obviously influential for many of its viewers. In the last twenty years, with the advancement of technology and the ability to study fetal development and brain function, a huge amount of scientific research has been confirming what humans have instinctively known for thousands of years: music is a powerful medicine, and singing offers its most highly potent form. With the support of scientific research, more Western professionals are incorporating song into their work with prenatal, birthing, and postpartum women, as singing begins to play a more evidence-based and socially-embraced role in pregnancy, birth and new motherhood.

Pregnancy

> … learning to sing lullabies in pregnancy benefited women in terms of relaxation, in feeling closer to their infants, in connecting with other pregnant women and in providing an additional tool for communication in the early newborn period. Some women described profound feelings of love and connection with the unborn infant while singing the lullabies… it appears to be an enjoyable exercise for pregnant women and to have an effect on reducing maternal stress and encouraging infant attachment. (Carolan, M., et al.)

These were the key findings from The Limerick Lullaby Project, which studied the effects of singing on prenatal stress, and whose results were published in *Midwifery Today*, April 2012. Participants learned three lullabies through four group sessions with musicians and qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted approximately three months later to capture the women's experiences. The *Pre- and Perinatal Psychology Journal* published an article by Rosario Montemurro which told a similar story with similar results from a group of pregnant women in the village of Vilamarxant, Spain. They discovered "…a cascade of psychological

benefits [for the mothers.] …After their babies were born, the mothers who had sung to their unborn infants found themselves more proficient at calming their newborns…" (Montemurro). As both these studies demonstrate, prenatal singing can have a profound impact on women in numerous ways including: helping a mother tune into her body, encouraging and supporting mother-infant bonding, creating and offering a mental and emotional refuge, and reducing postpartum stress.

Prenatal singing offers a chance for a mother to learn how to breathe in rhythm and to consciously relax her muscles. Singing is done through a slow release of air, which automatically relaxes the body. Singing in tune and with ease also requires a relaxed jaw and throat (Bruser 68, 133). Many birth workers have made note of the correlation between the jaw/mouth and the perineum (Gaskin, Fletcher, Skoko). Ina May Gaskin, one of the most revered and well known midwives in America, approaches birth through something she calls "Sphincter Law," an understanding she and her team have developed through three decades of experiences with over two thousand births at The Farm Midwifery Center in Tennessee. In her book, *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, she writes,

> I noticed a strong connection between the sphincters of the mouth/throat and those of the cervix and yoni. A relaxed mouth means a more elastic cervix. Women whose mouths and throats are open and relaxed during labour and birth rarely need stitches after childbirth. … Most women can figure out how to relax their jaw more easily than their bottom…Singing will maximize the ability of the body's sphincters to open (178).

Another benefit of prenatal singing is that it strengthens communication channels between mother and baby, nourishing and supporting infant-mother bonding. Hearing is one of the first senses to develop, sometime between sixteen and twenty weeks. French physician

Alfred Tomatis extensively studied the ear, nose, and throat, working with many singers, and developed the field of Audio-Psycho-Phonology. One of his fundamental ideas was that "the fetal ear responds to sound and uses the energy it receives…to shape the developing nervous system and brain" (Prada ix). He was fascinated by the experience of listening and the profound implications it has upon fetal development and mother-infant bonding. Tomatis writes, "the vocal nourishment that the mother provides to her child is just as important to the child's development as her milk" (*The Conscious Ear* 132).

Sheila Kitzinger notes in *The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth* that the "…spectrograph of a baby's first cry can be matched with that of its mother's speech… The baby has been listening to its mother's voice and has learned her speech characteristics" (79). In an article called "The Two Way Umbilical Chord – Bonding with Your Baby Before Birth," obstetrician-gynecologist Shawn Tassone notes several other studies that demonstrate this same conclusion.

> There is a silent conversation born from the physical fusion between you and your baby during pregnancy—an unspoken communication that deepens as you journey together toward birth… Visualize the umbilical cord as a telephone wire that connects two receivers… communication goes both ways, and encompasses physical, emotional, and spiritual connection…. transmitted through emotion-borne hormones [that] can also physically alter the state of your baby within the womb, after birth, and beyond. (Tassone)

These ideas suggest that the mother's voice is extremely important in the development of a fetus. When a mother sings, her voice is amplified for her child in the womb, resonating

through the mother's bones and the amniotic fluid, offering an even more powerful aural/vocal connection with the fetus than the spoken voice alone.

Today in the western world it is commonly understood that a healthy diet is important for a healthy pregnancy. Historically, other cultures have included a concept of healthy surroundings, believing that what a woman sees, hears, feels, and thinks during pregnancy contributes to or subtracts from nourishment for a growing fetus. Giselle E. Whitwell, a board certified music therapist, trained childbirth educator, DONA (Doulas of North America) certified birth doula, and prenatal parenting instructor for over twenty- five years, offers further details. As the website for her organization, The Center for Prenatal and Perinatal Music, explains:

> The Chinese had their Tranquility Centers, where mothers were encouraged to walk by the banks of the rivers to maintain their peace and serenity. The Hindus believed that mothers should be taught to transfer their thoughts to the fetus. Specially trained teachers shared this philosophy and gave mothers the necessary techniques in locations called Thought Rooms. Likewise, in Japan… it was believed that the voices of the parents and extended family, their thoughts and feelings had an influence on the fetus; all disharmonious sounds were avoided…

Considering this, Whitwell writes that, "Music, because of its nature and qualities, is most suitable for the task of nurturing the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development of the unborn baby."

Beyond the physical experience of singing, lyrics and melodies of a song can offer benefits as mental and emotional refuge. The 2014 documentary *Alive Inside* exploring the profound effects of music on patients with Alzheimer's and dementia, demonstrates the power of music to connect us to other times and places, even other parts of ourselves. When singing is

consciously and intentionally practiced during pregnancy in a relaxing and supportive environment, that space and presence created can be returned to during birth and postpartum, through song. It is as if the songs become a wormhole in time. As one graduate from Womb Song U.S. commented about her birth:

> One moment in particular I was feeling that I couldn't take anymore and my whole body seemed to be coming apart...as I listened to the "Hollow Bamboo" song and went back to the circle of women in my mind, I found my place of strength again and was able to make it through… (Maggie).

The benefits of prenatal singing extend not only into birthing but also into the postpartum period. In the research for her master's thesis from Florida State University College of Music, Candice Sirak discovered that singing prenatally affected the mother's perception of infant temperament: infants who were sung to during pregnancy were perceived to be calmer overall than infants who were not sung to. Whether this was because the infants were in fact calmer, or because the mothers were calmer and thus more available to attend to the needs of their infant, the results are the same: prenatal singing reduced postpartum stress levels for both mother and child.

Birth

"Things were not progressing so my Doula put on the Grease soundtrack. The entire room was singing and I felt it really helped put me at ease and back on course" (Lifeplustwins). The benefits of singing during birth all contribute in one way or another towards increasing a labouring woman's comfort, and reducing her experience of pain. Easing pain during birth makes for a more relaxed body, which makes for an easier labour, which makes for less pain, and the positive cycle continues (Simpkin, *The Birth Partner* 121). Music Therapist and founder of

SoundBirthing prenatal program Mary DiCamillo explains that during birth music can "… cue rhythmic breathing, assist the mothers in relaxation, prompt positive associations, and help focus attention on the music as a diversion from pain and hospital sounds" (DiCamillo, "Music Therapy Assisted Childbirth").

Singing during labour eases pain by regulating breathing, relaxing the body and helping open the cervix, giving the mind a place of focus, and connecting the birthing mother with her birth team, and/or with another place of strength and power. Sophie Fletcher, clinical hypnotherapist, doula and author of *Mindful Hypnobirthing*, , echoes Ina May's idea that vocalizing can help open the cervix. She has seen this practice work in her own experiences as a doula and has heard similar stories from other midwives as well. Fletcher explains that singing different notes will activate different places along the spine which in turn stimulate different parts of the nervous system, with those nerves branching off to one or more internal organs (Fletcher). Thus, certain notes that activate certain points along the spine can stimulate the cervical area. This may sound foreign to a Western understanding of the body, but is fully accepted in other traditions. For example, Traditional Chinese Medicine advocates vocal toning to stimulate and tone bodily organs (Nakkach and Carpenter 15).

Elisa Benassi, a midwife and music therapist in Italy, inspired by Aucher's work, is developing singing as a method of pain relief during labour. Her explanation is that the vibrations from singing reduce muscle tension and thus pain signals to the brain (Kurilko; Ridolfi). One of the most important tasks for a woman to do during her labour is to simply relax and allow her body to open to her baby. Writer, lecturer and social anthropologist Sheila Kitzinger writes in *The Complete Book of Pregnancy and Childbirth* that "relaxation is vital for

labor" (189). In a very physical way, the act of singing can assist with this work as the jaw and throat relax and the notes resonate throughout.

Elena Skoko lives nomadically between Croatia, Italy and Bali, offering her *Singing Birth* workshops, which teach women the power of song in birthing and in their own lives. Skoko writes that a "…woman's body is a complex yet poetical system that is able to respond to analogies, metaphors, symbols and gestures as well as to rational and mechanical stimulation." Music offers all of these forms of both physical and mental stimulation. Song lyrics give a worried mind something to focus on. In the Womb Song circles I lead, many of the songs we use are about surrender, trust, and opening, with lyrics like "I am feeling very open, like a flower in the morn', let my petals open, let my child be born," or "I am opening up in sweet surrender to the luminous love light of my babe."

The power of music links to memory, emotion, and experience, and can offer a portal into another time and place, helping connect a mother to a sense of calm and support if she is not feeling that in her birthing experience.

> Song really helped during my emergency C-section. I had brought many physical tools with me to help me deal with the birth; photos of nature, a cuddly blanket, etc. But they took all of these things away from me as they prepped me for surgery. They took away feeling in 80% of my body. They took away my knowledge, my power, and even my ability to see what was happening. But they couldn't take away song. As I desperately prayed my son would be safe, I sang a simple song: "Simply Trust. Don't the leaves flutter down just like that?" It got me through a scary time, and everything was fine in the end. (Jessica)

In an article in *Midwifery Today*, midwife Robin Lim writes of her observations of the universal instinct to bring song into birth. Lim is one of eleven midwives at Bumi Sehat, the famous birth center in Bali where six to seven hundred babies are born each year. She reflects on the spiritual connections offered by song, helping to remind us of the sacred nature of birth.

I had a powerful experience with one of our Womb Song U.S. moms who had been attending circles regularly. During her home birth, she texted to see if I might come and sing some songs with her and her partner. She had already been in early labour since the previous day, and her contractions had stalled to almost nothing. She and her partner were sitting in despair on the couch when I came in with my guitar. I immediately got them standing and moving as we begin to sing the songs together she had become so familiar with during her pregnancy. Her spirit lightened and she smiled for the first time since I had arrived. After another ten minutes, she felt a strong contraction. A few songs later, she felt another, and another. Later that night, her baby was born in a beautiful home water birth, and without forethought, she greeted her baby with a song we sing in our Womb Song circles: “May the longtime sun shine upon you, all love surround you, and the pure, pure light within you, guide your way home.”

Postpartum

> Still, I kept singing... I was singing for her and for me without distinguishing the two... that is the ultimate coping strategy. Every moment I was humming along, letting the music and words tumble out was a moment I wasn’t thinking dreary thoughts. I wasn’t thinking anything at all… Singing also activates another overlooked coping strategy: breathing. Singing is breathing and breathing is life. (Miller, 34, reflecting on her early postpartum days)

Singing invariably continues its physical and mental benefits in the postpartum period, benefits which are magnified if singing has also been done prenatally. Early postpartum can be one of the most emotionally powerful and overwhelming times in a woman's life. Singing the same songs she has been singing prenatally can keep her connected to a calm joyful space.

Studies have been done demonstrating the effects of songs sung to babies while they were in the womb and the calming effects they have post birth (Sirak; Partanen; Simkin). Benefits are for both mother and baby, for as a mother calms, her baby can too, and vice versa. Penny Simkin, birth educator and doula based out of Seattle, has written several articles emphasizing the power of singing to children while in utero and the incredible benefits this can offer after a child is born (Simkin, "Parents Singing"; Simkin, *The Birth Partner* 24).

She recalls that her interest in prenatal singing began in the 1980s with inspiration from French pioneering physician and obstetrician, Michel Odent, and his book *Birth Reborn*. Odent's weekly prenatal singing circles inspired Simkin to begin her own. At that time, research on the capabilities of newborn babies—to recognize and have preferences toward familiar voices and sound—was just beginning to be published. She began suggesting to all students in her childbirth classes that they sing to their baby or play their favourite recorded music, with the thought that the baby will remember it and be soothed by it after birth.

One of her couples brought this to another level and chose one song that would be their son's song. They sang it frequently during pregnancy and when the birthing time came, they ended up needing a C-section. She writes:

> [A]s the cesarean was underway, and the baby boy, crying lustily, was raised for the parents to see, the father began belting out the baby's song. Though the mother didn't have a strong voice under the circumstances, she also sang. The baby turned his head,

> turned his face right toward his father and calmed down while his father sang. Time stopped. As I looked around the operating room, I saw tears appear on the surgical masks. It's a moment I'll never forget, and it was that event that taught me the value, not only of singing prenatally, but also, singing the same song every day (Simkin, "Parents Singing").

Another doula attending Womb Song U.S. recalled an almost identical experience she shared with a client. The couple had chosen a song they loved and sang it religiously to their baby each day she was in utero. In the end this mother too had a C-section, and as soon as the baby was out, both mother and father began singing the song to her. "Everyone in the room, the doctors, nurses and myself all started to cry," she recalls, "and the baby, she instantly stopped crying. It was so beautiful!" (Susana)

An article in the Daily Mail, UK, sites research which demonstrates an ability of babies to recognize music they heard while in utero for up to four months after their birth. Neuroscientist Eino Partanen, who contributed to this study, said, "If a mother sings or hums some melodies during pregnancy, it may be more likely that the newborn will recognize those songs. Then singing or humming those melodies may be useful in trying to soothe the baby if he is crying" (Macrae).

Lullabies are a universal form of song that has been passed down through generations of parents to their young. In this way song offers another portal through time, connecting generations and offering a sense that one is not alone in the sometimes very lonely task of infant care.

> When I was a child, my mother rarely sang because she had been told she couldn't carry a tune in a bucket. However, she did sing me a special lullaby when I felt scared. Sadly,

> she passed away before my son was born. I miss her terribly and I search for small ways to connect my son to her. I find great comfort in singing the same lullaby every night to my son because it connects the generations. It reminds me how safe and loved she made me feel... (Jessica)

Conclusion

> One can never sing too much. It is one of the most complete modes of expression, involving mind, body and emotions. When fully expressed, it goes beyond charging the brain. One passes through different states of consciousness to reach a higher level of mind-body integration (Tomatis, *The Ear & The Voice* 26).

The research and anecdotes offered in this paper are by no means comprehensive. Such a deep and broad topic calls for many further areas of study, and it is my hope that these will be explored. But in the stories uncovered here, and the years I've now spent working with women as they move through pregnancy, birth and into motherhood, it is obvious that song and singing connect mind, body, and spirit, helping ease the sometimes painful, sometimes terrifying, always incredible transition into motherhood. This knowledge is growing, gaining recognition and momentum. The power of music is making its way into the Western world of pregnancy, birth, and new parenthood, and it is about time. May the awareness of the power of singing become commonplace throughout society, so that all women may gain support, inspiration, and empowerment as they expand upon the ancient wisdom, "If you can talk you can sing," to add, "and if you can sing you can birth."

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Singing Birth: from Your Voice to Your Yoni

Elena Skoko

"Restoring the right to storytelling to the voices that have been denied, in order to interrupt their void and silence, their absence from the stage of the time, rebuilding the memory so that every single voice can speak by itself and for itself, and while doing so, express its own being." (Translated by the author)

Michela Zucca, anthropologist

Abstract

Childbirth is part of our women's lives and it is one of the most transforming. It happens through the same canal where women experience sexual pleasure, called "*yoni*" in Hindu culture, and it is indeed a continuation of women's sexual life in its full orgasmic potential. Today we have the science that proves the importance of modulated voice for the well-being of women, children, men, couples, communities and human species in general. The melodious maternal voice has a special effect on humans, as it is in the roots of our linguistic and social behaviour. Yet singing during childbirth has still to be properly addressed as a beneficial and powerful practice used by women and by traditional as well as medically trained midwives and ob-gyns inside maternity assistance nowadays. Until recent times, women used to sing and dance during important moments of their social and individual lives, including childbirth. You don't have to be a professional singer to sing while you're having your baby. Spontaneous singing is part of our human nature and culture. Making peace with our own ancestors is the first step to remember and set our voice free in order to regain our dignity as childbearing women and mothers.

I had mixed feelings towards Slavic Istrian (Croatian) folk songs and dances. I loved them, but I also felt ashamed to perform them. My grandfather would ask me to sing with him "our way" (*po našu*) and we would perform typical nasal chirping duets in front of the other members of the family. He would cry afterwards, my mother and her sisters would hide their tears, and my cousins would chuckle. I felt my voice was powerful, it could induce deep emotional states in others, but I also felt there was no space for it to be expressed freely for me in the city. I stopped singing.

I started singing again at the university in Bologna (Italy), where I formed a “psycho-noise-punk’n’roll” band CUT together with my colleagues at the faculty of languages. I resonated with the “riot grrrls" international bands—L7, Babes in Toyland, Sleater Kinney, Bikini Kill, Pussy Riot—as well as “angry women” (Juno), including Nina Hagen, Diamanda Galás, Lydia Lunch, and Exene Cervenka. I loved to perform my anger, and I used to paint my face, crotch, and legs in blood red for the performance. When I graduated, I had to choose between my two passions: research or singing. Since both were unprofitable, and equally below mere subsistence, I chose the band and went underground. After six years, three albums and a period of female power exploration through performance and embodiment that included on-stage group rituals, rock’n’roll, fashion, and multimedia, the guys in the band felt overwhelmed and I ended up one month in a hospital, back in my home town, with right ovary inflammation. The doctor threatened a partial oophorectomy if I didn’t rest still as a stone. I was 27 at the time. I stopped singing again.

I used to nurture my ears with Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Anita O’Day, Peggy Lee, Esther Williams, Big Mama Thornton, and other ladies singing the blues. It felt so right to my soul. The blues was a foreign music to me, as was the English language, but it felt so close. There was something special in the old school blues that rang my bell. As Naomi Wolf puts it:

> Ragtime, and then jazz and blues, also introduced a new frankness about discussing the vagina, and female sexuality in general. Blues lyrics in particular were filled with African American slang for “vagina”. …These slang terms were usually encoded in metaphors: the clitoris was a bell that needed a ring; the vagina was a hot frying pan, or a butter churn that needed to be beaten, or a hot dog bun in need of a hot dog. … Rather, the metaphors that both male and female blues singers used about the vagina consistently

> cast female desire as strong, steady, positive, sometimes funny – just as male sexual desire is often portrayed as very funny – and obviously in need of gratification, as well as deserving satisfaction (Wolf 222-223).

In 2007 I moved to Bali (Indonesia), where I met a guy in a local restaurant. He asked me what I was doing. “I want to sing the blues”. He paused and said, “I am a bluesman.” Junior Wells gave him the nickname Bluebird when he was playing harp in his band back in the days in Chicago. After some time, we formed the band Bluebird & Skoko and recorded an album. Our “Trust Your Mojo, Sista” is an ode to love, passion and sexual mystique. We would sing, play, create, make love, and howl to the moon all night long with stray dogs gathering under our gates and wailing with us. Then, we made a baby. Our daughter Koko was born in 2009 in Bali. I described our story in my book *Memoirs of a Singing Birth*. She came out, as she came in—while I was singing in ecstasy.

When I got pregnant, I laughed in joy and delight. It was the craziest thing I did in my life. When I realised I was doing a crazy thing that I didn’t know anything about, I started searching for help. My mother gave birth in a hospital. The little she described was not encouraging. My grandmother gave birth four times at home, with the help of her mother and her husband holding her from the back, on their wedding bed. This birthing scene created an icon in my head that I cherished during pregnancy and birth. My great-grandmother was a village community healer, but she couldn’t lend me a hand from the heavenly meadows (she would call it *livada*, a big field where ancestors’ souls gathered). I didn’t want to give up my freedom while giving birth. I found a midwife who nourished me with love during pregnancy and assisted the birth of my baby with kind words and songs, encouraging me to be and act as a lioness—and to

sing. She wouldn't tell me what to do, but she would be a mirror where I could see myself as capable and competent woman who is transforming herself into mother.

I sang my baby Koko to Earth and I continue singing to her whenever she feels distressed. We sing together when we are happy, making up our own music and lyrics. During the first years with Koko, I discovered that some frequencies and rhythms were able to calm her down. It is the "mother's voice" that all mothers discover, as it is so beneficial and immediately soothing to babies and children. Fathers get it as well and they are able to tell amazing adventurous stories while inducing sleep. Researchers have addressed this phenomenon, recognizing the mother's role in shaping the linguistic and socio-emotional functioning of children that would form the life-long patterns of human socialization (Dissanayake).

> Mothers sing regularly to infants, doing so in a distinctive manner marked by high pitch, slow tempo, and emotional expressiveness. The pitch and tempo of mothers' songs are unusually stable over extended periods. Infant listeners prefer the maternal singing style to the usual style of singing, and they are more attentive to maternal singing than to maternal speech. Maternal singing also has a moderating effect on infant arousal (Trehub).

Since the 1970s, the research has explored the mother-baby auditory link before birth, focusing on the hearing capacity of the fetus in the womb. The mother's voice is reported to be the most intense acoustical signal measured in the amniotic environment that influences the wellbeing of the fetus, the development of the brain and auditory system, as well as later social and emotional development (Fifer and Moon).

This phenomenon is well known today and prenatal educators motivate future parents to speak and sing to the baby in the belly (Simkin), in order to create the premises for a familiar

acoustic environment for the baby's birth and early infancy. The prenatal market has attuned into the topic and now we have a plethora of soundscapes for the bellies resulting in mothers wrapping in sound equipment hoping to increase their offspring's IQ. However, it is not the music itself, least of all transmitted through pregnancy music belts, that makes babies happier or more intelligent, it is *their own mother's voice* (Jahn et al.).

As humans, we are perfectly equipped to make music based solely on the features of our body, the instruments can be considered as accessories. Our innate ability to sing and dance, and to use these capabilities to engage intimately and socially, is part of our human nature. The infant's brain makes no difference between music and language, actually it treats language as a special case of music (Koelsch et al.). It appears that if mothers wanted their children to improve their communicative and intellectual skills, they should start singing as soon as possible.

The voice plays a crucial role in human musical activity since the origins of our species. The human physical constitution, which enables us to produce vocal modulated sounds (mainly the orofacial musculature, laryngeal anatomy, along with the neurological control over pitch, intensity, contour and duration of sounds produced by it), represents a consistent heritage dating back to at least one million years ago. According to the Oxford paleoanthropologist Iain Morley,

> In contrast to the prevailing trend in Western music of the last few hundred years, instruments (anthropogenic sound-producers) are not fundamental to musical production; the human body has the potential to constitute an excellent instrument in its own right, both melodic and percussive. Instruments constitute an accessory to these existing human capacities; the origins of musical behaviour would not have relied upon the invention of instruments" (Morley 152).

Babies usually like simple repertoire connected to prenatal and natal memories, but I remember Koko didn't choose her birth song as her favourite one, though I sang the same song all the way through labour and birth. Instead, I would make up monotonous, repetitive, wordless lullabies that had an instant effect. Meaningless onomatopoeic expressions worked magic both in a cheerful play as well as in emergencies. Scholars Stephen Malloch and Colwyn Trevarthen have named this mother-baby vocal interaction as "communicative musicality." They also emphasise that the role of this primal musical communication, taking place in infancy, is creating patterns for affective relations and a sense of community belonging well into adulthood. Genevieve Vaughan, a feminist theoretician of gift economy, considers mother-infant bonding and interactions not only as foundations of future linguistic and social patterns, but she advances the possibility of this primal relationship being the essence of social bonding which relies on mutual gifting and not on monetary exchange.

Some spiritual communities have specifically coded singing in their religious and social practices, such as the Orthodox Jewish Lubavitchers. In her publications the feminist anthropologist Ellen Koskoff gives some examples of *nigunim* (singular *nigun*), vocally modulated melodies that are the very expression of the worshipers' faith and spirituality. The songs can have a happy atmosphere or they can express yearning, and many are performed using vocables, or syllables without referents in spoken language. The songs chosen as examples by the scholar show repetitive lyrics such as "yam ya di di di yam bam ya di di di yam bam bam bam" for the happy melody, and "yi ya ma ma ya ma maa ma ma ma ya ma ma" in one of the most favorite yearning *nigun* (Koskoff 110-111). However, the women's voice (*kol isha*) in this community is prohibited in occasions where men are present, since it is perceived as sexually promiscuous (*ervah*) (Koskoff 95).

It is not the content or the grammar of the vocal expression that matters in emotional bonding and stress reduction, it is the familiar and especially (maternal) comforting rhythmical voice that makes our oxytocin rise. I'm turning to neurosciences in the effort to give back some authority to women's and maternal singing.

> Since each vertebrate clade contains famously vocal members, language in the sense of human's unique ability to use recursive grammar may be unlikely to stand alone in its ability to release OT [oxytocin]. It is at least as likely that prosodic cues are responsible for the observed similarities in OT release between touch and human speech, and that non-linguistic social vocalizations facilitate attachment via the release of OT or related peptides in many other species. Nonetheless, two grammatically identical instances of human language differ in meaning depending on tonality, who is speaking, who is listening and the nuances of the relationship between them." (Seltzer et al. 4)

The use of modulated voice, similar to the touch, has direct effects on the neurohormone oxytocin, known as the "hormone of love" that has a crucial role not only in childbirth and breastfeeding, its best known features, but in our innermost humanity, our physical and socio-emotional functioning and wellbeing, as individuals, couples, families, communities, and as a species. The research on therapeutic properties related to singing, as part of mother-infant bonding as well as in other social and pathological situations, has been explored and documented in Kay Norton's book *Singing and Wellbeing. Ancient Wisdom, Modern Proof*. Norton points out that, therapeutically, the singing repertoire that works best varies according to the cultural background of each individual. The beneficial properties of singing, and especially community singing, are one of the emerging fields of research in UK, where the University of Oxford is providing scientific evidences on the topic (Pearce and Launay).

The exchange of oxytocin between the mother (and father) and the child passes through their voices and it is mutually responsive. When the mother is out of reach, her voice is soothing for her child like the embrace of her cuddling arms. When the mother is overwhelmed and exhausted, the cooing and wooing of a smiling face of her baby works as an immediate uplifter, rising her levels of oxytocin. Actually, I remember that my baby's crying voice was also able to induce stressful reactions in myself, so was the effect of my angry voice on her. She would look at me in awe and suspension until my voice would become cheerful and my face positively expressive again. I would, of course, feel guilty. In the womb, both mother and baby produce oxytocin that passes through the placental barrier. Once they become two separated bodies, their amourous bonding continues through their vocal exchange as well as through skin-to-skin contact, "but a strikingly similar hormonal profile emerged in children comforted solely by their mother's voice" (Seltzer et al.). It appears that vocalizations may be as important as touch to the neuroendocrine regulation of social bonding in our species.

My voice was transformed during childbirth and motherhood; it became somehow lower and warmer. In the expulsive phase of labour, weird sounds were coming out from my throat. Very deep, as if coming from the underworld. It made contrast with high-pitched sounds I had made a few hours previously, resembling a teakettle, when my midwife delicately remarked how much "energy" I had and advised me to bring it downwards. I explored a plethora of sounds during labour, and many came unexpectedly. I remember using my voice expressively and quite creatively during my daughter's conception, and these rehearsals came handy when she was ready to manifest herself through the very same passage of my body. I was uninhibited when I was giving birth, my voice went where I have never been. I could physically experience and acoustically express the connection with other mammal mommas, I would sound like a lioness, a

tigress, a hog, a momma bear, a queen cat, a bitch, a bird, a whale, you name it. I had a feeling I could pick up frequencies from the world of the ancestors: I had a circle of grandmothers, great-grandmothers all the way back to the first birthing hominids humming to my ears.

I distinctively remember the moment I embraced the sensuality of my situation. I started moaning and groaning as if I was making love. The more I felt sensual the closer I was to opening up. I felt my entire childbearing body was responding to my voice, it was both physical and spiritual.

I couldn't have gone on my vocal voyage if I didn't have a supportive environment. I wished I was brave enough to do it all by myself, possibly in an ancient cave that used to serve for the same purpose, but I wasn't. Although in Slavic tradition (in some rural and isolated places well into 1960s), women were giving birth alone (Vondraček-Mesar), convinced that their baby is perfectly able to give birth to itself (Gasperini), a few branches were broken from the tree that connected me to my ancestral mothers' experiences. I tried at least to find a matching soul that would like singing and music while being an expert in gentle birth assistance. I found it in Ibu Robin Lim, a poetess midwife. If the birth center Bumi Sehat that she founded in Bali wasn't an ancient cave, it was the place where women gave birth freely and midwives were singing and supportive to vocal childbearing expressions. I kept in touch with Ibu Robin and I occasionally witnessed births at Bumi Sehat. What I could notice, a part from reassuring faces and overall stable poses of both younger as well as senior midwives - even in critical situations - it was their changing voice. When they had an everyday conversation they had a "normal" voice, but as they entered a room where a woman was giving birth, their voice would become sweet as the mead, caressing as a feather and very melodious. It wasn't an infant-directed speech, nor they would infantilise a woman in any way, they would use a mother tongue, a mother voice, a mother pitch.

Not the “motherese” in the sense of expressive exaggeration, no, it was a kind but firm vocal support such as the mother who is encouraging her child to take her first steps, feed herself, go beyond her boundaries and become independent.

Scholars may continue to treat these skills as “unconscious,” both in mothers as in midwives, but they are highly effective, experiential, and belong to deeply rooted human patterns of interaction. I have met other senior singing midwives, Canadian Betty-Anne Daviss and American Carol Gautschi, and I field recorded their favorite birth songs during a coffee break at a conference (available on my website, www.singingbirth.com). Betty-Anne told me about her experience with indigenous midwives in Guatemala who regularly used singing special songs both to mothers and newborns. Carol had a repertoire where spiritual songs went along with her own birth themed songwriting production. There are also singing obstetricians-gynecologists, such as Dr. Carey Andrew-Jaja, who continued the singing tradition passed on by a senior doctor not because it was evidence based, but because they both liked it, and their patients seemed to enjoyed it (Huffington Post). In the 1970s, in a hospital in France (Pithiviers), a then young head ob-gyn Michel Odent and a French singer Marie-Louise Aucher, founder of the “psychophonic” method, started a choir as part of unstructured prenatal education (Cardinale and Durieux). Their intuition, to include group singing as part of maternity assistance, was much appreciated both by pregnant women and by midwives (Odent).

If singing can be part of a humanised maternity assistance, why not encouraging parturient women to indulge in this beneficial expression of their childbearing and motherly skills? “Musical experience can gain much of its value from a sense of a profoundly personal response coupled with the sense of shared experience; meanwhile, when practised alone, it can act as a surrogate for interaction and shared experience” (Morley).

Women often spontaneously start singing, as well as vocalizing, humming and moaning melodiously while in labour. As singer and advocate for human rights in childbirth I happen to hear stories of women being silenced and ridiculed when singing in labour and childbirth, especially in medical settings. These anecdotes leave me deeply saddened, and I intend to do more research on the subject. For what I perceive intuitively, attitudes reflecting aversive reactions against woman's singing voice in labour has to do, in all its complexity, with historically determined gender interrelations, as well as with power and pleasure issues. It is a women's secret, brought to light in recent times, that birth is not only sensual but it can be orgasmic (Davis and Pascali-Bonaro). Some healthcare providers cannot deal with it.

The voice is a powerful tool during childbirth, but it is also very personal. I've met a singer who was afraid to use it not to harm her child, as she felt her voice was too powerful. There are many singers' anecdotes that tell about their voice changing during pregnancy and childbirth, some experiencing long lasting transformation and some coming back to normal quickly. When you are a professional singer and your performance is tied up to standards you are supposed to deliver as close as possible to perfection, then some anxiety may occur in this extraordinary yet common metamorphoses that is pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. But there is no other way than arrange for a birth setting so that little or no interference takes place. Harsh, disrespectful or harmful assistance during delivery may produce damage to abdominal and genital area influencing the ability to use the voice or perform, as in case of an opera singer affected by chronic flatulence after childbirth (Hooton). Abuse and disrespect during childbirth in hospital facilities is a documented issue addressed on the global level, both in low-income as well as in high-income countries (WHO). It is not the birth itself that is harmful to the vocal

ability, but the poor quality and the inappropriateness of the maternity assistance. If a cesarean birth happens to a singer, she can face some extra challenges (Pitman Will).

Few people know that our *yoni* is directly connected to our voice. I prefer to use the term *yoni* instead of "vagina" because it is more precise by being more inclusive. Let me explain. When I was giving birth, afraid of my vagina exploding, Ibu Robin invited me to touch my *Yoni* (she *pronounces* it with the capital letter). This term previously felt so "new age" that it would never cross my mouth without intellectual embarrassment. But when I touched my… *Yoni*, I felt all the pride related to the vagina word was nothing compared to that feeling of glorious wonder, the sense of amazement with my own body and the euphoria the moment I realised another living being was coming out from *Her*!

Yoni is a Sanskrit term for the fascinating area between female legs up inside the lower abdomen. It stands for the "vulva" (external genitals including labia majora, labia minora, urethra and the complete clitoral body), the "vagina" (internal muscular and tubular tract and the female prostate) and the inside reproductive organs (cervix, uterus, ovaries, Fallopian tubes). In all its anatomical, poetical, spiritual, philosophical and practical aspects, *yoni* is the female principle itself. On the other side there is *lingam*, the male principle. Their mutual interaction produces the love of the Universe. I borrow from another culture as I don't know any other term in the five languages I speak that expresses the same complexity, beauty and respect for human genitals as those of *yoni* and *lingam*.

I discovered the mouth-vagina connection for the first time in books of Ina May Gaskin, the mother of spiritual midwifery, during my pregnancy. I was fascinated. Based on her experiences with birthing women, Gaskin acknowledged that women who were able to widely open their mouth, loosen their jaws and protrude their tongues had a more rapid cervical

dilatation. If a woman was smooching with her partner, she had better chances to have a quick and painless labour. When a couple, while in early labour, made love, the outcomes were far more promising. Even self-stimulation of the vulval area and/or of the nipples has positive effects (Komisaruk et al., "Women's Clitoris").

Undoubtedly, there is much oxytocin involved, as well as dopamine and endorphins. The anticipation of pleasure and orgasm boosts woman's euphoric and blissful states moved by the levels of dopamine and opioids/endorphin release (Wolf). This sparkling cocktail enhances the feeling of security and intimacy promoting showers of oxytocin that regulates all the birthing and post-partum activities. If a "sexually assertive, self-aware woman is much more focused, motivated, energised and biologically empowered" (Wolf 77) this condition might indeed affect her ability to successfully and pleasurably give birth. From cosmic orgasm to orgasmic birth.

But there is more about female biology that we have to acknowledge. Science has finally addressed the female body in its own peculiarity and it is reaching bias-free levels. We know now that female genital system is an intricate multidirectional neural freeway for pleasurable sensations interconnected between the head and our entire orgasmic body (Komisaruk et al., "The Science of Orgasm"). Three sets of nerves run along the spine and directly connect our brain with our genital area:

- *pelvic nerves* convey sensations from perigenital skin (the area of our pubic hair), including the perineal skin (the area from the vaginal opening to the anus, damaged in case of episiotomy), vagina and cervix;
- *pudendal nerves* reach the clitoris (the densest nerve supply in the body) and perigenital skin;
- *hypogastric nerves* zoom in from the stomach to the cervix and the uterus.

And then there is a bonus – the *nervus vagus*, connecting our auditory apparatus (ears), the pharynx (from the back of the nasal cavity deep inside the throat) and the larynx (the "voice box") down to the cervix and the uterus. A freeway from your voice to your *yoni*! The nervus vagus remains active even in case of spine damage, conveying pleasure and orgasm from genitals (or even the skin of the shoulder) to the brain and *vice versa,* since it runs independently from the spine.

The vagus nerve is the key to scientifically understand the "singing birth". Not only is our mouth connected to our vagina, but our voice is essential to our experience of pleasure *and* of childbirth, and it has a direct intimate influence both on ourselves and on the others, including our children and men. It is now scientifically confirmed what women and men always knew: singing is empowering and highly sensual, this is beneficial for general health, sexuality, conception and birth. Our mouth gets sensual by performing modulating melodies and our *yoni* opens up by hearing love songs. Rural folks all over the word performed spicy duets during the day so to light the fire up in the night, mutually gifting each other with all degrees of pleasure. This is the reason why "The Voice" Frank Sinatra made all women sigh and Elvis "The Pelvis" Presley made girls scream. Our sexual organs, in unison with our *six* senses, are even able to choose the right mate for procreation, as described in detail by Catherine Blackledge's in her book *The Story of V.* But today the knowledge of singing as intrinsic part of our childbearing capacities has been neglected, facing stigma when spontaneously performed.

It appears that our uterus and cervix respond to our mouth and ears. The childbearing woman has all her senses enticed, she remembers everything people around her said and the tones they used during birth. As we know, babies hear as well. When the woman expresses herself vocally in those moments, she is hearing herself and interpreting her own voice: is it

reassuring and pleasant, or frightening and expressing pain? This multifaceted information might have direct influence on the outcomes of her birth.

When women are treated in a motherly, vocally modulated, way, when they are free to sing and dance, they are free to give birth on their own terms, allowing their children to experience love and freedom from their very own start.

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Land of My Mothers? Clara Novello Davies as "Mam" and Musician[1]

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Abstract

Although women in Welsh history have received increasing attention in recent decades, the participation of women in music remains underexplored. Choral singing, in particular, has occupied a central position in Wales since the mid-nineteenth century, when coal mining resulted in both rapid industrialisation and population expansion in South Wales. Here, choral singing provided a unique framework for cementing social relations and galvanising community spirit. However, Welsh choirs have since become stereotyped. Today, choral singing is often equated with a singular image of nationhood, one that is indelibly linked to a working-class conception of male identity; even the national anthem boldly states that Wales is the "land of my fathers". By contrast, this chapter interrogates this paternalistic view by examining how Clara Novello Davies (1861–1943) promoted female singing to national and international audiences. Despite establishing the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir—a pioneering female choir with a bourgeois membership—in 1883, Clara's longstanding musical career is often overshadowed by that of her son, composer Ivor Novello (1893–1951). In terms of success, her choir won chief prizes at both the Chicago World's Fair (1893) and the Paris Exhibition (1900), yet her personal legacy has since been forgotten. Drawing upon her autobiography, amongst other sources, I will examine how Clara negotiated the dual role of being a "mam" and a musician. Moreover, Clara contested a number of contemporary ideologies regarding domestic responsibility and social visibility. Invoking a historical ethnomusicological perspective, I will show how Wales was also the "land of my mothers".

The wind held up above his head the sound of the choir from the Chapel for me to hear, and gave it back, but in those few notes I heard the rich, male voice of the Valley, golden, brave, and clean, with heart, and with loftiness of spirit, and I knew that their voice was my voice, for I was part of them as they were part of me, and the Valley was part of us and we were part of the Valley, not one more than the other, never one without the other. Of me was the Valley and the Valley was of me, and every blade of grass, and every stone, and every leaf of every tree, and every knob of coal or drop of water, or stick or branch or flower or grain of pollen, or living creature, or dust in ground, all were of me as my blood, my bones, or the notions from my mind. (Llewellyn)

Land of My Fathers

The above words are reproduced from a novel by Richard Llewellyn (1906–1983) entitled *How Green Was My Valley*, a narrative that depicts the life of a family, the Morgans, living in a coal mining community in a Welsh valley. Although written in 1939, the story is a nostalgic reflection upon an earlier period in South Wales, when the narrator, Huw Morgan, was a young boy. Recalling the struggles placed on family life, Huw traces the transformation from the utopian vision of a pastoral green valley to one that is blackened by the reality of an expanding coal mining industry. Although music is not the main focus of the narrative, Llewellyn shows how the struggle of industrial life is punctuated with moments of music making that promote communal accord and a unified identity. In particular, it is choral singing that is noted especially as a focus not only for social recreation, but also, as the above excerpt indicates, as a marker of national identification.

What is particularly interesting in this novel is the ambiguity surrounding location as it relates to music and society in South Wales. That is, Llewellyn fails to name his valley, showing how a familiar place serves to represent a cultural identity that is homogenous and typical of any Welsh valley during the late Victorian era. The immediate popularity of publication within Wales indicated that this identity was familiar and it was therefore accepted as a "true" reflection of life in the South Wales valleys. In 1941, this notion of an industrial Welsh identity was promoted to a much wider international audience when John Ford, an established American film director, adapted the novel for the screen for 20th Century Fox. Featuring a star cast that included Maureen O'Hara, Walter Pidgeon and Roddy McDowall, the film was awarded five Oscars (including one for "Outstanding Motion Picture") in 1942.

Such success in the international arena allowed Wales, its people, and its economic output to be promoted to new audiences. That being said, John Ford's adaptation promoted a singular, gendered representation of choral singing in Wales. From the outset, a connection is established between music and life in the valleys since the opening credits are accompanied by a rendition of "*Rhyfelgyrch Gwŷr Harlech*" ("The March of the Men of Harlech"), and less than five minutes into the two-hour-long film, the viewer is introduced to the musical element of Welsh industrial life; coal-blackened miners stand in line to collect their wages before walking humbly from the site of the mines to rows upon rows of houses, where the woman of the household (the "mam") is waiting to amass the family budget before helping her husband and sons to wash away the residue of a hard day's toil. Importantly, the representation of this sequence in film is accompanied by music that is essential (not ancillary) to the narrative. Instead, the music is created by—and for—the men themselves. From the moment they leave the mines to the moment they cross the threshold, they sing together in harmony.

Here, John Ford's decision to include the sound of male voices singing "Men of Harlech" at the opening of the film is significant for a number of reasons: first, it calls upon a sense of national identity that was created in an earlier period of Welsh history. The connection to an historical narrative is crucial; although the song represents the tale of a fifteenth-century battle for the throne between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists at Harlech Castle (situated in North Wales), its adoption throughout the nineteenth century as an anthem not only for the proclamation of a national identity but also for communal singing serves to highlight how the song was adapted to suit the changing demographics of an industrialised Wales. That is, it serves as what Philip Bohlman would call an "unofficial national anthem" (111).[2] The second reason that "Men of Harlech" is noteworthy in terms of both Ford's vision and Llewellyn's narrative is

linked to gender. By utilising male-only versions of songs, the film projected a singular vision of music and working-class masculinity to both national and international audiences, and simultaneously cemented the patriarchal image of Wales as the "land of my fathers".[3] It is worth noting that the book (without the aid of audiovisual technologies) also associated men with choral singing.

It may be questioned how relevant a 1939 book and a 1941 film is to the concept of national identity in contemporary Wales. In the late twentieth century and to some extent in the twenty-first century, the participation of women in Welsh choral singing is often significantly marginalised or, in some instances, completely absent from accounts concerning the musical practice in Wales. According to *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales* (published in 2008), "the male choir is regarded as a characteristically Welsh institution. It found congenial soil in the country's populous mining valleys, metallurgical centres and quarrying districts [... and] fulfilled similar roles to football teams in providing a focus for local identity and opportunities for disciplined collective expression" (532). While it cannot be denied that the practice of choral singing in Wales developed along gendered lines from a unified approach first performed in mid-nineteenth-century chapel choirs, sources (such as the one mentioned above) fail to acknowledge the development of female choirs alongside their male counterparts, perpetuating the notion that choral singing in Wales has been historically linked only to men.

By contrast, this chapter seeks to uncover Wales as the "land of my mothers". Interrogating the paternalistic perspective that is often called upon to represent Wales, I examine how Clara Novello Davies (1861–1943) promoted female singing to national and international audiences with her Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir. Despite leading this pioneering female choir between the early 1880s and late 1930s, Clara's longstanding musical career is often

overshadowed by that of her son, composer Ivor Novello (1893–1951). Having built a reputation throughout his lifetime as a successful playwright, actor, and composer, Novello's legacy continues to be remembered in the present day with the prestigious Ivor Novello Awards. Since 1955, the Ivors (as they are known colloquially) have been presented annually by BASCA (British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors) in association with PRS for Music to recognise excellence in British and Irish songwriting and composing. The musical legacy of Ivor Novello's mother, however, has been largely forgotten. Drawing upon her autobiography, amongst other sources, I will examine the successes of Clara's female choir by focusing upon two case studies – the Chicago World's Fair (1893) and the Paris Exhibition (1900) – in order to show how she negotiated the dual role of being a "mam" and a musician.

Clara's Novello Idea

Clara Novello Davies was born in Canton, Cardiff, to Jacob Davies and his wife Margaret (née Evans). Like many families living in South Wales during the nineteenth century, the upbringing of Clara's parents was influenced by the two main facets of Welsh life: religion and mining. The family had strong religious connections since Clara's maternal great-grandfather, the Reverend William Evans of Tonyrefail (1795–1891) was known for his unique style of pulpit recitative, while his son (also called William Evans) was a leading Deacon at a Calvinistic Methodist chapel. Although religion functioned here as a form of employment (as well as faith) for both, the latter William gained wealth through farming land at Parc-Coed-Machen in St Fagans, near Cardiff. Here, the involvement in religious leadership coupled with the involvement in profitable agricultural work ensured that William's family occupied an elevated social position in the local community.

Margaret's social status was to be altered, however, when she married Jacob Davies. The pair first met in chapel when Jacob was a seventeen-year-old miner, an occupation that was considered by Margaret's parents to be inadequate to support their daughter. Despite attempts to separate the couple, Margaret's marriage to "a young fool of a *miner* who [could not] even buy her bread let alone butter" (Novello Davies 9) prompted her father to disown her. Such outward signals concerning the division of social class between the couple did little to dissuade them, particularly Margaret who utilised her background by educating Jacob in the use of the English language (he was principally a Welsh speaker). Moreover, she turned the house into a quasi-private school in order to increase the family income, and secured employment with better wages for her husband.

However, one area in which Jacob did not require assistance was music. From a young age he could be heard singing in chapel, and he began to conduct the village choir at the tender age of twelve. Enthusiasm for music was demonstrated also by the couple's daughter, Clara. Jacob and Clara often spent weekends together at the local Salem Chapel (located in Canton), where both musical and religious interests were fostered. Jacob played a leading role in the chapel, as both a precentor and a leader of the Band of Hope singing sessions.[4] Clara's own musical abilities developed significantly as she became recognised officially as the chapel's harmonium player, playing all services from the age of ten. Here, she became conversant with the activities of the chapel choir, since the harmonium was situated in the gallery with singers on both sides. Singing was a particular passion for both father and daughter. Jacob was interested in the positive effects of singing and, following the visit of an American evangelist named R. T. Booth, he set up the Cardiff Blue Ribbon Choir in 1880 for the cause of temperance.[5] Once again, Clara's musical skills were nurtured as she became the official accompanist for the choir's

performances at national *eisteddfodau*[6] and at choral competitions held at the Crystal Palace in London.

Following her 1883 marriage to David Davies (a solicitor's clerk who sang in the Cardiff Blue Ribbon Choir), Clara fulfilled the role of a housewife; she notes in her autobiography that her retirement from public engagements in order to do so was presumed (Novello Davies 56). This was not an uncommon expectation for married Victorian women, particularly those who belonged to the middle class. In 1854, a lengthy narrative poem by Coventry Patmore (1823–1896) was published in London. Entitled "The Angel in the House", the poem depicts the vision of an "ideal" woman; as a wife and mother, she obeys and adores her husband, promoting his self-being while simultaneously allowing her own life to be scheduled by the responsibilities of motherhood, social engagements, religion and domestic management. This idea of a fixed domestic ideology was well established by the late Victorian era with a proliferation of household help manuals (or etiquette guides) published to teach women how to behave in social situations. In this matter, involvement in musical practices was somewhat problematic, since music performances in general did not reflect the domestic ideology presented to the women; pursuing career as a professional or semi-professional musician was particularly difficult for "middle- and upper-class women who were firmly discouraged from any kind of public exposure or career" (Fuller 315). Despite the fixed nature of contemporary ideologies regarding domestic responsibility and social visibility, Clara was not an "angel in the house".

Mimicking the precedent set by her mother, Clara canvassed to secure a better job for her husband David since his salary was insufficient to support the newly-married couple. More importantly, she furthered her musical interests and created an income by teaching private vocal lessons. In the same year, Clara established the Welsh Ladies' Choir (as it was first known) with

encouragement from her father. Following the death of both her mother and her first child Myfanwy Margaret (who lived only for weeks) within the first year of her marriage, Clara was introduced to the art of choral conducting by Jacob. She recalls that "perfection in singing had always been [her] father's aim", and concepts of the qualities that signalled worthy performances came from hearing a variety of visiting "world-famous singer[s]" (Novello Davies 58). Here, according to Clara, "father was never too poor to afford front seats for us both at every concert" (ibid). While it was possible to hear both male and female solo artists on the stage in the late nineteenth century, the idea of seeing and hearing an all-female choir was seemingly innovatory. She explains:

> One day he was looking over some part songs which the publishers had sent for his approval, and calling me over to him he said: "Look here, Clara. These glees are for female voices only!" His tone of surprise was not to be wondered at – in those days when men monopolised most of the good things in life. "Did you ever hear of such a thing?" he continued. [...] I went over the parts and was enchanted as father. "Why don't you get your pupils together and form a ladies' choir", he went on. "But who ever heard of a woman conductor?" I asked incredulously. But the idea had a great thrill for me, and I decided to try. Thank God for father who always had vision and was keen on innovations, whose sole thought about women was not the one prevalent in those days – that they should be tied to the home – but was only too pleased to have me follow along his own lines of endeavour (Novello Davies 59).

The notion of creating a female choir at this time must not be undervalued. Wales was a patriarchal society where male musical practices, particularly in terms of choral music, were the privileged and expected form. Such an initiative also belonged to a greater consciousness

regarding respectability in the nineteenth century where the idea of women on stage provoked mixed responses. Therefore, the formation of a female-only choir led by a female conductor can be viewed as a conscious subversion of such patriarchal values. The members of the newly-formed Cardiff-based choir (*circa* 70 women) were drawn largely from Clara's private pupils. The advantage of utilising her pupils in this manner meant that consistency in terms of tone, pronunciation, and breath control was achieved with ease, since each singer had received identical training. Significantly, each singer belonged to an elevated social class. In other words, the financial burden of musical tuition was exclusive in two ways; excluding those classes who were unable to pay, and marking music as a social distinction for those classes who were. For women in the late Victorian era, voice lessons were socially desirable, yet financially burdensome. This reflects a marked contrast from the aforementioned stereotype concerning working-class male voice choirs in Wales.

Women of Harlech

In this section, I argue that the formation of Clara's Welsh Ladies' Choir was significant in the development of Welsh choral music, by looking especially at the achievements of the choir in the international arena. In particular, I focus upon the choir's performances at the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893 and the Paris Exhibition of 1900. International exhibitions have attracted scholarly attention since, as Burton Benedict notes, they allowed nations "to project an image of unity for their own people and to present to the world at large" (5). Moreover, international exhibitions provided a framework in which the power relationship between the colonised and the colonisers could be displayed. In terms of music, non-Western sounds of the exoticised Other were favoured by visitors and audiences. In this context, the inclusion of Welsh music at such exhibitions was unusual. Moreover, it is surprising that the Welsh chose choral music to

represent their national identity. Originating in the nonconformist colonisation of the industrialized valleys (a colonial music to represent a colonised nation), the Welsh choir represented a unique combination of religious difference and social solidarity at a critical moment during the Industrial Revolution.

In Chicago, the World's Columbian Exposition, known also as the World's Fair, commemorated the four-hundredth anniversary of the "discovery" of America by Columbus in 1492. Here, Chicago was an important centre for Celtic migration; Irish immigrants in particular played a significant role in the city's political and musical realm.[7] Welsh communities were well established in North America at the time of the Exposition, with the relevant census reporting 267,160 individuals with Welsh ancestry resident in the states by 1900. As a tribute to this immigrant community, the Exposition featured an *eisteddfod* which was co-ordinated by the National Cymmrodorion Society. The word *cymmrodorion* is formed from *cyn-frodorion*, meaning "earliest natives." Consisting of a four-day programme (5–8 September), the initiative was designed to promote Welsh culture at an international level. The secretary of the society, William ap Madoc, was a key figure in its successful realisation. To encourage interest, ap Madoc circulated 10,000 pamphlets (both in Welsh and English) throughout Wales; he asked:

> Will the Welsh people neglect this grandest and most exceptional opportunity of exhibiting THEIR literary and musical characteristics? 'THEY WILL NOT!' is the united voice of the Cymry of America and their descendants, and we pray that the same will be the voice of GWALIA" (*World's Columbian Exposition International Eisteddvod* 7).

Despite the circulation of the open invitation, Clara recalls receiving a personal invite for her choir to participate. Although the obvious benefits of being involved included promotion for the Welsh Ladies' Choir as well as for Welsh choirs in general, the financial burden of travel and

accommodation was unsurprisingly great. For Clara, the decision to compete required careful consideration for another reason: she had recently given birth to a son, David Ivor Davies ("Ivor Novello", born 15 January 1893). With the personal support of her father and her husband in terms of childcare for young Ivor, Clara agreed to participate and began to raise sponsorship for the venture. In this matter, the princely sum of £500 was offered by Lascalles Carr (editor of the local newspaper *Western Mail*), while the remainder was achieved through fundraising concerts arranged by the choir.

Like all *eisteddfodau*, the Chicago Eisteddfod required all entrants for the choral competitions to learn a number of test pieces. In this case, the test pieces were "The Spanish Gipsy Girl" [sic] (arranged by Walter Damrosch) and "The Lord is my Shepherd" (arranged by Schubert). According to Clara, the former piece is "one of the most difficult things ever written for ladies' voices. It calls for quick dramatic attack and technique of every description [...] the voices blend in perfect simulation of the tambourine's prolonged shaking" (Novello Davies 91). Despite many of the choristers suffering with seasickness on the journey from Southampton to New York, Clara attempted to continue rehearsals aboard the ship in order to ensure her choir was ready to face its competitors. For the female choral competition, there were two other entries: The Cecilians (from Wilkes-Barre) and The Scranton Ladies. Both Wilkes-Barre and Scranton are known as settlements for Welsh immigrants.

To the sound of a cheering audience and the sight of a standing ovation before the performance, Clara's choir filed onto the stage as the last of the three choirs to compete. Believing that the previous ensemble – The Cecilians – had delivered a "perfect" rendition of the test pieces, Clara was somewhat doubtful about her own choir's performance. To her surprise, however, John Thomas (1826–1913, harpist to Queen Victoria) announced on behalf of the

adjudicators that the Welsh Ladies' Choir had won the Ladies' Choral Prize of $300.[8] Amidst the stateside celebrations of cheering, hats being thrown into the air and invitations for the choir to perform across America, details regarding the choir's success was communicated back to Wales via telegrams sent to Lascalles Carr. In the aftermath of the competition, Clara and her choir embarked upon an unplanned tour to Kansas City, Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Buffalo which, although important for the promotion of the choir, kept Clara away from her parenting responsibilities.

While it might seem logical for musical ensembles to gain recognition in the international field following national success, the opposite was true for Clara's Welsh Ladies' Choir. Although the choir was known in Cardiff prior to the Chicago Eisteddfod, recognition in the broader national context was lacking. This was remedied in 1894 when Clara received an invitation to perform before Queen Victoria at her residence in Osborne House on the Isle of Wight on 8 February 1894. This was an important engagement for the female choir since no other Welsh choir had been honoured in this way. In the following year, the Treorchy Male Choir – a choir made up largely of miners and colliers – performed for the Queen on 29 November, while the Rhondda Glee Society (winner of the male choral competition in Chicago) was commanded to sing on 23 February 1898. Thus, it was a bourgeois female choir that was first to be recognised with a royal title; from the time of the command performance, Clara's choir became the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir.

While the Chicago Eisteddfod allowed Welsh-Americans to assert their right to promote a native identity on one side of the Atlantic, the Exposition Universelle of 1900 offered a different opportunity for musical exhibitionism on the other. Comparable to the Chicago World's Fair, the Exposition Universelle was an international fair that took place in Paris between 15

April and 12 November. Although Clara notes in her autobiography that choirs in Wales were invited to participate in the Exhibition (139), contemporary accounts in the media suggest a more complicated reality. On 13 May 1900, Laurent de Rille (head of the Music Commission for the Exhibition) sent a letter to Paul Barbier (a Professor of French at Cardiff University) inquiring whether or not it would be possible to include Welsh choirs at the Exhibition (*Cardiff Times* 26 May 1900). The suggestion was taken seriously and a conference was organised accordingly, to which representatives of a number of Welsh choirs were invited. The conference committee concluded that it would be "desirable" to be represented at the Paris Exhibition, and it suggested in particular that an international contest should be organised following the precedent set at the Chicago Eisteddfod. Here, it is clear that the relationship between competitive spirit and communal singing in Wales was an important factor to consider when representing musical practice outside of Wales. That being said, the organising committee did not follow the suggestion of arranging a contest. Instead, the Welsh singers – the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir and two Welsh male choirs (namely the Rhondda Glee Society and the Barry District Glee Society) – were afforded the opportunity to present a concert at the Trocadéro Hall in Paris.

Social class is pertinent here. The distinction between the social backgrounds of the choristers from France and those from Wales was observed by Clara. She stated: "The French male choristers struck me as being of the bourgeoisie, and very different from our sturdy Welshmen, many of whom were miners" (Novello Davies 140). Of course, Clara's own bourgeois female choir was also very different from the Welsh male choirs. In terms of the relationship between choral performance and national identity, Exposition Universelle allowed the Welsh choirs to promote a different sense of nationhood; the choirs were able to select their own songs free from the restriction of competitive regulations. Without the need for test pieces,

the repertoire performed by the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir was more closely linked with a sense of native identity; it contained several songs in the Welsh language, including the following Welsh folksongs arranged for the choir by David Emlyn Evans (1843–1913): "Y Deryn Pur" ("The Gentle Dove"), "Llwyn Onn" ("Ash Grove") and "Clychau Aberdyfi" ("The Bells of Aberdovey"). Interestingly, the choir performed a joint item with the male choirs: "The March of the Men of Harlech". As I discussed earlier, the piece is especially associated with a Welsh construction of masculinity. The involvement of the female choir in this performance thus underscores the ways in which women were actively involved in a stereotypical representation of male identity in Wales for an international audience.

Land of My Mothers?

Having received recognition in the form of awards and congratulations in both Chicago and Paris, Clara and her choir had acquired a reputation as a leading female ensemble on the international stage.[9] Despite holding a musical career for over six decades, the personal legacy of Clara Novello Davies and her pioneering choir has been largely forgotten from narrative records in Wales. In some ways, this lacuna is related to the general representation (or lack thereof) of women in the musical history of Wales. On the other hand, however, the legacy of her son, Ivor Novello, has maintained a place in the cultural memory of the people of Wales.

To conclude, I would like to draw attention to a contemporary event held in Cardiff Bay on 3 December 2014. Authored by a Cardiff-based writer, Arnold Evans, *Novello & Son* depicts the life of Madame Clara, focusing particularly on her musical achievements and the (sometimes strained) relationship with Ivor. Although the factual framework of this musical revue is taken largely firsthand from Clara's autobiography, Evans admits that his depiction of her life may not have been entirely accepted by Clara herself. He says: "I don't know if *Novello & Son* is a true

portrait of Clara. What I do know is that she would insist that it wasn't. She'd hate some of the words I've put in her mouth, cringe at the moments when she lets her guard down. And, of course, she'd be outraged by the bits I've made up" (programme note to *Novello & Son* 2014). Here, the construction of myth alongside the representation of reality is notably clear. Moreover, he uses his brief programme note to draw the audience's attention to Clara's social standing and her position as a woman. Evans explains that the revue is not only a "tribute" to the life of Clara but also "to those of her generation who never allowed such minor obstacles as class distinction, sex discrimination or the occasional world war to stand in their way" (ibid).

Taking place in the Western Studio, a small theatre situated within the iconic Wales Millennium Centre, the single performance of the revue in this venue was well-attended, especially by those belonging to the older generations.[10] What is most interesting in the context of this chapter is the representation of Clara and the reception of the event portrayed in the press. In particular, it is the relationship between a female and a male, Clara and Ivor (played by Rosamund Shelley and Christopher Littlewood, respectively), that is especially noteworthy. While the title of the tribute – *Novello & Son* – suggests that Novello (the role assumed here by Clara) occupies the superior position in this partnership, the hierarchical relationship is reversed in reality. In a review published by *Wales Online*, the show is framed immediately in terms of Ivor's fame rather than solely on Clara's success. For example, the title reads "Ivor Novello's mother is brilliantly captured in stage show" and the by-line refers to the "Cardiff entertainer's famous mum" (*Wales Online*, 4 December 2014). Although the adjectives "brilliant" and "famous" indicate a sense of approval from the article's author Mike Smith, he later says that "Rosamund Shelley is superb as the driven, talented, egocentric, bitchy, at times pompous and, ultimately, out of her depth product of a Welsh Methodist family" (ibid). Considering the lack of

negative press regarding Clara and her choir throughout her lifetime, it must be questioned how much truth there is in this depiction exposed to audiences in the twenty-first century. Here, a negative portrayal is framed in terms of a positive reception.

The show's repertoire is also of interest. Arnold Evans has chosen for Clara (Shelley) to sing only songs composed by her son, despite the fact that Clara herself composed a number of songs and her choir sang a diverse repertoire of songs in English and in Welsh. However, Evans' choice provided a particularly poignant moment when Shelley began conducting the audience as if they were the long-established members of the ladies' choir, and, accepting the role assigned to them, members of the audience sang aloud. Here, the choice of song – Ivor Novello's wartime classic, "Keep the Home Fires Burning" – is significant; at an event signalled to remember the lifetime successes of Clara Novello Davies, it is her son's song that is audible. In this manner, Ivor (rather than Clara) is heard sonically, a symbolic gesture since it confirms also that the legacy of Ivor is remembered and a living memory of his music is alive at this time. Despite the advances of Clara Novello Davies and her Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir in the realm of Welsh music, once again, the women of Harlech are marginalised in order to perpetuate the myth of Wales only as the "land of my fathers".

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Notes

[1] "Mam" is the Welsh word for mother.

[2] According to Bohlman, "unofficial national anthems serve all the functions of a national anthem, but they do not have the top-down sanction to represent the nation beyond its borders" (111).

[3] The opening lines of the official Welsh national anthem read "*Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i mi. Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri*". English translation: "The old land of my fathers is dear to me. Land of poets and singers, and people of stature".

[4] Following the religious reforms of the nineteenth century, the issue of temperance became pertinent when the temperance movement was initiated in England and Wales. While the focus for social reformers was placed at first upon individuals, strategies aimed at social groups soon emerged. This was linked especially to social class; reformers, who were predominantly middle-class, believed that the behaviour of the working classes needed to be addressed (especially in relation to temperance) in order to stabilise society as a whole. In this matter, the Band of Hope played a crucial role. Although associated with the temperance movement, Band of Hope leaders did not focus solely upon the issue of alcohol consumption. Instead, they "aimed to inculcate a new cultural identity in their young members, to facilitate the absorption of the upwardly mobile working-class families into respectable society" (Shiman 49).

[5] The Blue Ribbon Movement was initiated by Francis Murphy in the United States during the 1870s, and was part of the greater Gospel Temperance Movement and general focus on temperance in the late nineteenth century. As this may suggest, the movement was associated with abstinence from alcohol, and those who joined the movement wore a blue ribbon on their lapel as a public marker of this decision. The movement initially took the form of meetings held in public halls, where "rousing speeches", "personal testimonies" and "collective song[s]" were presented. Richard T. Booth, who was himself a reformed drinker, imported the movement to Britain in the 1880s. He launched a Blue Ribbon campaign, which lasted for five years due to its widespread appeal at this time. See "Blue Ribbon Movement" (Blocker, Fahey, and Tyrrell 107-9).

[6] An *eisteddfod* (pl. *eisteddfodau*) is a Welsh competitive festival of music and poetry.

[7] Between 1903 and 1922, Captain Francis O'Neill (1848–1936), an Irish-born policeman, published a significant number of Irish traditional folk melodies that were collected from the Irish diaspora in Chicago. His main collection *The Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems* (1907) remains both highly regarded and well utilised by Irish traditional musicians.

[8] The other music adjudicators were Ben Davies (1858–1953, a Welsh tenor), William Tomlins (conductor of Chicago's Apollo Music Club from 1875 to 1898), D. J. J. Mason (director of the Wilkes-Barre Oratorio Society), William Courtney (a British-born tenor living in New York), John Gower (also British-born, a cathedral organist living in Denver, Colorado) and Mary Davies (1855–1930, a Welsh soprano who was well-known in the fashionable London music scene).

[9] In Paris, the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir was awarded with the Grand Prix for its efforts while Clara was presented with a gold wreath of laurel leaves by Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921). The laurel leaves were donated to St Fagans National History Museum by Ivor Novello in 1943. Clara also received a Sèvres bowl (worth £80) from the French Government (*Western Mail*, 24 July 1900). Moreover, her skills as a conductor made an impact in Paris. As it was reported in *The Musical Times*, a "lady conductor was doubtless something of a novelty to the French folk" (1 September 1900). Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray (1840-1910), the President of the Paris Conservatoire, was one such person who was impressed by Clara. He reportedly commented "she possesse[d] the exquisite delicacy of feminine sentiment, and the energy indispensible for forcing her will on a large number. I have never heard such efforts of choral interpretation [...] as those that she obtains" (Novello Davies 142). Accordingly, Clara was offered a position to teach at the Conservatoire but she declined.

[10] The location of the venue in Cardiff Bay is significant since a statue of Ivor Novello was erected there in 2009. Created by Peter Nicholas (1934–2015), the 7ft bronze sculpture features Ivor seated and looking over his shoulder at the Wales Millennium Centre. The statue cost £80,000 to build, an amount that was raised through an official charity named the Ivor Novello Statue Fund. An equivalent statue memorialising Clara Novello Davies does not exist.

Que Vivan Las Mamas:
Las Cafeteras, Zapatista Activism, and New Expressions of Chicana Motherhood

David Eichert

What does it mean to be a mother along the border between Mexico and the United States? Mexican and Mexican American mothers have long found themselves politically and socially marginalised by their societies because they fall outside of established power dynamics. This systematic disenfranchisement is nothing new: during colonization, for example, the Spanish imposed the strict *castas* system which ranked people in the Spanish colonies by race and "purity of blood," thus disenfranchising the indigenous and mixed blood (*mestizo*) mother. Patriarchal norms reinforce a system of uncompromising gender roles which continues to define the role of a mother as very limited and powerless. Violence and poverty endemic to many communities in Northern Mexico disproportionately impacts mothers, while racist politicians in the United States often blame immigrant mothers from Mexico for many of their country's political ills. Moreover, Mexican American mothers continue to face legal and societal borders in the United States, regardless of citizenship or education levels.

In response to these systemic challenges, the Chicana feminist movement (as well as the larger Chicano Movement) has fought against harmful cultural forces in an effort to improve the lives of Mexicans on both sides of the border. Musicians in particular have played a hugely important role in the creation of a Chicano and Chicana (often simplified to Chican@) identity, combining traditional Mexican instruments and styles with modern musical genres to address a wide range of social, political, and economic problems faced by the Mexican community (Alvarez and Widener 227).

While this Chican@ tradition of creating songs about social issues is not new, a recent group from East Los Angeles called Las Cafeteras brings a new and unexplored perspective to the issues faced by many Mexicans and Mexican Americans. In particular, many of their songs explore the challenges faced by Mexican mothers on both sides of the border, asserting a strong transnational solidarity against the forces which marginalise these women.

This paper will examine the music of Las Cafeteras and their messages about transborder Chicana motherhood. Furthermore, special attention will be given to how the band challenges existing power dynamics of gender-based violence and economic limitations, instead envisioning, through their music, an ideal world which recognises the political potency of the Chicana mother.

Background

The musicians of Las Cafeteras started making music in 2005. The various members of the group, which now features two women and four men, first met while taking music classes at the Eastside Cafe in El Sereno (the easternmost neighborhood of Los Angeles). The group decided to write music promoting an idealised sense of community inspired by Chican@ activism, eventually releasing their first album, *It's Time*, in 2012 (Gutierrez). Their name comes from the Eastside Cafe, but is feminised to show their commitment to making music about gender equality (Phillips; Romero).

Las Cafeteras' choice to use traditional Mexican musical styles to convey a political message is nothing new. Chican@ musicians have been writing music about social causes for decades, both for use in public demonstrations and as part of a community discussion on identity and politics. Many groups fuse traditional Latin musical styles with a variety of modern genres like rock, R&B, hip-hop, punk, or jazz, and the names of many of these groups reflect themes of

resistance, indigenous identity, and self-determination that are so important to the Chican@ Movement (e.g. Rage Against the Machine, Quetzal, Ozomatli, Delinquent Habits, Funky Aztecs, The Filthy Immigrants, etc.) (Loza, "Assimilation" 147).

The music of Las Cafeteras is heavily influenced by the *son jarocho*, a regional musical style from Veracruz that is particularly important for Chican@ music and identity. During the second half of the twentieth century, the *son jarocho* experienced a resurgence in popularity in Mexico and quickly crossed the border into California, where early Mexican American musicians like Los Lobos and Ritchie Valens adopted the style. Las Cafeteras relies heavily on the *son jarocho* to convey their political messages, employing traditional instruments like the *jarana*, a small guitar, and the *tarima*, a wooden box with sound holes upon which musicians dance to create percussion (*zapateado*). Other instruments include the *quijada*, a dried jawbone of a donkey or horse, and the *marímbula*, a plucked key box bass (Viesca 725-6).

The *son jarocho* was created during the era of colonization by combining the various musical influences in Veracruz such as music from the Spanish, the indigenous populations of southeastern Mexico, and Africans taken to the New World. The first documentation of *son jarocho* as a distinct musical form occurred in 1776, when it was banned by the Spanish Inquisition during a period of strict Catholicism for allegedly being blasphemous and immoral. Later, following the Mexican War of Independence in the early 1800s, *son jarocho* was an important part of the creation of a Mexican identity that was neither wholly Spanish nor indigenous, especially among the country's *mestizo* population. This history is particularly important for Chican@ musicians like Las Cafeteras, who see the *son jarocho* as a kind of resistance music that survived and flourished despite colonial cultural oppression (Loza, "From Veracruz").

By taking *son jarocho* music styles and using them to express solidarity with mothers on both sides of the border, Las Cafeteras pays homage to a centuries-old struggle against exclusion and disenfranchisement. Furthermore, Las Cafeteras' use of the *son jarocho* connects their music to a larger Chican@ activist tradition that peacefully challenges oppressive power dynamics while supporting mothers and others marginalised groups. Specifically, in many of their songs the musicians of Las Cafeteras decry the violence and economic disadvantages faced by many mothers along the border, while simultaneously praising and emphasizing the idealised potential of mothers to act as political agents in their communities.

Mothers and Violence

A consistent theme in the music of Las Cafeteras is the violence and discrimination faced by mothers on both sides of the border. This violence, resulting from gang activity, harsh legal barriers, or other forms of discrimination, is a particularly vile part of the systemic limitations which restrict Chicana mothers. However, by telling the stories of mothers affected by violence, Las Cafeteras seeks to bring attention to the plight of these women and ultimately create a tool that will inspire individuals to rally for political change.

For example, in their song "Mujer Soy," Las Cafeteras targets what is arguably the worst problem facing mothers in Mexico: the pandemic of femicide occurring in the northern *maquiladora* towns on the U.S.-Mexico border. For the musicians this phenomenon, caused by the intersection of poverty, globalization, and patriarchy, is one example of the forces which disenfranchise and harm mothers.

Since the early 1990s, hundreds of women and mothers have been brutally murdered in Ciudad Juárez, a major manufacturing center south of El Paso, Texas and the second-largest metropolitan area on the U.S.-Mexico border. These murders are often shrouded in mystery and

investigations can be stalled for months until body parts are found floating down the river or in mass graves (Cave). Often the mothers and family members of murdered women are unable to properly grieve because of government restrictions on access to the bodies. One mother even recounted that government authorities barred her from visiting a morgue while simultaneously producing conflicting accounts about how many murdered girls were held inside (Cave).

There are many causes of this violence, including drug-related gang violence and jealousy from romantic partners and other men. One study found that a third of studied bodies had been sexually assaulted (Cave). These problems are not specific to Ciudad Juárez either: on average, six women are murdered every day in Mexico, with relatively high impunity for the criminals. For instance, only 24 percent of all femicides in 2012 and 2013 were ever investigated by police, with only 1.6% of crimes ever resulting in a sentencing. Furthermore, femicide is simply the most extreme form of violence against women in Mexican society, where over 60 percent of women have been abused and where more than a third of women have been victimised by male partners (Matloff).

Las Cafeteras addresses these issues in “Mujer Soy” by using the femicide epidemic as a symbol of the Mexican woman’s larger fight against oppression. The song opens with a timid and plaintive *son jarocho* instrumental introduction, followed by powerful language evoking the many challenges faced by Mexican women in Ciudad Juarez:

Las niñas, las niñas y las mujeres,	Girls, girls and women,
sólo pedimos justicia.	we only ask for justice.
Nos dejan, nos dejan con los quehaceres	They leave us, they leave us to our chores
y un golpe de caricia.	and hit us with a caress.
Caminar, caminar es peligroso	Walking, walking is dangerous

en los desiertos de Juárez.	in the deserts of Juárez.
El Gobierno es poderoso	The Government is powerful,
mientras mueren las mujeres.	whereas women die.

Las Cafeteras continues, incriminating the *maquiladora* system and declaring:

Yo no vengo a disculparme: mujer soy y lo seré. Sólo vengo a declararle que quieta nunca estaré.	I didn't come here to say I'm sorry: I'm a woman and I'll always be. I just came to tell you I'll never stay still.
En la casa, la calle, el desierto, hay maquiladora.	At home, in the street, in the desert, there are maquiladoras.
En la casa y en la calle, el desierto, hay maquiladora.	At home, in the street, in the desert, there are maquiladoras.

The *maquiladora* system is often blamed for creating the conditions which have allowed the femicide epidemic to become so widespread. Following the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, the number of *maquiladoras* (factories) along the U.S.-Mexico border increased dramatically to meet the sudden demand from American corporations. As workers (mostly female, and often young mothers with children) from poverty-stricken areas of Mexico migrated to these border towns in search of work, massive metropolitan areas arose with little public transportation, not enough electricity, and poorly-lit dirt roads. This combination of inadequate infrastructure and hundreds of female migrant workers walking home from work late at night increased the risk for greater violence against women (Pantaleo 350).

Moreover, the *maquiladora* system has been widely criticised by activists for having created a "consume and dispose" cycle of young female workers who work until they lose their utility and are replaced by fresh hands (Fragoso 163).

From the perspective of Las Cafeteras, the violence in Ciudad Juárez is endemic of a larger systemic problem which reduces the bodies of mothers to objects that can be violated and discarded without punishment. Las Cafeteras also points to the Mexican government, which allowed for the expansion of the *maquiladora* system and which has failed to stem the murders of mothers and daughters in Ciudad Juárez and throughout Mexico.

In response, Las Cafeteras offers words of support. Instead of reducing them to a valueless body, the mothers of "Mujer Soy" are given a voice and a purpose:

Cada paso, cada paso que camino	Every step, every step
Me lleva a la libertad.	Takes me towards freedom.
Llegaré a mi destino,	I'll reach my goal eventually,
Donde en paz podré estar.	Where in peace I'll be.
Vivo lucha, vivo lucha mujerista,	I live, I live a pro-woman fight,
Mi existir tiene razón.	My existence has meaning.
Sobrevivo en la conquista,	I survive in conquest,
Tengo grand fuerza y pasión.	I have great strength and passion.
Mujer soy y lo seré.	I'm a woman and I'll always be.

Las Cafeteras also addresses other forms of violence in their music. For example, in addition to the very real threat of sexual assault and murder faced by mothers in Northern

Mexico, there are also legal barriers which create dangerous conditions for mothers who choose to immigrate to the United States. Since 1994, when the United States government enacted harsher measures to enforce border security, migrant deaths as a result of exposure have dramatically increased. In order to avoid border fences and evade border security, migrants are obliged to travel longer distances over more dangerous terrain, which necessitates more water and food. This is especially trying for mothers with children or menstruating women, and female migrants are 2.7 times more likely to die of exposure than men (O'Leary 112-7).

Las Cafeteras addresses these risks in their plaintive song "Ya Me Voy," which recreates the desperate and perilous journey experienced by many Mexican immigrants to the United States. The song opens with a quiet and pained female voice as the migrants, driven by economic desperation and violence, choose to cross over into the United States:

Ya me voy sin dinero	I am going without money
Ya me voy, yo no quiero	I am going, I do not want to
Pero ya me voy	But I am going

In addition to telling the story of marginalised individuals (Mexican migrants to the United States), Las Cafeteras also draws attention to the various forms of sexual violence which threaten migrant mothers, including rape and prostitution-related exploitation, via a mournful dialogue between a mother and her child:

Ya me voy, yo no quiero	I am going, I do not want to
Sin dinero, por mi sueño	Without money, for my dream
Ya me voy (ya me voy)	I am going (I am going)

En la tarde ya me voy (ya me voy)	In the afternoon I am going (I am going)
Por la luna ya me voy (ya me voy)	By the moon I am going (I am going)
Tengo frío pero voy	I am cold but I am going
ya me voy	I am going
No te vayas no te vayas	Do not go do not go
No te vayas mi madre	Do not go my mother
No te vayas (no te vayas)	Do not go (do not go)
Con la cara maquillada (no te vayas)	With made-up face (do not go)
Con la boca muy rosada (no te vayas)	The very pink mouth (do not go)
Con tu negra minifalda	With your black miniskirt
Ma no te vayas ma	Do not go mama
No te vayas	Do not go

In addition to the various weather-related risks experienced by all migrants crossing to the United States by foot, Mexican mothers also take the risk of sexual assault while crossing the border. Too often, border crossing guides (also called *coyotes*) will threaten to abandon female migrants in the desert if they do not submit to having sex for continued help. This treatment is not limited to adult women either, with some migrant mothers telling stories of being coerced to surrender their teenage daughters to their *coyotes* in exchange for continued direction. To make matters worse, these migrant mothers often cannot report their rapes or the rapes of their daughters to authorities the United States for fear of deportation, which allows these kinds of crimes to continue unpunished (Joffe-Block).

Furthermore, cross-border trafficking and prostitution are perverse forms of gender-based violence which harm Mexican mothers. The American market for Mexican prostitutes is nothing new: prostitution of Mexican women has existed since the West was Wild. During Prohibition in the United States, northern Mexico became the place for American men to find amusement in the numerous bars, clubs, and brothels which sprung up to meet demand (Lacey).

As a result of immigration policies in the twentieth century which excluded women, many single mothers and abandoned women unable to find other forms of work were obliged to turn to prostitution in order to support their families (Rosas). This trend has continued to this day: for example, a recent study of Mexican prostitution found that the overwhelming majority of women were single mothers, many coming from poverty-stricken areas of Mexico in search of a better life. The desperation of many of these women puts them at greater risk for exploitation and trafficking into the United States (Bender).

By choosing to emphasise the stories of marginalised Mexican mothers, Las Cafeteras is magnifying the voices of disenfranchised women whose experiences are often ignored or co-opted by oppressive cultural and political forces. Because the violence faced by these mothers has many causes (legal barriers, patriarchal influences, neoliberal economic policies like NAFTA), Las Cafeteras seeks to highlight their challenges and inspire solutions.

Economic Challenges

In addition to describing the violence faced by mothers along the border, Las Cafeteras also recognises the economic challenges and barriers which color the experiences of many Chicana women. This includes both the day-to-day struggles of a mother to provide for her family as well as the larger systematic disenfranchisement which creates unique challenges for Mexican mothers.

Las Cafeteras, continuing to bring attention to the stories of people on the margins of society, devotes several songs to the daily struggles and victories of working mothers. For example, in their song "Cafe Con Pan," Las Cafeteras connects a seemingly inconsequential, maternal activity (the preparation of coffee and bread for a morning meal) to ideas of strength and supreme communal importance (including one line that declares that mothers who prepare breakfast are *fuertes luchadoras* [strong fighters] for the community, a term usually associated with professional wrestling!). Similarly, the band dedicates their song "Trabajador Trabajadora" to "mothers, who sacrifice to make ends meet," as well as a long list of different daily workers (farmworkers, teachers, students, activists, spiritual leaders, etc.). Furthermore, the song points out that it is mothers (and, as also noted in the song, single mothers) who fill many of these roles and form an essential part of the economy and society.

The message of gratitude and appreciation for working mothers in "Trabajador Trabajadora" counters a larger, negative perception of Chicana mothers in American media, which often stereotypes Mexican mothers as foreign or parasitical. This includes, for example, the recent "anchor baby" debate during the 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign or racist laws in states along the border (Barro; Bermúdez et al.). Latina mothers also face unique societal challenges in the United States, such as earning 56 cents for every dollar earned by a white man in the United States, resulting in thousands of dollars in lost income every year (O'Brien). America's system of mass incarceration, which imprisons one in every eighty-eight Latino men, also hurts Mexican mothers, who are obliged to provide for families and households without the financial and day-to-day support of husbands or male family members (Schlossberg). The overtly positive and grateful message of "Trabajador Trabajadora" instead envisions a world

where mothers are appreciated and valued for the work they do, both in the community and for their families.

Las Cafeteras also critiques macro-level economic forces which disenfranchise the Chicana mother (such as NAFTA, as previously mentioned). For example, in "Ya Me Voy," Las Cafeteras recreates the pains faced by impoverished Mexican women left behind by migrant husbands and sons. In a hypothetical conversation, a husband announces that he is compelled to migrate north out of economic need:

Ya me voy, yo no quiero, sin dinero	I am going, I do not want to, without money
tengo miedo pero voy	I'm afraid but I am going
Para el norte ya me voy	To the north I am going
Por el jale ya me voy (ya me voy)	By the pull I am going (I am going)
No se a donde pero voy	But I don't know where I am going
Ya me voy	I am going

In response, his wife pleads for him not to leave her:

No te vayas mi querido	Do not go my dear
Con cariño te suplico	With fondness I beg you
No te vayas (no te vayas)	Do not go (do not go)
A morir en las montañas (no te vayas)	To die in the mountains (do not go)
El desierto no perdona (no te vayas)	The desert does not forgive (do not go)
Y tampoco Arizona (no te vayas)	Nor Arizona (do not go)
No te vayas	Do not go

This conversation represents decades of similar discussions that have happened between husbands and wives, or sons and mothers, in Northern Mexico, and demonstrates in some small way the economic necessity which has separated thousands of families.

Economic migration between Mexico and the United States is nothing new: during the first half of the twentieth century, it was mostly Mexican men who crossed the border to work seasonal jobs in the United States, leaving behind wives and children for months at a time. This arrangement was formalised with the Bracero Program in 1942, which brought in hundreds of thousands of men to work the fields and factories during World War Two. While women and mothers were forbidden from working in the United States, they were an essential part of the Bracero Program, since they were tasked with staying home and caring for dependent children and elderly members of the family, thus enabling their husbands to work. The work was dangerous, both for the men who crossed the border and for the mothers left behind in Mexico, who suddenly lacked social and financial stability. In some cases, men chose to abandon their families and establish new families in the United States, thus stranding Mexican mothers on the other side of the border in a "married-but-single" limbo without remittances or knowledge of her husband's whereabouts. In all cases, there were no resources dedicated to helping these mothers care for their children or household, which put untold psychological and financial pressure on them (Rosas).

In many ways economic disenfranchisement goes hand-in-hand with the violence faced by mothers on both sides of the border. Because Chicana mothers are often viewed as expendable – by gang members, government leaders, *maquiladora* managers, *coyotes,* etc. – their lives and their stories are not valued and they find themselves on the margins of society. In response, Las Cafeteras uses their music to directly address these systemic problems.

Mothers as Political Agents

Finally, the music of Las Cafeteras is connected to a strong underlying message of solidarity among mothers on both sides of the border. This idea of unity, a consistent theme of the Chicana feminist movement, is central to the work of Las Cafeteras as they seek to reimagine the Chicana mother as a political agent. Instead of being acted upon by colonial powers and patriarchal oppression, the Chicana mother is portrayed as a powerful and potent force for good in her community and the world at large.

For example, the band rewrote the words to the traditional *son jarocho* folk song "La Bamba" to focus on revolutionary Chicana values. This feel-good anthem, dubbed "La Bamba Rebelde," decries racial profiling and discrimination while declaring:

Que vivan las mujeres de East L.A.	Long live the women of East L.A.
Porque bailan La Bamba, que bailan la	So they can dance La Bamba...
bamba...	Like the Zapatistas, like the Zapatistas
Como las Zapatistas, como los Zapatistas	I will fight, I will fight, I will overcome
Yo lucharé, yo lucharé, yo vencere	

The choice to use "La Bamba" as a platform for their activist declaration is an obvious one, since the song is arguably the most well-known *son jarocho* song in the United States thanks to Ritchie Valens' popular 1958 adaptation. By remixing "La Bamba," Las Cafeteras joins a long tradition of musicians on both sides of the border who have used the music to express their heritage and Mexican ancestry. The reference to the Zapatistas, as well as the overarching themes of the song which closely mirror radical Zapatista ideology, connect the

struggle of the Chicana woman in the United States to the counter-globalization and pro-equality battles that are so important to the Chican@ movement.

Other than traditional musical styles like the *son jarocho*, perhaps the most important influence on Chican@ activist music is the ideology of the Zapatistas. In 1994 the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or EZLN) declared war against the Mexican state. Based mostly in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, the group consists of thousands of indigenous men and women who espouse a libertarian socialist ideology based on radial participatory democracy that opposes economic globalization and marginalization by Western and postcolonial powers. The Zapatista war with Mexico has been largely defensive, and true to their creed of nonviolence many of their military actions have been largely symbolic. For example, in 2000, the Zapatista Air Force "bombed" a federal military encampment with thousands of paper airplanes (Meyer and Ndura 12).

The Zapatistas are also radically dedicated to gender equality in all aspects of the movement. This was clearly outlined by Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos in one of his earliest communiqués when he wrote about "the double subjugation of women" who were marginalised because of their gender in a community already marginalised by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the federal Mexican state (Govea 66). Gender equality was also outlined explicitly from the beginning of the rebellion, when the Zapatistas announced the Women's Revolutionary Law alongside its other foundational Revolutionary Laws. This law outlines the rights of women to fair pay, decisions about childbirth and marriage, political involvement, healthcare, and education, and even though many indigenous women are unaware of the specific protections that the law affords them, its mere existence has become a symbol of fair lives for women (Speed et al. 3-4; Castillo).

The Zapatista women's movement draws on Western feminist ideologies while preserving and reclaiming indigenous traditions which were lost with the imposition of European culture (Hymn 2). This hybrid form of indigenous feminism, with an emphasis on creating a movement *for* everyone *by* everyone through communalism and consensus, has proved instrumental for many Chican@ activists and musicians like Las Cafeteras, who have used Zapatismo as a framework for their own activism (Marquez 79; Govea 66).

The Zapatista uprising was an important paradigm shift for the Chican@ movement in the United States, since "[n]o longer was the movement looking to an indigenous past for its inspirations. It was now a group of living, indigenous peoples from southern México who were challenging the dominant power relations in the new, neoliberal world order" (Marquez 79). It is only logical, therefore, that Las Cafeteras heavily employs Zapatista ideology in their messages about mothers as political agents.

Perhaps the most explicit example of Zapatista influence in the music of Las Cafeteras can be seen in the music video for their 'beautiful dope remix" of *Mujer Soy*, released in 2015 and remixed by local Los Angeles DJ Yukicito. The music video for the song, which was meant to "reclaim the dance floor with empowering dance music" (Iseli 2015), follows a day in the life a Chicana single mother and community activist from East L.A. named Maryann Aguirre.

One important message of the music video is the multiplicity of roles played by the Chicana single mother. Aguirre must be and is an excellent mother, employee, leader, and community member from the moment she wakes up to the moment she falls asleep. The influence of Zapatista and Chicana ideology on the video is obvious, as can be seen in the posters announcing, "Sin las mujeres no hay revolución" [Without the women there is no revolution] and "Mi existencia es mi resistancia" [My existence is my resistance]. The message is clear: Mexican

mothers like Aguirre are strong, multidimensional, and not invisible as they resist borders and categories which would otherwise ignore them. Even though forces from society and the government have historically restricted the political efficacy of Mexican mothers, they are capable political agents whose voices deserve to be heard.

Furthermore, the choice to remix *Mujer Soy* is highly symbolic. The remixed song and music video demonstrate solidarity with the women of Mexico and creates a unified transborder voice in support of motherhood and women. The remix also suggests a continuation of the Mexican mother's struggle – even though a physical border has been crossed, there still is work to be done. Finally, the choice to feature Aguirre is deliberate and follows in the grand tradition of using media to portray the lives of subjects who would normally be ignored by the dominant culture. "Imagine," the video concludes, "a world where we saw every womyn's story, vision, strength, passion, dignity, labor, courage, resiliency, leadership, freedom, [and] power. What would the world look like?"

Conclusion

Through their music, Las Cafeteras actively opposes dominant societal and political forces which oppress and marginalise Mexican and Mexican American women. There are many layers of resistance in their music, such as the choice to employ and remix the cross-cultural musical style of *son jarocho*, the decision to feature micro-level stories of mothers as a way to critique large transnational inequalities, or the frequent references to Zapatista pro-mother political ideology. By telling the stories of violence and struggle and empowerment that are so common to the experience of Mexican mothers, Las Cafeteras seeks to praise and honor the sacrifices made by mothers on both sides of the border.

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Parenting Outside the Mainstream: Indie Rocker Moms

Jackie Weissman

Abstract

The stereotypical image of the sex- and drug-fueled rock star is the diametric opposite of the stereotypical image of motherhood. Yet woman rockers have always found ways to support themselves, their children, and their creativity. Often this is accomplished by finding supportive family models outside the mainstream. Sometimes this approach is kept secret. At times it is thrust forward as an act of rock 'n' roll rebellion. This article explores the issues indie musicians encounter, drawing primarily on research and experiences I captured during the making of my recent documentary film, *Rock N Roll Mamas*. Over seven years, the film examined the lives of Kristin Hersh from the bands, Throwing Muses, 50FOOTWAVE, and a solo performer, who home schooled four children while living on a tour bus; Zia McCabe from The Dandy Warhols, who relied on her husband, the band guitar's tech and merchandise seller, for childcare; and up and coming hip hop MC, Ms. Suad, a single mom who depended on family and other single mothers with mixed success. The article also includes insights from prominent rock critics/authors, Evelyn McDonald and Ann Powers, who provide valuable research regarding rock musician mothers throughout history. Although rooted in the story of rock 'n' roll moms, this article challenges the more universal notion that there is an ideal mother or parenting style, and highlights the worldwide struggle of women who try to balance their passion for their children and their art.

The Lack of Public Mother's Stories: Why I Made *Rock N Roll Mamas*

Throughout history, women's stories, especially those of mothers have been kept hidden, told in secret to one another outside of the public eye. Society has a vision of the "perfect" mother, either doting and selfless, or as a corporate multitasker who "does it all." There is no public vision of a creative mother. What are these women's lives like?

In effort to explore this mystery, and also to better understand how to balance my own creative inner needs with the needs of my toddler, I started making a documentary called *Rock N Roll Mamas* in 2003. I did this because I had a difficult time finding mothers' stories, locating role models whom I could emulate as a creative person and parent. As a result, I went on a seven-year journey making the film, which took me many places and introduced me to many musician mothers. Ultimately, I was lucky enough to follow three "rock mamas" off and on

through brief periods in their lives; Kristin Hersh Zia McCabe and Ms. Suad.Through the course of my filmmaking journey, I learned from all these women's stories.

I share these stories with you, readers, as a way to educate and empower yourselves and validate your own choices as a parent/creative person, or simply as a person juggling career and creativity. Bringing mothers' stories out into the light gives them power. As Adrienne Rich profoundly stated, "Sharing personal private stories can enable women to create a collective description of the world"

Ms. Su'ad

I begin with Ms. Su'ad, the very first subject in the film, whom I followed the longest. I met Ms. Suad at a small local performance, a benefit for a political cause, where she was a completely engaged and energized performer. There, in the audience, was a little boy dancing. He certainly piqued my curiosity, as I do not see many young children at shows dancing alone. Then Suad called him up on stage to dance with her; this boy was her son, Moses. They danced together to her strident, lyrical rhymes;

What I am is,

the fearfulness of symmetry,

What I am is,

the fluidity of poetry,

What I am is,

the open book you cannot read,

What I am is,

me, me, me.

In this life I stand on my own two feet,

use the gifts God made me to hit the streets. (Su'ad, *What I Am*)

This incident was truly heartwarming, a rock 'n' roll scene not seen often, an MC mother rocking out with her four-year-old son. It was a perfect dichotomy of the power and energy of hip hop mixed with the sweetness of maternity.

Ms. Su'ad is a dynamic, impressive performer and person. The name of her first EP was "the urban superwoman is a savage." She has bravado, to say the least. As a single, black mother in her early twenties, Su'ad seemed to have endless energy and passion. When I first started following her, Su'ad worked full time as a paralegal while Moses was in daycare, and then gigged and recorded on weekends while managing her music career at night. I mention Su'ad's race only because she comes out of a long history of strong, black women who are heads of their households. While this does not give her—and the many others before and after her—wider social and political power, it does often imply leadership and responsibility within her (their) community (Rich xxvii). Led by her mother's example, Su'ad learned from a young age that she was capable of surviving and succeeding as a single mother with a burgeoning musical career and a day job (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Su'ad comes out of a strong tradition of single mother musicians in hip hop and rhythm and blues. Ann Powers, NPR rock critic, music commentator and a mother herself, discussed this this aspect of Rock N Roll history:

> I think historically in the beginning with R&B and early rock 'n' roll, the first few women who were successful often had children, especially African-American performers like Ruth Brown or Aretha Franklin, who had a child when she was a teenager. They oftentimes had children young, and it wasn't really integrated into their performing lives. It's more that the extended family would help and care for these children…But they

> weren't considered spent once they had a child. That was just part of what women did. At that time, that was the only option before the pill. A lot of women had children young and then sort of put them away or put them with their mom or their sister and then went out and had their careers (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Su'ad and Moses seemed to move to a new place every time I filmed them (about twice a year). During an early film shoot, Su'ad was living with her back-up singer, Adrienne, also a single mom to a toddler. This arrangement seemed to work out well for both Su'ad and Adrienne, as they shared childcare. Together they were able to book gigs and go over song arrangements during their time off. They also helped each other with cooking and cleaning, essentially acting as surrogate partners to each other during this time. Su'ad said this about their living arrangement,

> Yeah, it's great. I'm always like, "She's my wife. It works out really good. The kids get along well and we help each other out. And then we can talk about music and when she's tired or burnt from the day, I can pick up a little bit of the slack and hang out with the kids or whatever is needed (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Su'ad's experience is typical of an indie musician/parent trying to make it. She works all the time, whether it is at her day job, building her music career, or parenting. As a result, she is exhausted and stressed.

> I'm tired after work and I drive home through traffic 'cause I work out in the suburbs. I drive home in traffic or I take the bus and then pick [Moses] up and I'm just tired at night. Working eight hours a day, I want to have something to give [Moses] at the end of the day but I'm just stressed and like "Ahh." But you just get tired and depressed (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Su'ad then decides to take a more part-time job so she can have more time with Moses and additional time to devote to music. She clearly loves spending time her son but is also very driven to build her music career. About this she stated,

> I haven't been on email like I should, I haven't been on the message boards like I should for the last month. I have been hibernating with Moses and I took time. I cut my work schedule, not forty hours a week, and I've been just been in the house with him and writing and stuff…I was burnt out from doing so many shows throughout the summer and the beginning of the fall that I was enjoying taking a break. Then one morning, I woke up and panicked, I was like, "Wait I'm falling off, I'm not out networking with people." Because that is how you keep your name in there and you have to spend that time just on the internet talking to friends. I know so many good MCs and I know a lot of big names and it's like if I was just stepping it up more, I could be doing more, but I don't have the time. I have to do it slow (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

At our next filming, Su'ad worked all day as a paralegal. She then took a half-hour bus ride home, picked up a bite for herself at a convenience store, and then picked up Moses from his babysitter. When she and Moses get back home, Su'ad prepares for a "big gig" opening for The Coup. Doing a lot of multitasking, Su'ad books more gigs on the phone while getting dressed and playing with Moses (now four years old). She and Moses are living with Su'ad's mother now, who provides child care in the evening when Su'ad has gigs. This situation works well for her but she is still juggling many things with her do-it-yourself ethic of making records, managing her own music career, and her all-encompassing day job.

Sometimes before a gig, Su'ad will rush over to the copy shop and make copies of inserts for CDs that she will sell after the show. She occasionally will miss sound checks because she is

doing this, or her car will not start, or she is running late to get Moses to childcare, either with his father or her mother. It can be a chaotic lifestyle.

As I filmed Su'ad, the chaos seemed to be taking its toll on her and her lifestyle. She stopped living with Adrienne or her mother and got her own apartment. I initially thought this seemed like a positive step, but the more I filmed Su'ad, the more I saw that she was less focused and more frenetic. I feared that this must be the reason her personal support was waning. The last time I saw Su'ad's apartment, it was filled with garbage bags full of music equipment and recording gear.

During my next shoot with Su'ad, she was getting ready for her first gig in a year. She no longer had a car and had to juggle getting rides with her mom, friends, or band mates. She had hired a new back-up singer, a friend, to replace Adrienne. An older, eight-year-old Moses waited around in the apartment while Su'ad practiced with her new DJ. Moses entertained himself by watching TV, playing basketball, and getting snacks.

At this point in time, Su'ad is not the confident superwoman I was entranced by years earlier. She is jittery and fluttering all around her apartment. She goes from spending time with Moses, getting him snacks and looking over his job chart, to wrangling cable and then practicing song after song with her new DJ. Her computer is having problems, so she calls her building superintendent, who often gives her computer assistance. She chats with him while he troubleshoots and asks to use his phone as her phone has been shut off. She said honestly that she is "doing this gig so she can pay her phone bill this month" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

She needs a phone so she can try to find a ride to her gig, and someone to watch Moses. After multiple phone calls to Moses' dad, her mother, and others, Su'ad, very late, gets a ride

with her mother to meet and drop off Moses with his dad at her gig. She has missed sound check, so mingles a bit in the greenroom while listening to the other performers on her bill.

When it comes time for Su'ad's performance, she goes on, but is clearly a bit more flustered than she has been at past performances. Working with all new people and the brief rehearsals has taken a toll on Su'ad's confidence as well as her performance. There are some problems with the microphone and some mistakes in the songs, which Su'ad covers up expertly. Her momentum picks up a couple of songs into the set, and Su'ad eventually wins the crowd over by doing call and response while dancing.

When Su'ad's performance is finished, she runs to the restroom and stays there, even when finding out that a reporter, who was clearly intrigued by her performance, wants to interview her. It seems like Su'ad is upset and exhausted, that she wants to sequester herself. I cannot figure out why, and am confused and worried.

After this performance, Su'ad and Moses move to Seattle, and I do not see them for about a year. Su'ad has music connections there, and a high-powered corporate job. She is excited to try living in a larger city, making more money, and getting a bigger jump start to her music career. I am happy for Su'ad and think that her career will benefit from being in a bigger city where she has contacts. I am hopeful that she can make it work there.

About two years later, I hear that Su'ad is back in town and I interview her. She tells me that living in Seattle was extremely challenging. Without her family and friends as a support network, Su'ad felt very alone and struggled with Moses, and became depressed. She ultimately decided to move back home. About this time Su'ad said,

> I was working at a really high profile business with a job that was…[high pressure]. They hired me to streamline their whole process and I was really unhappy. It was different for

> Moses, being away from his dad. It was a new kind of struggle for me because I'm okay with struggle. I like to struggle when it's something that I'm striving for, that I believe in, and the thought of it makes me excited, but obtaining that sort of position didn't make me happy (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Back in her home city, Su'ad continued to struggle with depression. She did not have a job, and lived in hotels. Moses began living more and more with his father.

I saw Su'ad again about a year after that. She had recently graduated from a rehab program for drug dependency, and was upbeat and confident. Su'ad had not performed since before her rehab stint but was doing a lot of writing she was proud of and had been published in a *Writers In the Schools* anthology. Moses lived full-time with his father, and Su'ad saw him a lot during the week and on the weekends. Su'ad was working full-time as a customer service agent at a tech company.

Su'ad's work and music careers were on the upswing until her support system started collapsing, and then crumbled upon her move to a bigger city. This ultimately led to Su'ad's depression and her drug dependency.

For any type of parent who is establishing a music career or truly any type of creative endeavor—having a stalwart support system, family, paid help, or a spouse—is of the utmost importance. Without these helpers, having time to create and the ability to earn money—and then parent—is almost impossible. According to some scholars, it is fairly common for young, black, single mothers like Su'ad to struggle with depression. (Atkins).

My film's other two subjects', Kristin Hersh of Throwing Muses and Zia McCabe of The Dandy Warhols, exemplify the importance of having a strong support network in the life of a working musician. To be clear, these women also have the advantage of being white and in a

long-term relationship, both of which contribute to their ability to make a full-time living from their music.

Kristin Hersh

Kristin Hersh started her band, Throwing Muses with her half-sister, Tanya Donnelly; they began in 1985, while Kristin was still in high school. Kristin was the singer, songwriter, and guitarist for the band. After getting extremely popular in the Boston and Newport, Rhode Island (where Kristin and the band are from), the band was the first American band signed to the English label 4AD. They were later contracted by Warner Brothers in the United States (McDonnell).

Kristin grew up on a commune. After receiving a head injury during a bicycle accident, she began to channel songs.

> When I was fourteen, I started hearing songs and it wasn't good. It was unsettling. I had always wanted to be a scientist. In fact, I had started college early and I was I was a biology major. I was trying to ignore the songs as hard as I could…I've come to grips with the fact that songs just play. They just write themselves and they don't shut up if I don't somehow make of record them (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

At the age of eighteen, Kristin had her first child, Dylan. She ended up losing custody of him after a long, difficult legal battle. During this time, Kristin was diagnosed with bipolar disorder which she has been treating with various different remedies including medication and acupuncture for years (McDonnell).

I met Kristin in 2006 when she was on tour with 50FOOTWAVE. She invited me onto her tour bus and introduced me to her three-year-old son, Bodhi, whom she was lovingly cuddling. Then, this soft-spoken and gentle woman apologized. A couple of hours before I met

her, Kristin had pulled out her own tooth with a pair of pliers, and apparently was still recovering. I was immediately spellbound; this woman is hardcore.

The juxtaposition of this offstage and onstage Kristin, channeling her loud, fierce songs, is intriguing. In fact, Kristin created 50FOOTWAVE after Throwing Muses stopped recording because of lack of funds. She performed solo but found that she was "channeling" much more aggressive songs that wouldn't work with her solo acoustic music.

> But there were still songs that were more aggressive, that were harder. And kind of me wearing my influences on my sleeve. It sounded like the songs that I was listening to as a teenager. And it happened that the Muses bass player, Bernie, was getting antsy at the same time, so we moved to LA and shacked up with the drummer, Rob Allers. What they brought to these songs was not just a reflection these songs' intrinsic sound; it was something more than that. Which was kind of what I was looking for, so now I'm kind of following 50 Foot Wave to see what it does next (*Rock N Roll Mamas*)

Kristin is the mother of four boys, Dylan (eighteen), Ryder (thirteen), Wyatt (eight), and Bodhi (three). The last three are with her husband and manager, Billy O'Connell. Billy drives the tour bus and arranges Kristin's touring and recording schedule while Kristin plays, records, and writes music, all while homeschooling her three boys. Kristin has always toured pregnant and folds mothering into her musical career.

> I didn't think it was anyone's business particularly because I've always toured pregnant and I do whatever I have to do…But you know I do videos pregnant and I'm on the road up until my eighth month usually. The babies go out on tour when they are three or four months old. They're quite portable at that age and I have my doubts as to how healthy it

> is for any of us but they have their family around I think more than most kids do and that's healthy (McDonnell).

Kristin, Billy, and their boys live a primarily nomadic lifestyle.

> We're never anywhere for very long…I would tour forever if I could. I mean it's hard. To live for that two hours of music is romantic and it drives you. It's hard for me to sit still as a person and touring has exacerbated that part of my personality. Touring is an extreme example of restlessness and it feeds itself. You get used to seeing a new world every day. And sometimes I bring my family and sometimes I don't but either way it's fast and it's music and I like that (McDonnell).

Kristin and Billy have been through a lot on the road through the years, During this time they struggle with lack of money as the music business changes from selling albums through record stores to selling music digitally directly to customers.

> We had left LA looking for America. We found it just outside Cleveland. It was amazing. The people were brilliant. We just wanted to raise our kids there and escape. It didn't work out that way. We lost our house in a flood. We were wiped out in a day. All the money we'd saved from touring, all our retirement funds, all the kids' college funds were gone in one afternoon. We were deeply, deeply, deeply in debt.
>
> We went on tour for a year. We stayed homeless. It was sort of a perfect storm. It was just as the industry was beginning to fail. So the tour and record both lost money, so I was even deeper in debt. We had to live on credit cards to feed the kids. It was an interesting life lesson — not a practical lesson, because we already lived small — but a life lesson. Because poverty's a big monster. I was hungry. Pictures of me then, I looked old and brittle (McDonnell)

I caught up with Kristin and her family again in Portland, Oregon, where they settled for a year. Her sons Ryder (fifteen) and Wyatt (ten) were studying, while her youngest son, Bodhi (five), baked with Kristin. There was a fire in the fireplace and the family's three dogs were milling about. It was a quiet, sweet, domestic scene.

Kristin had stopped curating the boys' homeschooling curriculum and now let them decide on their own learning projects. Previously, she was getting school age curriculum from the various states they lived in and was implementing it. After a while she felt that it wasn't that relevant to her boys' lives and now they choose their own curriculum to study. Ryder, Wyatt, and Bodhi, Kristin's boys still living at home, are all very curious and studious, so it is no trouble for them to find subject matter that interests them.

During this visit, Ryder and Wyatt are writing a cookbook of their favorite recipes and dishes they've had on tour. Wyatt is keeping a garden and learning Icelandic while Bodhi is studying all types of fish and reptiles. The boys have traveled to every single state in America except Hawaii and Alaska, and have been to many countries overseas. Each boy is very bright and sensitive. They are articulate and thoughtful. Ryder, the eldest at home, takes care of the other two boys when his parents are gone. He is an expert cook while Wyatt, the second oldest boy at home, loves plants and gardening. Bodhi, the youngest, describes himself as "obsessed with fish" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Kristin's family is a self-contained family unit with no outside help. They take care of each other and get along well together. They have their own family jargon, as they are together so much.

> They [the kids] just think that nobody will ever understand. They can be aloof and suspicious. But it's true their lives are very different from most of the kids they meet.

> They live on a tour bus. Even the other children of rock bands are usually of rich rock bands. Usually the only musicians that can afford to have kids are rock stars. It's very different. They have nannies. They have their own bus. They only tour a couple of months a year. Wyatt says we're just the gypsy people. I guess if it works for them, it works for me (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Ryder, Kristin's second oldest son, babysits for his younger brothers when his mother and father are at shows or recording. He had mixed feelings about the family's nomadic lifestyle.

> I can pretty much adapt to being on tour. I can just adapt to most of what's going on, the stressful touring lifestyle. I know my way around so many places. I drive across the country. I know clubs in almost every state…We never really stay in the same place. I never really get a chance to make friends or anything like that. I make friends all over the country and in other countries. I get to live a nice life. It's different from most people I know but still nice….I really like that my family is so close. We always stay together wherever we go really. We just shuttle across in the tour bus or minivan or whatever.
>
> I don't really have much privacy. This is the first house [in Portland] where I've had my own room. I do a lot of reading, and escape into my own world. If I want privacy, I go the library or go out to get coffee. I feel like I have pretty cool parents. I'm pretty happy to be in this family even though some things aren't as good; the good outweighs the bad I think (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

After the year in Portland, Kristin and her family return to the road. I catch up with them one last time, about a year later. They are abandoning their roaming lifestyle and bought a new home in Rhode Island. I was with them the day they moved back to where Kristin grew up.

> This is my new house in my old home. This is the island where I grew up. I haven't lived here in a long time. Here my kids get the nature that I grew up with. The ocean was a given to me. I had no idea it wasn't like that for everyone. It's the prairie, it's the woods. It's what you do and it's clean and healthy. It's balance and math and you learn to save the whales early. I want them to have that. I want them to have these gardens to grow their own vegetables. I want them to have grandparents. If it means that I have to work at 7-Eleven, it's a good reason to work at 7-Eleven (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

A desire for their children to experience stability, however, appeared to be only part of the story behind this dramatic change. The music industry was changing, and Kristin and Billy's ability to make it on the road was being tested. Right before they moved, Kristin's tour bus broke down, and they experienced another major financial crisis. They were rethinking how to make a living in the music industry. Billy spoke abou t the changes they were thinking of making:

> I think the music business is at a crossroads. We've already been through the cross roads. We're further along and now we have to make retroactive decisions and we need to create stronger bonds with the fans. We need to make it about artists, songs, and fans…The internet has always been about cutting out the middle man. We've always tried to be available and accessible by the people who appreciate the music. Because it's not a star thing, it's not about being famous for us. It's just proselytizing for us; it's about the getting the music heard…A lot of people say that music should be free but that's ignoring a lot of realities. Artists need to feed themselves too. The art of recording is a talent. And there is money that we just have to say is necessary to feed the process and it's not huge money. Nobody needs to make a fortune. We just want to live above the poverty line. One of the ideas we're talking about is having a monthly subscription

> service for fans. Kristin has about 10,000 people on her mailing list now that we can send messages to. We're seeking a very modest monthly subscription to Kristin, supporting her career. Having said that, Kristin needs to branch out and do other things too. She is writing one book, and she's written a children's book. She got other books to write and has a series of essays and monologues; she is starting to do a life performance (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

About this, Kristin said,

> There are good people in the good music business and they are struggling. I see no reason to stop. I feel like they need me and I need them. If we can work, then we should. Sometimes it all falls apart. Particularly if you don't want to play the game and I really don't want to play the game. And I disappear myself, I know, but the music business is not music. It's the opposite of music…Maybe if I took out the idea of a record label and then I made the money from the CDs and it didn't matter how few I sold, I could at least stay on the road, stay in the studio. It's a lot to ask to be a working musician, it's crazy; it should never have occurred to me in the first place. But music did occur to me and there were always people behind the scenes ready to make it happen and now I have to make it happen. It would be ideal if I could keep being a musician obviously. People have asked me to write books. The whole idea sounds offensive to me; writers should write books. Writers struggle the way musicians do. They shouldn't be coming to me and asking for me to write a book. But if it would pay for me to make a record, I would do anything (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Part of Kristin's and Billy's answer to the changing music industry is the subscription service they created called CASH Music. With CASH Music in place, Kristin is able to tour and record without being on a label.

> When CASH started, it was not only to facilitate giving music away, like 50FOOTWAVE has always done. It was for other musicians to be offered a set of tools with which they can circumvent the recording industry and reach fans directly. It's a pretty simple idea. It's all based on that urge people have to keep the music going. It's not purely a giving urge; it's this idea that they have an energy that could help turn the music that's in the ether into the music that's in their ears. It's completely reworked the way I function as a professional. Since the studio bills are paid by the audience, I have no one with an ear to the salability of the material. I can go to my lab and perform these experiments. And the outcome is only supposed to be truth, for lack of a better word. No one is interested in anything but that. And that's what I was essentially interested in all along. But even to play the game a little bit, you backpedal, you apologize, you alter your results until something palatable is the outcome. I should have never been interested in palatable; it doesn't come natural to me (McDonnell).

While it seems that Kristin and Billy may have found an answer to their concern about the music industry, Rhode Island did not stay home for long. About a year later, they moved to New Orleans, which proved to be a much better hub, as they have been there ever since. Billy teaches music management and marketing at Loyola University. Kristin loves the musical city with its history and characters (Duerden). And Bo, Kristin's youngest, is happy to have a permanent home:

> Everything changed after Bo, my youngest, was born," she says of her six-year-old. "It's like he said to me, OK, I see what you've got going on, but things are going to change now I'm here. He asked me when we were going to stop going places. I told him that if we stopped going places, the adventures would end. But he just said, Yes, Mom, when are the adventures going to end (qtd. in Duerden)?

Ironically, a stable physical home has also come with a new and unexpected change. In 2013, Kristin and Billy split up after twenty-five years of marriage. Kristin now splits her time in New Orleans and her native Rhode Island. Understandably, this breakup has been very hard on her (Duerden).

Kristin has immersed herself in work; she completed and toured on another album with the Throwing Muses, Purgatory/Paradise, and has recently completed another book about her friendship with Vic Chestnut called, *Don't Suck, Don't Die: Giving Up Vic Chestnut.* Because her sons are older now, touring is easier.

The two older sons are grown and live on their own while the two younger ones live in New Orleans. Kristin's career is thriving. Her emotional health is also more stable now as she successfully completed a post-traumatic stress therapy called EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) which has alleviated her bipolar disorder. About this she said wryly, "This is a relief. There is nothing wrong with me anymore, which is sort of a problem in itself" (qtd. in Duerden).

Zia McCabe

After watching the documentary *Dig!,* I noticed in the credits that Zia McCabe, the rowdy, effervescent, woman keyboardist in The Dandy Warhols, was pregnant.

Zia (and the rest of the band) were known for performing naked and for being fond of partying. Eventually I found out later, Zia was the band's party instigator, "Secret Agent McCabe" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*). I wondered how and if Zia's life—and that of the band—would change after she had a baby. As such, I reached out to Zia, and explained how I'd love to follow her through her first couple of years parenting on tour.

Zia is the only woman in The Dandy Warhols. At the time she had Matilda (Tildy), her child, no other band member had kids. Travis, Zia's husband, is also the guitar technician and merchandise seller for The Dandy Warhols, which means he is deeply intertwined into band life as well. Zia has stated that she is "most open book person in the band" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

> Our fans have grown up with us. Now a lot of them have their own kids. We really let everyone be part of the family…We had a contest to guess Matilda's weight when she was born and whoever was closest got an autographed baby t-shirt. I think it's fun to include our fans in our lives (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

The band acts as a surrogate family for Zia, Travis, and Matilda. It is a support system, as well as a built-in social life. Zia discussed the band's participation in her pregnancy and Matilda's growing up.

> Travis would go to the bar that everybody drinks at and you know that book that tells you everything that happens while you are pregnant and he would say, "today she got her teeth buds." Our lighting guy feeling her kick and maybe that's the only baby he'll ever feel kick. These are people that aren't planning on having families and they get to have this family because of Matilda. They've brought it up on multiple occasions and that's been great. The more people that can be part of Matilda's immediate family, the better (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Having as much support as possible is necessary during the hectic lifestyle that is a professional mid-level band. The band provides this for Zia as best they can. Even with the band assistance, Zia has to juggle her pregnancy around the band's album and touring schedule. There is no formal maternity leave in an indie band. About this, Zia said,

> Basically we decided when Monkeyhouse was coming out [Welcome to the Monkey House] that we'll promote it for as long as it needs and we'll get pregnant right as we finish promoting it. It worked out perfectly; we were lucky. We finished promoting Monkeyhouse in February, got pregnant, recorded Odditorium, and then toured that summer pregnant. We came home, finished the album one week before Matlida was born, and then I had six weeks' maternity leave. After that I came in and did promo shots, shot a video, did a little bit of rehearsing, and then we did our first road trip show down the West Coast (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Because Zia is an integral part of the band, she needed to discuss her pregnancy with the other members of the band and work it out.

> I definitely didn't want to surprise anyone with being pregnant. Nobody knew this [the band] was going to last ten years. I'm married now. I'm going to have a baby. We're going to have to work this out. We were all just hoping by the time Tildy came, we could afford two tour buses. Stuff would be a lot easier for us if the band was just one notch more successful. That didn't happen but we did hit a spot where we feel like we have a consistent career and can count on this success for several years to come. The band was cool with this and me. They've all got serious relationships. They are totally not in a party mood (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Certainly having Matilda on tour shifted Zia's demeanor, and that of the band as a whole. Before she had Matilda, Zia "was known as Secret Agent McCabe and it was all about getting the party started" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*). Zia's bandmate, Brent DeBoer, has said that after Matilda was born, "Secret Agent McCabe doesn't come out much anymore" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Zia's role in the band has certainly changed but it has not gone away altogether. Zia said about this,

> I've definitely proved otherwise that that's not how it used to be, but it's just not what I do as my full time lifestyle. It's definitely something that we worked out that one night per tour, Travis takes Matilda and I get to go and wake up with a horrific hangover...When you are pregnant you think you are turning into an angel and you're never going to party again and you're never going to stay up late and have a hangover because you are a perfect vessel for this child. And then you have the kid and you go, I do like hanging out with these friends, and I do like going out and getting rowdy. I am in a rock band and this is what I am happy doing. I never expected to stop to become a mom. You just slowly realize that you have to pick and choose (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

When I started filming Zia and her family, her daughter, Matilda was almost two. The Dandy Warhols were in their twelfth year together, and were touring Europe for the summer. Zia's husband also joined them on tour.

The band was doing a summer festival tour which entailed flying into Paris, and then taking a train to Normandy where they had an off day, and then a festival date. The day after the festival date in Normandy, they all took a train back to Paris, where they had another festival to play. After that, they travelled to Amsterdam, where the band played a club. Clearly, it was a lot

of traveling with a paucity of down time for that week. This grueling schedule as an adult alone can be very tiring, with a two-year-old it is especially challenging.

Zia and Travis took turns watching Matilda, with very little sleep for anyone. Typically, the family woke up late and then spent the day walking around or exploring their new location. Zia and Travis brought many "special" toys packed solely for tour that Matilda had not seen before with which they would engage her. They clearly loved playing with her, and being together as a family, in the many new cities. Touring was a big adventure for them all. When that failed to keep her occupied, they would get out the DVD player and play some movies.

Travis left for shows a couple of hours before Zia, so Zia would get ready while he was there or when Matilda napped. Then Zia would shuttle Matilda to shows in her travel system. They would play and nap on the way to the show, and then meet Travis at their trailer.

Having a partner who helps with childcare and is also involved directly in Zia's professional life is pivotal to making things work smoothly. While Zia can afford to be in the band full time with no day job, The Dandy Warhols is still a mid-level band, so spending money on a nanny for Matilda while on tour is out of reach.

Zia said simply, "If I didn't have Travis, I don't think I could do this. Without the money, you have to buy your support" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Ann Powers, NPR Music's critic, correspondent, and a mother herself, said this about indie rock parenting on tour:

> If you are a grassroots artist on the road, it's by hook or by crook. In that case what you really need is a supportive mate. If not a mate, a sister or someone who is willing to share so intensely and in fact be the dominant care giver at that time. And then you have to have a lot of faith that your choice is okay for your kid, I think. Because in that case your

kid is going to have to be flexible and ride around in a van or an SUV or something that's not that comfortable (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

At this time, 2006, The Dandy Warhols toured for about two weeks at a time every summer and other times during the year. Zia and Travis usually embarked on this travel without a nanny, and switched off childcare. Occasionally, they would bring a nanny with them on tour, but usually would ask a friend of the band or sometimes their tour manager to watch Matilda when they were both busy. Luckily their summer tours were primarily festivals, in which the band's sets are shorter, usually around forty-minutes to an hour, so this type of patchwork childcare was fairly easy to find.

Their schedule varied when they are home, however. The band usually practiced for about two hours a day and then did other things with their lives. Some were in other bands while others wrote music or started business ventures.

Zia joined a playgroup with two other mothers she met in prenatal yoga. They would meet together and engage in activities like finger painting, reading stories etc. Afterwards, they would all go out and have lunch together. These two moms were a big support system for Zia while Matilda was a toddler.

"It's great to be going through this with two other moms that have kids that are two weeks away from Matilda's birthday. We went through prenatal yoga together. I've never had two girlfriends that were friends…It's amazing the support" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Now that Matilda is a toddler and Zia and Travis have their rotating childcare schedule in place, they are vague about planning for future school options. They generally live in the moment, the present, because the future is unpredictable and difficult to plan for. About this Zia said:

> Courtney's [Lead singer in The Dandy Warhols] great in history. Most of the history I know I learned from Courtney. He's a good story teller and has a fantastic memory for details. So I've always kind of pictured Courtney teaching her a lot of history lessons. Pete [Guitar player in The Dandy Warhols] is someone who would stumble around in nature with her [Matilda]. All of them of course would teach her about art. She's immersed in music…I really like the idea of her getting her education in part from these people. They're really a wealth of information. So we'll split; do some school, do some travel…But you can't plan it. Who knows? I might be back going to school full time, doing something else. You can't plan in a rock band that far ahead. You don't really get to plan a future other than trying to save as much money as possible (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

As the years pass, the band continued to tour and record. They gained a large following in Europe as well as Latin America and Australia. Then, in 2007, Courtney, the lead singer of the band, got married, and in 2010, had a baby so recording slowed down some while he was on "paternity" leave. (*Rock N Roll Mamas*)

During this time, Zia records an album with her bandmate, Pete, and also starts a side project, a country band called Brush Prairie, in which she is the lead singer. She also is doing quite a bit of work as a DJ under the moniker DJ Rescue. Zia is excited about both opportunities. "I'm in a country band called Brush Prairie. I don't know what the earning potential is for this. I think it's just an opportunity to learn how to be in a band outside The Dandy Warhols" (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Zia got started in The Dandy Warhols when she was nineteen and still in school; it was her first band. She knows that having the band as her full-time work for sixteen years is very lucky.

> Okay, you had a band right before you turned nineteen, and you have not had a second job since about four years after that. Just getting that out of your life as a musician is way more than people that are way more qualified than me who have worked way harder than me have ever come close to. I want to consider myself lucky for just having that and I don't want to assume that that's just what life is like for a musician. I'm trying to be realistic as much as I'm trying to envision that as my reality (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Matilda has started preschool, which leaves Zia and Travis free during the day. Travis starts going to school full time, in video production. Zia continues to practice with The Dandy Warhols and her new band, Brush Prairie. As the future of The Dandy Warhols is uncertain after sixteen years, Zia starts pursuing other jobs, including work in film production as a personal assistant and a second assistant director. About this Zia said, practically,

> A mid-level band being together for sixteen years and to be making an income, a salary, is incredible but it's also, the stability, year by year, is less dependable. You can't count on it. We have no interest in stopping but this is time we start putting out our Best Of [album]. I don't want to assume that now that Courtney has a kid, he wants to go back to that [writing music and touring]. I want to make sure the band is my priority but I want to make sure we both have plenty to do outside of that (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

The band is changing as well. Now all band members are married and two other members have children as well. They decide to get off their major record label, Capitol, and form their own label, Beat the World. About this Zia said,

> Getting off the major label was a lot like moving out of your parents' house. You've got to keep track of the stuff yourself and you start appreciating the stuff you took for granted before. And that's what we did as a band and we're starting to mature in that respect and are really starting to make it run as a business. It's still unstable because it's music and it's art and making it stay as a business is unstable no matter how you look at it. And none of us have made enough to retire if another dime never came in. We're just making it happen as long as we can. None of us want it to ever, ever end (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

The next time I see Zia, she is performing at a birthday party for herself with Brush Prairie. The Dandy Warhols are still going strong after eighteen years; Courtney is writing music and they are recording and touring. Zia tells me that she and Travis have separated after twelve years of being together. I am completely shocked by this news, as Zia and Travis' partnership seemed pivotal in making touring with a toddler a workable situation and they seemed very happy together; an extremely compatible couple. However, Matilda is now in school full--time, and they do not bring her on tour as much or when they do, they do not need the same hands-on childcare for her. About her separation, Zia said this, which makes sense in this context:

> I felt like when I married Travis, he's a really good person, loyal and helpful and hardworking. I knew he's make a great dad and a great partner for however long he was going to be a great partner for. But I also felt like, I want to fall in love again. I want lots of adventures in my life and we had a ton of adventures together. But I just felt like we got a point where we weren't improving, we weren't having more adventures. We were kind of starting to live our own lives a little bit. And I was just ready to move on and I didn't want to be married anymore (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

After the separation, both Zia and Travis are figuring out the custody situation for Matilda. The adjustment is challenging as Zia is used to sharing childcare with Travis during the day and now she doesn't have him to fall back on. Zia's main challenge, she said, during this time, is loss of control of Matilda when she is in Travis' care.

> The hardest part about all of that is giving up the control. Matilda now is with Travis half the time, with what food he buys, what television and movies he allows her to watch, when her bedtime is, how many baths etc. That was something I was very controlling of in particular, no additives, no hormones, no milk etc. Travis was going along with this when we were together and it's probably slided [sic] now that we are apart and that is something I just have to let go of (*Rock N Roll Mamas*).

Ultimately, Travis and Zia divorce amicably, deciding on equal custody every other week. Zia lets go and moves on, dating other men while still having an amicable relationship with Travis. Matilda is happy; she has bonded relationships with both parents.

Zia and Matilda have a great time together. Zia has begun taking her on tour more now that she is older so they can experience the travel and world cities together. Zia clearly loves being a mother but also loves being a gregarious musician, sexy woman, and outgoing person. While Zia's personality has changed some now that she is a parent, now that Matilda is older, her need for fun and change has integrated back into her life.

What I Learned: Parenting and Having a Career is Different for Each Individual

I started this project to find role models that could teach me how to balance being a creative professional and a mother. Making music and parenting are both difficult pursuits. What these women's stories ultimately taught me, perhaps unsurprisingly, is that there is no "one way" or magic answer. All of them are driven to be the best they can, and are willing to do what they

need to do in order to make that happen. Sometimes this means that they, their relationships, or their professional lives suffer.

Despite their different styles, career paths, and economics, each of these women is a dedicated parent as well as a musician. They are each devoted to their children, and it showed. All of the children I followed were thriving, tremendously sweet, articulate, and bright; they were all well-adjusted. Even though their lifestyles seem unorthodox, these children get to spend a lot more time with their parents than most kids.

As I was preparing to finish the film, I thought these woman's stories did contain a universal lesson: Without a strong support network, parenting and engaging in a creative profession like music were not possible. Kristin and Zia had support, and while they still faced challenges, they thrived. It was heartbreaking, in contrast, to watch Su'ad, who lost her support network, struggle through depression and addiction. But in the end, Su'ad persevered, and got her life back on track, although whether that life includes music is unclear. Meanwhile, both Kristin's and Zia's marriages broke up. What I see now is that being a musician and a parent is just like having any other type of career and parenting. Things happen and change in life, and shifts occur. Marriages break up, children grow up, and careers are maintained or they change. This is what life is. However, because a musician's lifestyle is inherently an unstable one, one with late nights, usually without a consistent paycheck, living from gig to gig, these changes in lifestyle, a divorce, lack of childcare, a gig goes away, etc can have tremendous implications. A simple change or challenge that a parent in a successful double income partnership has can ultimately wipe out a freelance musician parent.I am thankful that these women, however, are brave enough to embrace life in their own unique ways and share their stories. Knowing others

are out there trying, sometimes struggling, sometimes succeeding, could inspire others to forge their own unique path.

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Walking Across the Burning Bridge: A Letter from a Mother to a Spinster

Lori Walters-Kramer

"Leroy got a better job so we moved

Kevin lost a tooth now he's started school

I got a brand new eight month old baby girl

I sound like a housewife

Hey Shell, I think I'm a housewife"

-- Michelle Shocked (1988).

Buchanen (2013) asserts that "discourses about mothers, mothering, motherhood permeate U.S. political culture" (p. xvii). She points to Margaret Sanger's birth control presentations, Diane Nash's civil rights discourses, and texts surrounding legislation of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act to illustrate the power of these discourses within the public sphere. Other scholars of rhetoric have studied discourses about or references to motherhood in anti-war activism (Edwards & Brozana, 2008; Knudson, 2009), anti-slavery efforts (Harris, 2009), and the environmental movement (Peeples & DeLuca, 2006; Stearney, 1994). These authors illuminated a variety of political, social, and cultural domains in which motherhood has potentially shaped audience members' attitudes about the agenda at hand. The texts they examine are the traditional texts of the rhetorical critic: speeches, books, newspaper articles. Yet, the lyrics above, from Michelle Shocked's (1988) song 'Anchorage', illustrate that music can also be

a vehicle for maternal discourses. Musicians, too, can turn to motherhood as a rhetorical tool that can serve personal or political ends.

Although Michelle Shocked has peppered her albums with songs about maternal issues such as pregnancy and stillborn babies, she is not recognized as a musician who highlighted (or even paid attention to) motherhood. Yet, motherhood was a topic that she threaded from album to album throughout her career - just as were other issues such as homelessness, Texas life, racism, and oppression. Her commitment to social justice issues shaped her identity, inviting audiences to think of her as an advocate for the marginalized. In fact, she vocalized her stance that her recorded music - particularly the music aired on radio - was a tool to get people to her concerts where she could pontificate. In 1990 she stated, "My agenda is to use the music to sell the agenda. I call that subversion" (Aiges, 1990, p. LAG6). Much of her music is not overtly political but, largely through the use of metaphor, is subtle activist rhetoric. 'Anchorage', the song that garnered her the most public attention, is an example. It is, I argue, an example of consciousness-raising rhetoric. Both the mother and the spinster are recognized in the song, offering a wide and diverse audience a point of identification with her music. Through sound and lyric, Shocked employed a feminine rhetorical style while juxtaposing motherhood and non-motherhood and, in so doing, fostering the creation of a feminist counter-public sphere.

Music as Rhetoric

As I have previously written (Walters-Kramer, 2001) and will summarize here, music has long been understood as rhetorical, although not always explicitly studied as such. Plato, Isocrates, and Cicero addressed the persuasive potential of sound and music (Katz, 1996; Winn, 1981) but for thousands of years scholars largely paid attention largely to oral and written texts as these were understood to be essential political tools (Poulakos & Poulakos, 1999). There were

exceptions. In the 17th and 18th centuries, musicians theorized about the emotional responses music evoked in listeners (McClary, 1991) and philosophers such as Susan Langer (1957) and Theodore Adorno (1956/1998) noted their appreciation for the rhetorical nature of music. Adorno, for example, noted music's relationship to language, asserting,

> music resembles language in the sense that it is a temporal sequence of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds. They say something, often something human. The better the music, the more forcefully they say it. The succession of sounds is like logic: it can be right or wrong. (p. 1)

Due to its reliance on sound, instrumentation and, at times, lack of any accompanying language, music is a form of non-discursive rhetoric that is imbued with meaning; it may be the vehicle for an argument, explicitly through lyric or more implicitly through sound or performance. It can be a resource we employ or consume daily that influences audiences in faint, yet compelling, ways. Because the norms and values of a community can be and are expressed in music (Citron, 1993; Frith, 1992), it can perpetuate the status quo and the ideologies and practices that comprise a community. It is a resource that can be – and has been – utilized by people advocating or resisting change. By its very nature, music is political (Attali, 1977/1985; Blacking 1980/1995; McClary, 1991).

Because gender is a critical component of culture and because music can mirror and (re)produce culture or, according to Attai (1977/1985), even forecast the future, the performance, content, and even business of music can be examined to excavate embedded messages about gender and explain women's precarious social and political positions. George Upton (1899) may have been the first to write extensively about women in music, focusing on how women have shaped the music of composers such as Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and others. Unlike Upton,

Sophie Drinker (1948/1995), also one of the first to write on the topic, was considered subversive for unearthing the barriers female musicians faced as early as 500 AD, discussing female musicians' acceptance into or refusal from secular and religious spaces over time. In the late 1980s and 1990s, several books and articles were published that described women's obstacles in the popular music industry (Bowers & Tick, 1987; Cohen, 1991; O'Brien, 1995). Others scrutinized and theorized music from postmodern and/or feminist stances (Citron, 1993; McClary, 1991) and summarized the history of women in music (Neuls-Bates, 1982). While scholars such as those noted above acknowledge the creation, performance, and business of music as gendered, McClary's (1991) treatise on 'Feminine endings' illuminates the gendered nature of the sound of music. McClary points to the 17th century when "composers worked painstakingly to develop a musical semiotics of gender: a set of conventions for constructing 'masculinity' or 'femininity' in music" (1991, p. 7) that has endured. Even in the 20th century, she claims, musicians and composers were identifying endings as 'feminine' or 'masculine.'

Rhetorics of Motherhood

A rhetoric of motherhood is at work when motherhood, mothers, or mothering are folded into a text by a rhetor, perhaps a rhetor who appreciates and understands that there are numerous connotations of 'mother' the audience members bring to their readings of the text. The meanings listeners assign to motherhood (or a variation thereof) are guided by culturally-embedded, assumptions about and expectations of motherhood. In short, motherhood is more than a biological fact; it is a symbolic construction. That is, motherhood is a product of our symbolic systems; over time, understandings of motherhood have been negotiated and shaped by communities. As a result, meanings of motherhood are historically contingent (which also reveals that the meanings aren't universal or inevitable understandings based on biological

factors). Meanings of motherhood can, and do, transform over time. In fact, current understandings of motherhood within the United States emerged between the 17th and 19th centuries (Buchanen, 2013).

Buchanen (2013) adopts Roland Barthes's notion of 'cultural code' to capture the power of 'mother' as a symbolic construct. As a term, 'mother' comes with a lot of, shall we say, 'symbolic baggage.' As a cultural code, the code of Mother is always present, guiding our daily practices. It is, to use another of Barthes's terms, an ideology and, like any active ideology, the code of "Mother" may constrain action or thought. The enormous weight of this cultural code is recognized by Buchanen when she claims, "Mother is easy to invoke but difficult to resist" (2013, p. 7). That symbolic weight provides 'Mother' with its persuasive power. The symbolic concept of motherhood is persuasive because its' symbolic force is intense, so intense that its use can generate "visceral and emotional response" from the reader or listener (Harris, 2009, p. 301).

Importantly, motherhood is an ideology crafted within a patriarchal context and, as such, is laden with assumptions about gender. Adrienne Rich acknowledged this aspect of "Mother," noting "Motherhood is coded in ways that disregard intersectional differences, create institutional impediments for nontraditional women, and produce serious rhetorical consequences" (Buchanen, 2014, p. 21). Buchanen concurs, noting "Rhetorics of motherhood …. impede [women], always/already positioning them within the gendered status quo" (p. 5). Buchanen also recognizes that the rhetorical consequences of the Motherhood code are not uniform and that rhetorics of motherhood can "benefit women, giving them authority and credibility" (p. 5). This supports Buerkle's (2008) claim that maternal discourses that involve a "play between talk of women's liberation and obligation" can be promising or a liability (p. 27).

Hence, feminist scholars are motivated to examine the ways in which “Mother” can empower and/or disempower women.

Motherhood is not a rhetorical tool reserved only for those who identify as mothers. For example, media outlets have relied on the cultural code of motherhood to frame individuals as good or bad mothers (Hasian & Flores, 2000). Youtube birthing videos can, according to Mack (2016), construct a narrative about mothering that functions to perpetuate the ideal of the good mother. Motherhood is a concept that may function to unite audience and speaker (Buchanen, 2013). For instance, Harris (2009) examined the *Liberty Bell* giftbooks and found that motherhood was a significant rhetorical appeal used by male and female antislavery activists in the 19th century to unite women readers across race and class.

Certainly, a rhetor can be a mother who may choose to build her identity as a mother through rhetorical means and, in so doing, encourage audience members to associate her with concepts such as “nurturance, empathy, and community” (Gibson & Heyse, 2010, p. 253). As an example, in her 2008 address at the Republican National Convention, Sarah Palin relied on the code of Mother as a rhetorical resource. However, she did it in such a way that her persuasive effort was both strengthened and harmed (Buchanen, 2013). After studying the Palin text and several others, Buchanen concludes that “maternal rhetorics may be used to promote conservative, progressive, or feminist ends” (p. 22). This potential to move listeners - to persuade - is why the code of “Motherhood” is a rhetorical tool for all rhetors including speakers, writers, and singers who are or are not mothers themselves.

To better understand the tensions that exist between ‘Woman’ and ‘Mother’ as cultural codes, Buchanen (2013) positions the constructs of ‘Woman’ and ‘Mother’ in opposition to each other. She uses Kenneth Burke’s and Richard Weaver’s concepts of Devil and God terms to

depict the tensions that exist between the two. While the God term is pleasing, the Devil term is repulsive. Some of the associations of 'Mother' and "Woman" mentioned by Buchanen are noted below:

Mother (God Term)	Woman (Devil Term)
Children	Childlessness
Home	Work
Empathy	Self-centeredness
Strength	Weakness
The Reproductive Body	The Sensual Body
The Private Sphere	The Public Sphere
Altruism	Irrationality

Buchanen contends, "The Mother and Woman afford rhetors means for exalting or denigrating women, as does the terrain that falls between the extremes" (p. 9).

Of note, Buchanen's deconstructions of 'Mother' and 'Woman' each contain both stereotypically masculine and feminine characteristics. For example, some of the concepts associated with Woman (the Devil term) are historically recognized as masculine traits (for example, the public sphere and work) while others are stereotypically feminine traits (for example, hysteria and extreme emotion). Some of the terms associated with Mother (the God term) are assumed to be masculine traits (for example, strength and protection) whereas others are stereotypically feminine (for example, love, nourishment, and self-sacrifice). The Mother/Woman binary, then, complicates traditional renderings of masculinity and femininity. The binary also functions to fracture women as a collective based on their motherhood

status Woman and Mother are symbolically constructed in an oppositional relationship with no apparent common ground other than their biological sex.

Michelle Shocked circa 1980 - 1990

Michelle Shocked was born in Texas as Michelle Johnston to a father who was a musician and a mother who was a devoted Mormon (Schindehette & Maier, 1988; Voland, 1989). By the mid-1980s she was traveling around the United States, often homeless, honing her skills as a musician, and adopting a punk sensibility (Robicheau, 1989; Walters-Kramer, 2001). One of her first public appearances was in January of 1985 when she performed her song 'Anchorage' on Coca Crystal's Manhattan Cable Show. During this period she traveled to Europe but, after being raped and finding no place where she felt at home, moved back to Texas (Schindehette & Maier, 1988). It was at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas where her performance at a late night campfire was recorded on a hand-held Sony Walkman by Pete Lawrence who subsequently returned to England and released the compilation of recordings as "The Texas Campfire Tapes." Her discovery was considered "Lana Turner-like" after the album reached number one on the Indie charts in England (Gleason, 1988) and was impressive enough for some to consider it a "landmark record" (Matthews, 1988, p. 113) and for a major record label to offer her a contract (Robicheau, 1989).

Short, Sharp, Shocked was Shocked's first studio album and was produced by Mercury/Polygram Records during a period of about 4 years in the 1980s when other female musicians such as Tracy Chapman and Suzanne Vega were considered part of the "new folk revival" (Hines, 1992; Walking the Line, 1988). An article in *People* magazine suggests her popularity is a fad, noting that she is getting her "big break during a year when short-haired, iconoclastic female singers (Sinead O'Connor, Tracy Chapman) are the hot new thing" (1988)

Shocked's decision to sign with a major record label was grounded in her hope that her audience would increase in size. In an interview in 1988, she stated, "I would've stayed on an independent if it was just a matter of getting recorded, but I'm playing with fire here. I want power, I want access" (Walking the Line, p. 14). The album, full of songs based on her own life in Texas, is to date her most popular album – in large part due to the popularity of the song 'Anchorage' which remains her signature song. In a 2009 interview she stated, "'Anyone who knows my work, knows that song.'" It is, according to the interviewer, "a shared vocabulary and a point of contact that she enjoys" (Kennedy).

A potentially significant component of a rhetor's efforts is the presentation of his/her identity and the co-construction of his/her persona. Identity, defined as "physical and/or behavioral attributes that make a person recognizable as a member of a group" is not politically neutral (Palczewski et al, 2012, p. 158). "Rhetoric," Palczewski, Ice, and Fritch note, "involves not only *what* people communicate (the words and the images), but also *as whom* they communicate - the identities they foreground" (p. 158). Palczewski, Ice and Fritch turn to scholarship about motherhood to illustrate how dimensions of one's identity (such as race and class) intersect with the identity of 'mother' in significant ways - illustrating that one's understanding of oneself and performance of oneself as mother (or non-mother) is influenced by and also influences the physical and behavioral elements of the self. I would add that identities are not only foregrounded by the rhetor, but are also foregrounded by audience members who talk and write about the rhetor and play a critical role in shaping the rhetor's image, or "a verbal and visual representation, emphasizing particular qualities and characteristics, that creates a perception of the rhetor in the audience's mind" (Palczewski et al, p. 167). To be sure, the rhetor has little control over his/her image developed in the public sphere.

At the time *Anchorage* was popular - when Shocked was being introduced to those outside of England - she was described as "skinny and pale, [wearing] the uniform of the defiant: close-cropped hair, black T-shirt and sweats, a British sailor's cap and black high tops" (Schindehette & Maier, 1988, p. 79) and as angular and boyish (True, 1989). She dressed the part of the skateboard punk rocker she sings about in 'Anchorage.' The presentation of Shocked as a defiant rabble-rouser is most evident in a black and white photo of her being held in a chokehold by police at a protest of Diamond Shamrock, a company that manufactured Agent Orange. Shocked insisted that this photo be used as the cover of *Short, Sharp, Shocked* (Walking the Line, 1988). Audiences viewed and made sense of Shocked's physicality while, through articles published in papers and magazines, gained knowledge about her politically-motivated, apparently rebellious activities such as burning the American flag at the 1984 Republican National Convention (Voland, 1989) and moving to England due to disgust with the Reagan presidency (Gleason, 1988). She was also cast as an unstable, manic musician by authors who would make note of her life as a squatter, her stays at mental health institutions. One journalist questioned her "grip on reality" (Jennings, 1989a, p. 8). As well, Shocked's sexuality was ambiguous. Because her music was popular in and became associated with gay (Gremore, 2013) and feminist (Aiges, 1990) communities, many believed she was lesbian. Even recently, comedian and activist Margaret Cho declared that she considered 'Anchorage' a lesbian anthem (Cho, 2013). Lastly, Shocked was open about her strained relationship with her mother due to her mother's strict Mormon lifestyle and her mother's decision to twice place her in mental institutions (Schindehette & Maier, 1988; Voland, 1989). In the late 1980s, Shocked identity was emerging as a woman who was politically, mentally, sexually, and interpersonally aberrant. Shocked was cognizant of how her identity was being shaped by her record label and

the media and acknowledged “that she was originally marketed as some sort of authentically field-recorded noble savage, a combination of idiot-savant and feral child” (Penn as cited in Bio).

Shocked’s identity is that of the socially-conscious activist who questions and disrupts the status quo. The tension that emerges, however, is that she was constructed as a dissident performer during a time when the female heretic in the music industry was profitable for record companies. Therefore, her music and behavior functioned to simultaneously resist and support the status quo within the industry. To some extent, she is what Cohen (1997) refers to as a consecrated heretic - given authority by those in power to critique the system. Those in power at her record label did not mind that she was vocal about motherhood or homelessness or problems within the economic or political system. Any critique she made of the label or the industry actually reinforced her nonconformist identity. Shocked seemed to recognize this when, after being nominated for a Grammy for Best Contemporary Folk Recording, she said “I've been pretty open about my motivation: basically to reclaim music to be made by people for people, and to destroy the system from within; now they're going to try to give me an award (Grammy) for it. It reminds me of that old cliche about capitalists throwing you the rope that you hang them with.” (Bream, 1989). Unfortunately for Shocked, the Grammy went to Tracy Chapman. Also unfortunate for Shocked was that her freedom to critique without backlash did not endure. By the 1990s her complaints about the restrictions placed on her musical endeavors rose to the level of a lawsuit in which she sued Mercury Records for violating the 13th Amendment - “claiming that “slavery” was unconstitutional—and the case was eventually settled in favor of Shock’s contractual release and ownership of her songs” (Torem, 2009).

Anchorage: Feminine Style & Feminist Sensibilities

Feminine Style in Lyric & Sound

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's influential *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (1989), introduced rhetorical critics and feminists to what Campbell refers to as the feminine style - a discursive style utilized by women in the Suffrage Movement during a historical period when speaking in the public sphere was deemed appropriate only for men. In the context of the Suffrage Movement, the feminine style grew out of women's lived experience; it was a strategic choice that allowed the female rhetors to "cope with the conflicting demands of the podium" (Campbell, 1989, p. 12). Discourse that reflects the feminine style is "personal in tone," relies "heavily on personal experience," encourages "audience participation," and positions the audience and speaker as peers. "The goal of such rhetoric is empowerment" because it invites women to be agents of change or because it is consciousness-raising (Campbell, 1989, p. 13). Campbell acknowledges that, while the feminine style can be employed by male and female rhetors (as well as applauded by male and female audience members), it is labeled 'feminine' because of the style's association with the non-aggressive manner of speech employed by female speakers in the 19th century.

Although Campbell identifies the feminine style as one that was evident in the 19th century, scholars have examined contemporary texts to discern the presence and consider the implications of the feminine style. For example, Dow and Tonn (1992) turn to Governor Ann Richards' speech at the 1988 Democratic National Convention to illustrate that "the characteristics of feminine style are part of a synthesis of form and substance that works to promote an alternative political philosophy reflecting traditional feminine values" (p. 287) such as a feminist counter-public sphere in which common identity is affirmed and in which

hegemonic ideologies may be opposed. *Anchorage*, through sound and content, showcases the feminine style in musical form.

A characteristic of the feminine style is reliance on personal experience (Campbell, 1989). *Anchorage* was written by Shocked and is based on her friendship with a woman who moved to Alaska and is now "Anchored down in Anchorage." She begins the song with, "I took time out to write to my old friend / I walked across that burning bridge / Mailed my letter off to Dallas / But her reply came from Anchorage, Alaska" (Shocked, 1988). The lyrics then move to the content of the letter she received from her friend. The song suggests that the relationship between the two was once strong but the lyric "I walked across the burning bridge" indicates the relationship had deteriorated. *Anchorage* is a memoir in musical form. Music reviewer Chris Woodstra wrote, "The songs have a very personal, almost diary feel, but at the same time, they speak a universal language -- none so poignant as the album's centerpiece, 'Anchorage', a touching letter from an old friend." The old friend, Kelli Bingham, wrote the letter when she was feeling homesick. "I was feeling, you know, hohum blues," she stated in an interview, "I was feeling like, I guess, a housewife" (Rich, 1988).

As the author of the letter from Anchorage, Kelli is the most prominent character in the narrative followed by Shocked and Kelli's husband Leroy, and, to a lesser extent, Kelli's son Kevin, and Kelli's daughter. The narrative indicates that Kelli is emotionally adrift while physically 'anchored down in Anchorage with her husband and children. There is a sense that Kelli is somewhat astonished by her current roles in life when she realizes "I think I'm a housewife. Hey, Shell. I think I'm a housewife." Her curiosity about, and perhaps awe of Michelle's life is addressed with the lyric, "Hey Girl, what's it like to be in New York? New York City - imagine that! Tell me, what's it like to be a skateboard punk rocker?" and her

homesickness is illuminated by the lyric, “Take me back to the days of the foreign telegrams and the all-night rock and rollin’.” Leroy is cast as the dominant partner; he’s the reason for the move to Anchorage and the voice that interrupts Kelli’s storytelling with “Send a picture,” “Hello,” and “Keep on rockin’, girl.”

The feminine style is also characterized by a personal tone (Campbell, 1989). Throughout the song, Michelle is referred to by her friend as “Shell” and greeted with “Hey, Girl.” This language conveys familiarity and intimacy. The lyric, “Hey Shell, we was wild then” reveals a shared history as does “Hey Girl, I think the last time I saw you was on me and Leroy's wedding day” which, more specifically, evokes a shared milestone followed by the estrangement alluded to in the “burning bridge” lyric. Furthermore, within the narrative, the use of letters as the vehicle of communication that functions to reunite these friends enhances the personal spirit of the lyrics. A personal tone, according to Dow and Tonn (1992), emits “emotional support, nurturance, empathy” (p. 287) and is “oriented toward relationship maintenance” (p. 288). In the narrative, the letter from Michelle is construed as a way of salvaging a broken relationship and her friend - who has become a mother of two during their period of estrangement - reveals she is willing to rekindle what once was a strong relationship.

Another quality of the feminine style is that it encourages audience participation. For Campbell (1989), audience participation does not necessarily mean that audience members participate in the performative moment and interact directly to and immediately with the rhetor. Rather, participation can involve a “process of testing generalizations or principles against the experiences of the audience” (p. 13), often relying on the inductive reasoning skills of the audience. That is, the listener participates by adhering to the message and drawing conclusions based on the information presented. Such is the case with *Anchorage* in which there is no

explicit assertion. The reasoning is inductive; Shocked encourages audience to consider the evidence (the narrative) and determine on their own the assertion the evidence supports. After hearing *Anchorage*, listeners may reach the conclusion that 'Life with a husband and children is confining'. As well, audience members participate when they make personal connections to the text. To expand on this, Dow and Tonn (1992) contend, "Generalizations reached through validation of personal experiences lead to the realization that the 'personal is political,' a process which produces group cohesion ..." (p. 289). Audience members who identify with the rhetor's narrative, or with any characters in the narrative, are folded into the meaning-making process and move into a relationship with the rhetor that is based on equality. Hence, the final characteristic of the feminine style - that the rhetor positions the audience and speaker as peers - is apparent in 'Anchorage'.

Social scientific studies conducted as early as the 1970s have found that even children associate instruments with a gender with females being associated with the violin, flute, and clarinet and males being associated with drums, trombone, and trumpet (Marshall & Shibazaki, 2013). It is not too surprising, then, that sounds instruments produce are also gendered. Because rhetorical critics have not articulated how the feminine style *sounds,* the work of scholars who understand the powerful role of sound as "an active participant in the shaping of cultural meaning and human subjectivities" (Monson, 1996, p. 211) is instructive. Sargeant and Himonides (2016) highlight the role of the listeners in this meaning-making process, noting that, "Masculinity and femininity are mapped onto the music by the listener." (Sergeant and Himonides, 2016, p. 13). The sound of the bass guitar, for example, has been socially constructed as a masculine sound (Auslander, 2004). Timbre, too, is perceived as feminine or masculine (Shepherd, 1991). Sergeant and Himonides (2014) found that tempo of the music was

the primary factor in listener's interpretation of music as feminine or masculine,noting that, "Faster tempi were associated with perception of the music as more stressed and dramatic, more assertive and masterful, more controlled and objective: slower tempi were associated with music perceived as more calm and reflective, mild and submissive, sensitive and emotional" (p. 7). Furthermore, sounds are not only gendered, they are associated with sexual identity and sexuality (Sergeant & Himonides, 2014).

'Anchorage's' sound is slow, soft, and folksy. One reviewer wrote that Shocked's lyrics are set "[a]gainst a melodic background of acoustic guitars and a Hammond organ right out of Bob Dylan's Highway 61 Revisited" (Okamoto, 1988). Whereas the album's "If Love Was a Train" was played on hard-rock radio stations, 'Anchorage' was the song from *Short, Sharp, Shocked* that was played on soft-rock radio stations (MacDonald, 1989). According to Shocked, it was the most highly produced song on the album (Walking the Line, 1988). She is described as "[m]ore of a straightforward folkie than either Suzanne Vega or Tracy Chapman" who generates a sound with "a bluesiness …. a hint of country swing in some of it, and a strikingly contemporary sensibility that carries highlights such as 'Anchorage'" (McCleese, 1988).

Feminist Sensibilities

In the late 1980s Michelle Shocked described herself as a feminist as well as a "squatter, anarchist and expatriate" (Waldman, 1988) and in one interview asserted "I am a very strong feminist" (Rosen, 1988). Numerous articles referred to her feminist leanings and influences (for example, see Bream, 1989; Harrington, 1989; Okamota, 1988). When Anchorage drew the public's attention, Shocked was identified, by herself and others, as a feminist and her song 'Anchorage' as a song that was women-centered. Some articles recognized that the lyrics of Anchorage addressed the differences in the lives of two female friends after one got married and

had children while the other developed into an active, traveling musician. Mullen (1988), for instance, noted “Shocked skillfully manages to express both the pain and joy of living with difficult decisions” while other writers noted “Shocked reads a letter from a former partner-in-crime who has settled down and given up” (Okamoto, 1988) and that Anchorage expresses “the love retained by old friends who have shared strong experiences, as well as the confusion and awkwardness that lack of continued contact brings” (Pick, 1988). Righi (1989) clearly acknowledged the role of motherhood in the discrepancy in the friends’ lives. She writes that Anchorage “sounds at first like a slightly nostalgic exchange between two friends who have gone separate career paths; one has become a housewife and mother isolated in Alaska, the other a singer living in New York City. But upon closer inspection, it’s really about a woman who has been forced to shelve her dreams and follow her husband.” When interviewed by Righi, Shocked acknowledges that the song emerged from a letter written to her by an old friend, adding “We're supposed to have had the civil rights movement, then the equal rights movement . . . ‘You are my wife, Goodbye city life’ . . . that stuff doesn't happen anymore. But it does.”

Perspectives by Incongruity

Visually, acoustically, and lyrically ‘Anchorage’ produces and excavates tensions while also being embedded in a tension-rich context. Shocked’s feminine and folky sound, for example, is in contrast to the image of Shocked in a chokehold on the album’s cover. An intimate, private letter between friends is at odds with the very public recording and broadcasting of the song (and the letter’s contents). A women-centered song performed by a feminist is not in harmony with the 1980s rock produced by the patriarchal music industry. Because juxtaposed images, sounds, ideas produce meaning (Aune, 2001), considering the juxtaposed textual elements can be insightful. Kenneth Burke’s ‘perspectives by incongruity’ is one tool that can

help reveal the rhetorical value of these incommensurate elements of the text that rub up against each other in 'Anchorage.'

When discussing perspective by incongruity, Burke noted that the world is full of incongruous objects but that he is most interested in moral or esthetic incongruencies. These incongruences occur when two objects (or ideas, etc.) are positioned in close proximity to each other but their "togetherness" is atypical. When an artist, for example, paints incongruous objects in her art, she does so purposefully. "The result," he says, "is a perspective with interpretive ingredients" (p. 97). Scholars who have utilized Burke's idea to assess rhetoric of incongruity have noted that incongruity can both induce pleasure and shift perspective (Anderson, 2016). It may induce pleasure if the incongruity is read as humorous or out of the ordinary. And, it may function to shift perspectives because "it is through confronting moments of incongruity that people re-evaluate their experiences" (Dubriwny, 2005).

There are three significant incongruities within 'Anchorage' that center on spheres of activity, identity, and motherhood. Each incongruity is reflected in Buchanen's (2013) continuum in which Woman (the Devil Term) is juxtaposed with Mother (the God Term).

One meaningful incongruity in 'Anchorage' centers on women's spheres of activity. The song lyrics contain quoted material from a letter written by one of Shocked's friends. When Shocked sang it during her live or televised performances and when the recording of it was distributed, replayed and broadcasted, the letter - an intimate vehicle for communication - moved from the private to the public sphere. The public audience became privy to the content of what was originally generated as private communication. 'Anchorage' was not the only text in which private communication was made visible to a large audience. At the same time that 'Anchorage' was on the charts, the show Designing Women was in its third season. Bonnie Dow

(1992), writing about the popular show Designing Women , argues that the show is a "case study that illustrates the blurring of the demarcations between women's private talk and the public sphere … this blurring occurs through the public performance of 'private talk' on television" (p.125). Before those boundaries were blurred, however, juxtaposing the activities connected to the private spheres (associated with femininity) and public spheres (associated with masculinity) made the usual tension between the two incongruent spheres more visible. The private sphere is associated with the Mother - a God Term - and the public with the Woman - a Devil Term. Dow argues that such discourse "can work to create a definition of reality that contrasts with the dominant definitions offered by a patriarchal culture" (p.128). The tension, and the subsequent heightening and release of that tension that occurs when boundaries are blurred (or when those spheres are purposefully juxtaposed), may have a consciousness-raising function (Dow, 1992). Dubriwny (2005), in fact, asserts that "Perspective by incongruity within the process of consciousness-raising can play a key role in reshaping of the meaning of individuals' experiences, for it is through confronting moments of incongruity that people re-evaluate their experiences." As a result of the consciousness-raising function, there is the possibility of the creation of a feminist counter-public sphere (Dow, 1992). As a counter-public sphere, there is the possibility of "devolopin[ing] alternative norms for public argument and what counts as evidence" and creating "oppositional interpretations of identities, interests, and needs" (Palczewski et al, 2012, p. 243)

Another significant incongruity centers on identity. As noted earlier, Michelle Shocked's association with the folk genre was considered to be at odds with the feminist, punk, rabble-rousing image she (and her record company) constructed. In her review of *Short, Sharp, Shocked*, Deb Waldman (1988) noted that Shocked describes herself as an expatriot and

anarchist “but you wouldn't know it from her new album on Polygram, "Short Sharp Shocked."” People Magazine (1988) wrote, “musically Shocked doesn’t sound at all like a typical punk rocker; she more closely resembles the protest-folk singers of the early 60s” and music reviewer Chris Woodstra (1988) noted, “The cover photo, which shows Shocked restrained by police officers during a protest, indicates little about the music found within.”

Although her radical image and persona may not have been attractive to a potential audience, the folksiness of ‘Anchorage’ was palatable to a large audience. Importantly, while female pop musicians have steered away from integrating the topic of motherhood into their music, female country and folk musicians such as Dolly Parton, 1960s folk revival performers such as Peggy Seeger and Joni Mitchell, and musicians associated with ‘new country’ such as Bonnie Rait and Mary Chapin Carpenter have folded this topic into their music (Grieg, 1997). Grieg notes, “Country music is, of course, the home of the domestic melodrama” (p.172). Despite the fact that motherhood is not widely addressed even in the country/folk genre, the folk genre is more generally affiliated with motherhood than are other genres. Shocked may have understood this association when she articulated her strategy in interviews. She stated, “Sure, the songs could be all nice and sweet, but put that shot on the cover, and I knew I’d get a chance to talk about something that mattered.” (Walking the line, 1988, p. 14) and “I feel that what I’ve done by keeping the record fairly subtle is to make people curious enough to come see me live” (Harrington, 1988, p. B12). The tension that exists between her image as a radical, black-clothed punk rocker and her folksy/country sound (arguably connected to the God Term of Mother) may lead some to consider Shocked as irrational which, per Buchanen (2013), is associated with the Devil Term of Woman. However, it is a tension Shocked may not mind if it functions to heighten curiosity enough to get people to her performances.

The incongruity most recognized centers on motherhood. It is a tension that was apparent to listeners which is evident in the description of the song as a "contrast between Shocked's rambling life and the stable married world of a childhood friend" (People Magazine, 1988). In fact, Shocked and her friend's primary common ground is now a history of their youth when they shared common ground (literally and metaphorically). Discourses that address the woman and the mother "provide speakers with immediately recognizable (and culturally resonant) stereotypes" (Buchanen, p. 8). As well, shifting from a woman's voice to a mother's voice in one text highlights the dissimilarities in the lives of the mother and the non-mother. Within a single text, listeners are confronted with the Mother (the godly) and the woman (the godless) - two characters that are part of a woman/mother hierarchy. According to Buchanen (2013), the "mother stood at the apex and was followed (in order of significance) by the maiden, eagerly awaiting marriage and family, the mother and the maiden were, in turn, trailed by the spinster, a pitiful figure lacking the home, husband, and children required for social consequence" (Buchanen, p. 18-19). The song does not hint that Shocked has the same degree of interest in her friend's life as her friend has in her life. There is no indication that Shocked envies her friend in Alaska or that she hopes to someday be a mother herself. Therefore, Shocked does not portray the maiden but may be considered a spinster. Shocked's transient life (as identified in the lyrics as well as in articles about her), when paired with the absence of any lyric that speaks to a longing for parenthood, reinforces her spinster status. Furthermore, in the late 1980s Shocked was emerging as a favorite of lesbians and believed to be homosexual. This aspect of her identity adds complexity to the song due to the unique tensions between the terms lesbian and mother due to the widely-held assumption that mothers must be heterosexual. Homosexuals are considered sexually "explicit and perverse" and "sexuality is emphatically <u>not</u> an attribute of the mother

(emphasis included)" (Buchanen, 2013, p. 20). To review, Michelle Shocked's country/folk sound is generally associated with the maternal. This maternal sound, however, is countered by the black and white photo of a short-haired Michelle Shocked in a chokehold at a protest. As well, when Shocked shares the contents of a letter between friends in Anchorage, she exposes the private sphere in a very public manner. Like country/folk music, the private sphere is also identified with the mother. Combined, the folk sound, revelation of the private sphere, and the lyrics which showcase the voice of the friend exalt the mother. The God term is doing its rhetorical work. On the other hand, the visual aspects of the album (along with Shocked's appearance), the reliance on the public sphere, and the lyrics which showcase Michelle address the woman (specifically, the spinster). So, too, is the Devil term at play.

Conclusion

Buchanen (2013) declared that the "Mother and Woman afford rhetors means for exalting or denigrating women, as does the terrain that falls between the two extremes" (p. 9). She asserts that the 'middle ground' between the woman (Devil term) and mother (God term) is a space that is rhetorically rich due to its ambiguity. 'Anchorage' was Michelle Shocked's signature song and, to date, her most popular song. It graced the top 100 during a period in which pop musicians just did not refer to mothers in their music (Grieg, 1997). At once, 'Anchorage' presents the audience with a text that holds the two powerful and competing constructs of mother and woman. Indeed, the text represents the more ambiguous terrain between the two extremes.

It was noted earlier that Shocked believed that her music - particularly the music that was played on radio stations and distributed to a wide audience - was the means to realize her goal of sharing her political viewpoints with a live audiences. For political and artistic reasons, Shocked also hoped to unite diverse audiences (Jennings, 1989; True, 1989). The appeal of 'Anchorage'

to the general public helped her in those efforts. The song presented disparate listeners with familiar characters with whom they could identify. The character of the Mother, as has already been discussed, is a powerful symbolic construct that "is easy to evoke but hard to resist" (Buchanen, 2013). Often, referring to mother "discourages critical distance, in effect shutting down analysis, discussion, deliberation, reflection, and nuance" (Buchanen, 2013). Although there is a hefty emphasis on all that is associated with the God term of Mother, the Mother is not idealized. One reason for the decreased strength of the Mother as God term is because the mother is juxtaposed with the woman (and the concepts associated with that Devil Term) who is not vilified. 'Anchorage' lies in that rhetorical middle ground, inviting audiences to consume the music without resistance while subtly presenting a feminist sensibility in which motherhood's cultural hegemony is recognized and, perhaps, questioned. As such, 'Anchorage' is an example of consciousness-raising rhetoric that may lend itself to the creation of a feminist counter-public sphere.

Works Cited

(forthcoming)

Electric Mommyland:
Writing a Sociological History through Auto-Ethnographical Art and Music Performance towards a Deeper Understanding of Everything Mom

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Introduction

Historically, music has been a force for change. *The Sounds of Resistance* outlines the ways "overt and implied messages of resistance from slave songs to rap" have challenged the status quo and paved a path to a "Truer World."[1] This paper examines some of the ways music has confronted stereotypes and challenged mainstream ideology within the world of mother culture. Throughout the text I identify the mom rock movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century and trace the efforts of mom rockers, as they played instruments, wrote songs, and created community. It was this newly-formed community that contributed to a metamorphosis of "everything mom" recognized today in the context of "mommy bloggers," the literary series *Listen to Your Mother*, Hollywood shows like *Desperate Housewives*, *The Housewives of Beverly Hills, Rita Rocks,* and the rumored soon-to-be-made feature-film based on Judy David's book *Rock Star Mommy*, among other things.

The mom rock movement formed organically as a source of empowerment and connection. What started as a single concert in New York City in 2002 quickly grew to four countries, twenty-five cities, and hundreds of performers.[2] There was a struggle to attempt to name and label many of the issues mothers faced. As we searched for a solid platform to stand on lyrics like: "Fuzzy Slippers," "Its Only Life," and "Eat Your Damn Spaghetti," insinuated rebellion. But in retrospect, a clear identification of exactly what we were rebelling against posed challenges. Were we engaging in effective protest or merely aimlessly dissenting? As recently as

2017 *the Canadian Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement* issued a call for papers on the topics of, "the social devaluation of motherwork, the endless tasks of privatized mothering, and the incompatibility of waged work and care work, and the impossible standards of idealized motherhood." These salient points have not changed much during the twenty years. Challenges remain. While in some cases, bands like the Oakland based group Placenta were able to confront contemporary social issues like poverty and queer mothering, others, like myself, sought to examine the lived-mother-experience and establish a cultural repository. Consensus on a shared agenda for mom rockers has been elusive. Some mothers were simply looking to get out of the kitchen for the night. In her book *Rock Star Mommy*, Judy Davids writes, "[Joy, the founder of Mamapalooza] was on a mission to empower, encourage, and enlighten all women to find their voice, whereas the Mydols were just looking for an excuse to get out of the house" (169).

Despite massive amounts of dialogue, media, and press attempting to "transform [motherhood] into a label that includes creativity and independence" (Sharon Hayes, USA Today, 1/31/2005), the platform for dissent crumbled. Within a few years, an assimilation process began. By 2006 motherhood was being used to sell everything from sex, to diapers, and dishwashers. The mom rock/Mamapalooza initiative was ultimately subsumed by a consumer society that translates terms like "action" and "agency" into the economic imperatives within a mainstream ideology. It is often within this ideology a new "mommy identity" continues to thrive.

In the first portion of this chapter, I demonstrate not only how the mom rock movement of the early twenty-first century awakened mothers to their individuality and creativity, but also to how the embedded mother-identity posed ongoing challenges to the narrative. Throughout

Electric Mommyland and the Mom Rock Movement I use an auto-ethnographical approach to the subject as both a performer and the founder of a large-scale International festival featuring mother artists, coupled with relevant work by Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic* and the music and writing of Charlotte Perkins Gillman. Secondly, I explore *Women's Marginalization and an Argument for Electric Music as a Medium for Expression*. The marginalization of women is not an original idea, nor is an argument for music as a medium for expression. Its newness is the manner in which it has been employed, specifically within the realm of motherhood and activism. The next section includes *Creating a Mother Culture* in which I review a very brief history of some of the cross-cultural identification of a category known as "mother-identity-labeling" in business, politics, scholarship, art, and literature to better lay a general framework for mapping this emergent area of investigation. Lastly, the section *Activism and Art in a Consumer Society* highlights the work of Hester Eisenstein, *Feminism Seduced*, and David Suisman, *Selling Sounds*. This portion of the paper focuses on the ways in which urges for lasting change are often usurped by the same systems they attempted to confront. In these ways, I summarize some of the successes and failures of the contemporary mother's movement.

Throughout this chapter I embrace an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from sociology, gender, media, American studies, feminist texts, as well as consumer culture. Both hegemony and the ideology to which I refer throughout the paper represent patriarchal constructions of power in which maleness or men themselves have held primary positions. Because this is auto-ethnographic, I will also draw on some of my experiences. By exploring this sociological history I aim to facilitate a better understanding of current evolutions (or de-evolutions) of a modern American mothers' movement as well as create a backdrop for those

wishing to do future research on this topic. I also aim to secure a position of legitimacy for the art and culture of mom rock within the great body of work that constitutes women's and gender studies, and more specifically, mother studies.

Electric Mommyland and the Mom Rock Movement

"Electric Mommyland" represents a period in time well documented through music, video and photographs, as well as through media interviews, featuring a number of artists who were also mothers (1997-2008). Just as Dorothy Smith invited women to "grasp their own authority to speak" within a feminist sociology in the 1980s (1987, p. 34), women began staking claim to the relatively uninhabited space of mother articulations within an area of the performing arts. The energy of this initiative was a spirited revolution against the tyranny of subsumed identity within the role of the mother/housewife. The original "mother rocker" did her best to draw up a rallying cry against the hard labor and banality of raising children, the constraints of the physical body, the imperatives of hegemony and the challenge the stereotypes that permeated mother culture. Likewise, many of the women, who were also past the age of thirty, challenged gender constraints as well as ageism. All of these intentions resulted from a subconscious understanding rather than one particular activist agenda.

As the leader, and organizer, and songwriter of the first mom rock band named Housewives On Prozac (1997), I relied on this platform because performance-art had framed my life. I hoped grass roots activism would benefit individuals who were mothers, who felt disenfranchised artistically, spiritually, culturally, and practically as well as others who might also be searching for a community and a voice. The goal was to amplify the lived experience of the woman performing motherhood, declaring or dis-claring the mother-identity, and claiming motherness as a legitimate point of artistic expression within popular culture. Goals

included sharing mothers' lived-experience, framed by social imperatives, in order to increase agency for those performing mother-work. Likewise, and particular to my story, making music was essential to my emotional and creative survival. Long-understood to be a vehicle for healing as well as change, music corroborated the essential truth that I was "singing and performing to maintain [my] own existence" (Sounds of Resistance, p. xv). The results of which, have no doubt furthered an International mother discourse[3] but have still left many issues unresolved.

In the late nineties and early 2000's, our planning sessions, songwriting, and art-making was an attempt to articulate a state of being, but was not framed by any theoretical justification. We were very much unlike other organized social justice movements. For example, *A New Queer Agenda* at Barnard College clearly determined there was an agenda and made the decisions that were necessary to support that agenda. In the case of LGBQT rights, *The Scholar and Feminist Journal* picked (for example) gay marriage as a central issue and aligned itself within an institution for long-term success and survival. This is a good example of a meaningful social engagement project. It wasn't until 2006 that a clear political agenda took shape within the mother-sphere the founding of Moms Rising by Kristin Finkbinder and Joan Blade. Their group focused on children's health, pro-mother legislature, and healthy food. Other projects like CMQCCC (founded in 2006) with a mission to end preventable morbidity, mortality and racial disparities in California maternity care locate within a specific state, and pro-maternal medical initiative.

Our project originated and remained focused on voice and identity. The media attention my music project garnished allowed me to leverage the notion of a mother-artist into a music festival series called Mamapalooza in 2002. The series was flanked by women-made, mother-branded art, comedy, theater, literature, poetry, music, and commerce. However. This fugacious

endeavor proved difficult to track. Concerts took place in underground nightclubs and church basements. Identities changed often, sometimes as quickly as a divorce, a move, a child's birthday or a band breakup. Circumstances were also beyond institutional regulation: unmeasured, unrecorded, and untrained as well as unsupported. (Just as current Guerilla Girls statistics suggest, women in the arts continue to be a subset of mainstream culture). Or, as Carlo Ginzburg establishes in his exploration of dominant culture (from as long ago as the Sixteenth Century), "the culture of the subordinate class is largely oral" (1992, p. xv) and traditions such as this easily dissipate. Our "movement" as it were was a stride in the direction of articulating our lived experiences, which was fresh, but ephemeral and lacking in a clear direction.

In addition to the temporal nature of our musical and other artistic creations, formidable cultural expectations dogged our platform. The role of the woman in American households is specific and constrained. The general social mandate locates expectations that keeps mothers in their place, doing what they are supposed to. As Johanna Brenner asserts, managing a family-household system, "in which the class-structured capitalist system of production incorporates the biological facts of reproduction" is very much a reality (2000, p. 25). A system like this leaves women either working the second shift, or the whole shift as a virtual "slave"[4] to economics or sometimes abuse. If such liberation were possible, Michele Barrett asserts much would need to change everything. A change like this would include a "re-division of childcare responsibilities," and an end to the "dependence of women on a male wage," as well as "a transformation in the ideology of gender" (p. 15). Perhaps change is happening slowly in some areas, but the forces that put these intangibles in place are still very much at work in our larger social structure. One need only watch the epic Trump vs. Clinton presidential election to see these values at play on the national stage (2016).

In the long view our rallying cry, while noisy, was defenseless against what I have come to recognize is a unified American ideology. Good mothers take care of their kids, and are not too unpleasant to each other, their husbands, or their communities. For the most part, participants in the Mom Rock arena of Mamapalooza adhered to this code. Therefore, the following obstacles continued to present themselves: We were much too connected to our children to demand real liberation from the job, despite the reality that some of us harbored a great deal of ambivalence about our roles. We continually vacillated between caregiving imperatives and a desire to actualize the lived experiences of the woman at the center of the caregiving responsibility. In other words, our identity and our lived-experience involved our children, so we were not willing to leave them very far behind, even as we sought to define ourselves as individuals with our own wants, needs, and agency. For those of us who were married, living in heterosexual households, our loyalty to our husbands was greater than any compulsion to dismantle the system that in many cases kept us subsumed. Many of us had a history of volunteerism, so equitable pay for performance or the idea of monetizing our projects proved to be challenging. This lack of monetization also complicated things. Where professional musicians were mercenary, many of us just wanted to "do good things." With no pay structure in the home, how were women accustomed to working for nothing going to suddenly transform themselves into artists and businesswomen demanding payment for talent rendered? Then the last and largest problem--whatever progress we did make was so rapidly assimilated into consumer culture that it became impossible to identify how exactly the "lifestyle" and music message was identified and then co-opted throughout the mom-rock timeline. Despite this fact the economics of those participating in the project varied greatly. Branding was employed at the project's inception, albeit somewhat

haphazardly, but quickly co-opted by more powerful corporate structures, which I will explain more in the final section of the paper.

Patricia Hill Collins argued in her book *Black Feminist Thought,* that a "highly effective system of social control [was] designed to keep African-American women in an assigned, subordinate place" (2000, p.5). I would add that this was true for both black and white women involved in the original mother arts movement who were also actively engaged in mothering.[5] For the most part we struggled against some invisible force that we could not put our fingers on. That force kept us in our place except for the nights we donned guitars. Like peasants during the medieval festivals of the past who were allowed participation in the excellent revelry of the season, we believed we were actual queens breaking ground on some reimagined vision of motherhood. Alas, in the morning we returned to our kitchens, cubicles, and carpools buoyed up, but with the world around us relatively unchanged. Our communal experience viewed through the festival lens, were, in the words of Alessandro Falassi, celebrations of "time out of time" (1987 pg. 7). We were not in fact focused on defining the ways in which the institution of motherhood needed to change. The songs, reviews, and films that ensued remind me now that we were saying something, and that it was amplified, and it did get a lot of attention, and that there were interesting things happening, but the terms of the revolution were unresolved.

The preamble was interminable. As the leader of Mamapalooza as well as the Housewives band I traversed the offices and studios of Hollywood where a variety of animated reality producers tried to set the stage for a Mom Rock competition or a mom-makeover show. From there, onto the stage of national women's conferences, grouping a path through the subject of motherhood. The subject animated the entirely of my intellectual and material labor yet I was unable to precisely put my finger on "the thing." This thing; called motherhood-- its theory,

practice, and the "art of"-- is something scholars, it turns out, had written about. However, I had no such exposure, and it was not until two thousand and five that I began to envision a path through the academy that might elicit some kind of lasting change. Until that time, I continued to strum my guitar and yelp through performances like "Shut Up and Drive" and "The Housewife's Lament."[6]

Women's Marginalization and an Argument for Electric Music as a Medium for Expression

The authors of *The Women Founders* question why women's contributions have been obliterated from the history of sociological thought. On each count, the first being social control and the second being legitimacy within the social order, women have been marginalized from positions of authority. The authors contend that women's voices were systematically erased from the canons. They give examples of female sociologists, theorizing in the nineteenth and early twentieth century who, unlike their male counterparts were purposefully omitted. These omissions were because of at least two major factors: "the politics of gender" and "the politics of knowledge" (1998, p. 11& 14). According to these authors the accounting is situated within a patriarchal framework; women were not considered as important as men. Sociology's contributions to humankind's understanding of the nature and causes of our complicated interpersonal interactions in the 1800/1900s led to the legitimization of the field and to the scientization of sociology as a practice. Finally, the emergence of the university as a stable source of income was a "move that was part of a quest for professional authority, social status, and job and salary security" (p. 15). These power arrangements proliferated for those practicing sociology. *The Women Founders* focuses on women who lived a hundred years ago. Since that time the first and second wave of feminism have come and gone.

Some of the legal and political problems associated with those movements have resolved themselves: the abolition of slavery, voting rights for women, to name a few, while others continue to be debated, including reproductive justice, equality in the workplace, and more. Similarly, feminist articulations remain removed from the domestic sphere where motherhood is enacted. There are many reasons for this, including the fact that mothering labor in America is performed within the home, a privatized zone. If "mother" were a real job in the public sphere then you'd have to apply, you could get fired, you would get paid, you would be accountable, and it would require education and training. But because motherhood is not generally considered a social issue, but rather a private one, the system is difficult to penetrate. Amber Kinser, author of *Motherhood and Feminism* describes yet another reason for the divide. She argues that the "Cartesian Divide" as early as the 17th Century began to assign the role of the body to women, and the role of the mind to men. This divide was enacted philosophically making women intellectually inferior, and also left them materially in the "private world," while men claimed the "public world" (2008, p. 11). Unfortunately, many of the texts like Kinser's, which could be instrumental to "our" liberation, do not find their way into the mainstream. They remain relegated to the privilege of the very few who embark on an a rigorous academic journey and I can tell you most certainly from the front lines of the kiddie parks of New York City to the playgrounds of suburbia, that these women-- my friends-- did not know such things existed. If they did know it, then I would have heard of it.

In this portion of the paper I discuss women's marginalization, or more specifically their "silencing." The phenomenon of silencing according to Dorothy E. Smith is a two way street, enacted by both men and women. In the *The Everyday World as Problematic*, Dorothy E. Smith directs the reader to look at the idea of silencing in the following ways: male authority is not a

conspiracy among men simply imposed on women; it is a complimentary social process between women and men– one in which women are complicit in their silencing. Because of the authority of the male voice, "men have authority in the world as members of a social category" (p. 29), and this category of authority serves as a form of power that allows men to get things done. Likewise women, and I argue, especially women who have children, are not only susceptible to the general social ideology of the good and obedient "silently suffering"[7] mother but also, those in partnerships are likewise bound by their husband's or partner's compliance. Such was the case with me. Though I was financially protected from the harshness of a lack of food, or shelter, I was a full-time mother of four children. Even with help, of which I had much, the task of domesticity was real and tangible. As I described in the introduction to this paper, our little mom rock movement was hampered on several counts, not the least of which was; mothers do what needs to be done. If the children's noses were runny, we wiped them. I offer up a lyric from one of Housewives On Prozac's most well quoted songs called "Fuzzy Slippers." The opening of which goes as follows, "I wipe my baby's chin with my college diploma and wonder how did I ever get here? I take the gold record off the wall, from 1983. Crack open the plexiglass and declare an emergency." Had I known of Smith's writing, and been educated in the idea of "grasping our own authority to speak" by recognizing a deprivation of authority and my own training to facilitate male-controlled topics, I might have written an academic paper instead of a song. But, then the question arises, would that have been better?

Just as I was scribbling on napkins and recipe cards, Andrea O'Reilly was hard at work in Canada editing *Re-defining Motherhood; Changing Identities and Patterns*, which was published the year after I started the "Housewives" project. She writes of her goals in the introduction:

> "These authors move beyond myths and stereotypes of mothering to explore differences among women and within individual women in order to challenge the existence of a universal meaning of motherhood…. Mothers are never only mothers. Simultaneously they are lovers, workers, activists, daughters, partners, sisters, neighbors, aunts, friends, and so on" (1998, p. 14).

I am fairly certain that as a feminist scholar Dr. O'Reilly had read Dorothy E. Smith, and was addressing directly the following issues cited in the opening chapter of *The Everyday as Problematic*. Those issues posit that as of the 1980s: a) we are deprived of developing among ourselves the thoughts and images that express the situations we share, b) it is only when women treat one another as those who count that we can break free of silence, c) we have learned to set aside, deny, and obliterate our own subjectivity and experience. Ten years later, in November of 1997 my singing partner and I were interviewed for a *New York Times* article called, "Band Sings What It's Like To Raise A Family in the Nineties." Part of that interview reads as follows.

> "The two women, whose stage banter is part of their performances, regard themselves as foot soldiers for meaningful lives within the family. When such women have fierce creative energy and a tendency to break the mold, that plight becomes even more complex."[8]

The song "I Am Not A Barbie Doll" released on "Housewives" first album chants, "Just because I'm beautiful, just because I'm sweet. Just because my eyes are blue, doesn't mean – I am not a Barbie doll." What was I saying when I wrote that? Was I not "grasping my own authority to speak"? And where were all the women of the seventies in the 1990s? Why did I not know these things? Why did I have to go deep into the cave of my own subconscious to draw out these truths?

"I am not a Barbie doll" was one of many anthems intended to vocalize the unseen forces that were constraining and controlling my life. What of the "violence done to women?" "…and there is violence done" as Smith says. (p. 25) The lyrics demonstrate "the ideological practices of our society provide us with forms of thought and knowledge that constrain us to treat ourselves as objects" (p. 36). I conclude this portion of the paper by acknowledging that marginalization of women is established (and continues today in our culture) through the evidence presented in feminist texts, gender studies classes, statistical evidence on equity between men and women in America, and the general atmosphere of which anyone with a sensitive nature can palpably intuit. Next, I discuss music and voice as a method of amplification, if not an antidote to this condition.

Mother, writer, sociologist, and activist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman used music and poetry to awaken women to their position in society in 1911. "Suffrage Songs and Verses"[9] admonishes women to seek their place in the world in the song "Women of To-day."

And still the wailing babies come and go,

And homes are waste, and husband's hearts fly far;

There is no hope until you dare to know

The thing you are!

In 1898 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, sociologist, artist, and activist penned *Suffrage Songs and Verses*. She sought to challenge obstacles to women's rights. Now, 118 years later, much has changed for women and families. But, significant barriers remain. Women in the United States vote, have rights to their property and children and enjoy the same opportunities to work outside the home that men do, but other hurdles; including policy slights, access to affordable childcare, a ratified equal rights amendment, equal pay for equal work, reproductive justice, and issues of gender parity continue to permeate social structures. According to biographer Cynthia Davis,

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an activist with a broad set of goals. Gilman "set her sights on women's domestic, maternal, and wifely duties whenever she believed they uniquely restricted women to the home and hence prevented them from pursuing fulfilling work in the public sphere" (xii). Gilman used music, literature, and the arts to express her position and influence community support.

Standpoint theorists like Dorothy Smith and Patricia Hill Collins call out for feminists to develop knowledge based on women's experiences and then do what feminists do: write, form coalitions, march, and sing out. Using one's voice to speak truth, whether about theory, or a call to action, or uprising against violence, or calls for emancipation is a primal act. For those not suffering from a physical condition that prevents them from moving their mouth or blowing through a voice box it is one of the most essential features of the human expression. When my daughter was three, I taught her to roar. Literally to throw back her head and "roar." Music as a form of worship, celebration, and activism, has a long history. I agree with Gillman on many counts. Her view on the core causes of inequality stemming from the patriarchal properties of acquisition and possession, her interest in "promoting progress and fairness" (1998, p. 125), and her theories about the sexuo-economic relation resonate (p. 117). The latter theory in which sex is leveraged (often unknowingly) as an economic stabilizer deserves more mention but must be left for another time. This feature is something very much at work in relationships even today, yet many layers of things passing as socially acceptable disguise it. The fact that Gillman was as lucid as she was, and an artist on top of that, serves as an inspiration.

Music it seems can be a notable appendage to any endeavor and need not be practiced as a sole source of meaning or money, but as a way in which to promote an agenda, which is a good thing, since being an artist in America is a nearly impossible way to survive unless the ascension

to the elite realm of stardom has been established. In America elite music stars are inducted into The Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame. But its mandate may serve the message of this paper with regard to music being employed as an activist platform. Located in Cleveland, Ohio the museum "exists to educate visitors, fans and scholars from around the world about the history and continuing significance of rock and roll music."[10] The museum does this through exhibits, and classes, as well as teaching plans it offers to those who wish to use music education in their classroom. The lesson plan on "music's role in civic and cultural upheaval" invites users to learn about "rock artists [who] have used their music as a forum to address various social and political conditions surrounding them." The Hall of Fame educational initiative focuses particularly on "protest" or "message" songs. Their emphasis is on civil rights, served with a large helping of Bob Dylan (there are no mom rock songs in this collection) are presented for the purposes of demonstrating the power of music in inspiring social change.

Sheila Whiteley, in her book, *Women and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity*, devotes much text to examining "sexuality, gender, freedom, and repression constructed and rooted in the lived experience and then related to ways in which art, music, and popular culture provide a focus for challenging established representations of femininity" (p. 11). She confirms that the employment of music for self-identification purposes is substantiated, something I will elaborate on in the next section of the paper. The use of amplification, necessary in the making of electric music, is a tool that requires only brief mention for the point of the essay. Its purposes and practicalities are self-evident. Amplification makes things louder. Instruments and songs plugged into equipment can result in a clamoring dispatch of messaging and music that are more resounding than those levied from acoustic accompaniments.

Creating a Mother Culture

A cross-pollination of literature, popular culture, and identity politics shaped by the Feminist movement(s) of the sixties, seventies, and eighties have informed subsequent generation of procreators just as the music of the time reverberated from Woodstock to Wall Street. In this section I review a very brief history of some of the cross-cultural identification of a category known as "mother-identity-labeling" in business, politics, scholarship, art, and literature to better lay a general framework for understanding this emergent area of investigation. The sweep must be broad, necessitated by the brevity of the text. Largely without fanfare, "mother" labeling transpired organically. Academics wrote about it, journalists labeled it, much like "radical feminism," "Marxist feminism," "queer feminism," etc. But let us note that before there could be a concept of a woman, who was a mother specifically, acting out her motherhood within the public sphere, there needed to be an identification of this state of being. This state could be conceived from multiple perspectives and through many lenses. The capitalist explanation for the rise of mother identity could be called branding. The philosophical point of view could include a desire towards a particular political bent, such as is the case of Sara Ruddick's, *Maternal Thinking; Towards a Politics of Peace*. Within the academy a "feminist mother" might find him/herself examining ways to elaborate on theoretical questions. Music has been used to break down boundaries and create dissent. Identities such as those of "mom rockers" could assist in creating conversations about "good mom" and "bad mom" stereotypes.

Popular literature brings the message to the masses, and while it might not solve a problem it certainly can capture the essence of what is wrong with a thing – this could be true about any of previously mentioned categories. It is useful to note that in an ironic twist even the predatory Donald J. Trump elicited the following statement during his Town Hall Debate with

presidential candidate Hillary Clinton "Before you solve a problem you have to say the name of the problem" (Oct. 9. 2016). Solutions are not always the subject we are concerned with. It is sometimes first necessary to take the thing out of the box (or in this case the house, or uterus, or consciousness) and examine it. While this topic alone could comprise an entire body of work, I suggest a brief overview to better demonstrate the way in which the concept of 'mother," specifically "working mother," "maternal philosopher," "maternal theorist," and "mom-rocker," are embodied in the public sphere. These concepts of mother have paved the way to coursework found in today's universities, and art exhibits like "New Maternalisms"[11] as well as interdisciplinary forums like Mother Studies.[12]

Perhaps one of the clearest attempts at forming a mother identity emerged immediately following the mainstream Second Wave Feminist movement. *Working Mother Magazine* was founded in 1979, incorporating the concept of mother as a worker, outside the home. The "Working Mother" missive focused on issues such as equal pay, flexible work schedules, and childcare. Primarily a "how to" advocacy magazine for corporations and their female employees, WMM's website says it has grown to readership of 2.2 million, and is part of a Bonnier Publishing, a company with more than $200 million in revenue.[13] The "working mother" identity helps to prioritize women's labor in the American workforce helping to balance the Feminist agenda of followers of Betty Friedan in the sense that the "housewife" has left her home. The magazine makes an appeal on issues of diversity, best work practices, and "The Multicultural Women's National Conference," (if you are to believe their PR and I largely do). They continue to perpetuate themselves through books like President, Carol Evan's, *This Is How We Do It*, and corporatized movements like *Lean In* (2013). It makes sense, given Americans' proclivity

towards capitalism that the idea of the working mother, as a purely economic construct is perhaps the most widespread, marketable concept among the manifold identities.

Two years prior to WMM's founding, Adrienne Rich leveraged feminist theory to examine the institution of motherhood, and ten years after WMM got its start, Beacon Press published Sara Ruddick's groundbreaking *Maternal Thinking*. Ruddick introduced the concept of mothering itself as a form of labor (and thought) able to be performed by men as well as women. Largely philosophical in its approach, Ruddick also argues for a "Politics of Peace," from those engaged in the raising of the next generation of human beings. Rich and Ruddick's inspiration lead to the self-identification of "feminist others." Spearheading the charge in Canada (1998) Andrea O'Reilly pioneered the concept of "feminist mothers" in her classes at the academy and went on to found organizations like ARM at York University (now renamed MIRCI). Meanwhile, American mothers were articulating motherhood in rock bands like Housewives on Prozac (1997), the Mydols, (2002), FRUMP (2003). By the year 2004, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on the burgeoning mom "movement" and by 2005, over 250 bands, comics, poets, actors, and singer-songwriters were playing on national Mamapalooza stages at 22 different locations, and the festival had spread to four different countries. At the same time, Demeter Press launched its first feminist book focused specifically on the topic of motherhood/mothering (2004). The nature of both activities lent themselves to identifying a collective of mom rockers, and mother feminist/academics. The purpose here is to demonstrate the inter-connectedness of these economic, philosophical/political, academic, artistic and popular creations that were forming themselves, as mothers engaged in the shaping of their identities.

A recognition of the failure of much of the second wave feminist movement to address LGBQT, non-White, Black, Latina, Arab and other(s) emerged throughout the 1990s and

continues in some way through the thread of women's discussions today– these women who are in the continual process of making, and unmaking themselves, and their concepts about themselves, as well as their children. This is the forefront of what any motherhood movement is—the constant expanding, and microscoping of identity, action, theory, and its ongoing creations. I had been speaking, singing, writing, and talking gender, class, power, and motherhood since 1989, but for the person engaged in mothering, with only a general reference to feminist theory, who was living outside of the academy and exposure to its methods for research and discourse, looking for concepts and connectivity was implausible. Translation, I was in the position of most American mothers who are lacking in the rarified position of illuminated connection. In tandem to many general issues being explored within the culturally dominant forces of 2003 America, *The Bitch in the House* was released as a collection of mother authors.[14] They recognized the "successes born out of the various waves of feminist politics from the late 1960s," however lingering frustrations remained. These frustrations had no real name. They emulated a general outcry regarding the competing burdens of career and motherhood and they hit big with dominant popular culture, registering an impact on conversations about motherhood. The book itself represented the writings of 26 authors, thus enforcing the collective nature of the articulation.

While feminists diversified into more and more specialized manifestations of themselves, women who thought of themselves as feminists were continuing the process of interpreting their feminism within the context of motherhood. Amber Kinser explored how feminist mothers were envisioning themselves in her book *Mothering in the Third Wave* (2008). "In the personal essays collected in this volume, mostly young feminist mothers recount their confusion and ambivalence about motherhood." So, while feminists expressed uncertainty about how to claim a

place in the mothersphere one breakthrough attempt was a collection edited by Dr. Andrea O'Reilly called *Maternal Theory* (2007). In this text O'Reilly consolidates a maternal feminist theory into one place, promoting a scholarly approach that was both inclusive and far-reaching in its discipline. Native American, Hispanic, and Black authors weighed in on the theorizing. The book precedes Amber Kinser's, *Motherhood and Feminism* (2010), which tied together the history of the first, second, and third wave feminist movements.

General theorizing (or attempts to theorize) continued to arise on a national level, with multiple activist, arts-based, and intellectual groups springing up. A more complete list of these organizations can be found within the three-volume, *Encyclopedia of Motherhood* (published in 2011), and *The 21st Century Motherhood Movement* (2011). Through the interwoven, inter-connectedness of corporate culture, high literature, academia, popular fads, and literary text, feminist motherhood, or mothers who had once been feminists (but now weren't sure what they were), began the attempt to identify themselves in the private and public sphere. They looked to form their identity about themselves and their children within their new roles as wife (sometimes), birther (adopter, fosterer, surrogate, etc.), and caregiver (just as feminist identities continue to split, expand, reform, and rename).

Why mother identities emerge, and include the popular, and the theoretical at this exact point in herstory is unclear? But, as I said before, the original inspiration was organic, and appears to have come from several different sectors simultaneously (within a 10 year period). It could be argued mother theory is the original daughter of feminism's insistence for equal pay, and equal rights, except that has not been the theme of much of mother-theory. It has more likely that many motherists in the mainstream did not want to make trouble, and even denied their feminist tendencies. In popular culture the theme seems to be focused on an unnamed problem,

but the problem can't be precisely articulated. In the working mother identity, the information/struggle is perhaps the most obviously feminist, but they certainly would not call themselves that. This is a specific brand of corporatized feminism that Hester Eisenstein would label "Feminism Seduced," (as her book suggests). It situates itself firmly within the corporate capitalist framework. With conferences, awards, and tangible financial gains, the working mother, (at least the working mother identified by *Working Mother Magazine*) is concerned with "leave policies, workforce representation, benefits, child care, advancement programs, flexibility policies and more." All of these concerns are within the corporatized framework, whose institutional pull cannot be ignored as being pivotal in American consciousness. It is also worth mentioning that any of the previously mentioned shifts from 2000 on have been largely empowered by expanded use of the internet.

Likewise, "maternal philosophers," "maternal theorists," and "mom-rockers," as well as contemporary "mom-authors," float through the national consciousness and across our computer screens. The website Ephemera.com carries buttons and magnets that say "Moms Rock" while the "Housewives of Beverly Hills" make trouble on TV and sip martinis, and the "Mom Bloggers," who are arguably the newest members of society manifest categories as far reaching as "Mormon Moms," to "The Feminist Breeder." Motherhood is here, as identity and theory. Unfortunately, while there is growth, we are making and unmaking ourselves at the same time.

Activism and Art in a Consumer Society

It was not far into my scholarly investigations when I realized that in order to exhume a feminist maternal perspective it was paramount to examine notions of economics, class, and consumerism. One simply cannot understand motherhood in America without becoming versed in its economic imperatives. Bethany Moreton opens her book *To Serve God and Walmart*; "the

making of Christian free enterprise" with a nod to Walmart Moms, who according to Moreton represented a demographic of one in five mothers in 1995.[15] Two years later in 1997, I was oblivious to the secret report referencing the "Wal-Mart Mom," but irrefutably cognizant of being buoyed up by my financially stable marriage. I pursed music with zeal and passion. Here I again give a node to privilege, because this marriage allowed for me to have the means to pursue my art. But, in this tenuous melding of material culture there is an ever-present consumer capitalist hierarchy that hungrily devours everything in its path, and it eventually devoured my marriage too. I echo the sentiment of Charlotte Perkins Gillman who regarded marriage as being built on the "sexuo-economic relation [which historically] places the man in position of master [and] the woman in position of subordinate" (pg. 128). While much progress has been made since Gillman's time, echoes of these theoretical realities persist. They are evidenced in far-right politics and rhetoric, as well as visible ongoing resistance to issues regarding women's equality.

The third wave brought LGBQT issues to the fore, and changed legislation in ways that potentially tilt in the direction of more equal standing. Where legislation lags, there is vigilance with an eye towards change, even as I acknowledge there is still much work to be done. But, what of the mothers? Is this true for them? What legislative action can we take that will end domestic violence, the severe poverty of older; divorced mothers, and the psychological shame of women who do not "conform" to the American motherhood ideal? Gillman's position on an "androcentric culture" resonates despite her inadequate treatment of "difference" which I believe can stand theoretically in alliance with Patricia Hill Collins and Smith if we simply expand our theory to include them.

In very personal terms, (and I remind the reader that this is an auto-ethnographical account) I was "socialized as a servant" to the household (1998, p. 120). Despite very visual,

prominent, and "loud" performance outside the home, my experience within the home was one of service for sexuo-economic security. In very modern terms, I was compromised due to my lifestyle. This is the only way I can account for the gross imbalance of power relations within my family and the lack of equitable ownership I had within my own so-called partnership. But, let me not stand alone in this. In my experience, American suburbs are littered with women who have left their Mac-mansions behind for tiny apartments and the serenity that comes with not being subjected to domination or violence, and the prosperity that accompanies the vague notion of one's own integrity. Now that I have reminded the reader of some forms of social imbalance still at work in the domestic sphere, let us move beyond to the larger economic picture, and how music, motherhood, and feminism fit in.

Music and money go way back. According to David Suisman, in his book *Selling Sounds; The Commercial Revolution in American Music*, the ephemeral nature of the parlor piano was tidily replaced in the late 1800's and transformed into a commodification by the wily likes of the early sheet music tradesman of Tin Pan Alley. Ironically this period from 1880 to 1930 coincides with the first wave of American feminism (the original Suffragettes), and the Hollywood star system (p. 128). It is not a stretch to observe the ways in which the artist becomes much less important than his or her ability to sell and promote the product. He acknowledges, "the contours of American consumer society became clear in the early twentieth century" and "that access to goods could be equated with the expansion of American democracy" (p. 123). Suisman's treatment of the chapter on Black Swan Records closely parallels my own experience with the music industry and Mamapalooza. Black Swan engaged in a "radical attempt to confront, challenge, and disrupt the invisibility of the modern music industry" (p. 205). The label was the first label formed by Blacks, making Black music, and selling to Black audiences.

It was a political statement as much as an artistic one focused on calling on Americans to think about their consumerism. Harry Pace, the founder of Black Swan understood "social relations and the distribution of power in society" (p. 238). Suisman points to Pace's use of branding, music, and activism in the following way, "the meaning of music depended not just on what was recorded but also which messages were associated with those recordings." Pace was experimenting with complex interdependencies that constitute our human economy, not just our financial economy. He was unsuccessful. The story of Black Swan Records is one of a small company, with a vision, getting swallowed by its own attempts at integrity. The bigger labels won the business, and Black Swan folded.

I saw music as a vehicle for questioning the status quo and like Pace I believed that by establishing mother-made, mother-organized, mother-branded music, women would find ownership and empowerment outside an industry that marginalized them. They would make the product. They would produce the venues. They would buy the product from each other. They would claim empowerment. What I didn't understand was how quickly appearances on TV, and meetings in Hollywood that enticed me to become the next "reality star" would become co-opted into the existing entertainment system. A book by A.M. Collins and Chad Henry called "The Angry Housewives" was produced at the Minetta Lane Theatre in New York City on September 7, 1986. So the theme of "Housewives" was not revolutionary, but the concept of women self-identifying as mom-rocker was. The meetings in Hollywood that ensued with Freemantle Media, Spielberg Offices, and Nickelodeon to name a few and the countless lunches with independent producers, and writers resulted in what we all recognize now as "The Real Housewives" (franchise) and "Rita Rocks" (The ill-fated, ill-conceived TV Show). Next was *Motherhood* the movie, starring Uma Thurman (2009). The film leveraged my "Mamapalooza" festival brand.

Uma participates in the Mamapalooza contest to become a writer. The producers did not contact me, consult me, or pay me. Corporate capitalism won. It swallowed my mom-movement whole, and is still putting it to use today to make money using the mom-brand to sell everything from diapers to sex (just google “sexy mommies” if you dare).

Profound work by Hester Eisenstein in her book Feminism Seduced, and Barbara Katz Rothman further substantiates the capitalist consumer narrative in two primary ways: a) Eisenstein identifies the permeating qualities of Neo Liberal capitalism, and illustrates the ways in which the feminist movement has more or less be duped into adopting lifestyles within the same system they fought against, b) Rothman connects patriarchy and capitalism to a universal view of women as disposable producers within a society that fundamentally commodifies life (p. 20). In both these scenarios, some truly new and revolutionary advocacy is required. As Eisenstein asks in her conclusion, “is there a way to decouple modernity from capitalism (p. 201)?” The democratizing features of capitalism, at least as it was first presented in the discussions of “Westernizing” the world (p. 20 Eisenstein) and the “modernization of women, linked to having economic independence, getting married later, and changing attitudes about sex,” still leaves open the question of how are women, who are mothers, engaged in performing motherhood affected, moved, and ultimately changed by these developments? I posit that perhaps through a slow shift? But the deep and abiding connection of the woman to her role, and to her child complexifies all of these issues in ways that remain largely outside (or more accurately “inside”), a larger worldview.

From a sociological perspective, motherhood was invented and continues to serve the society in which it exists. In plain terms, and according to the arguments presented thus far in hereto, we don’t really care very much about empowering mothers. But, from a consumer

perspective, we care a great deal. They are important as shoppers and also as products to be consumed by others; children, fathers, etc. Within the third wave, mothers, and the ways in which notions of activism and agency have been co-opted by brands to confuse people into the symbiotic inter-play of "shopping for a cause." How can it be that a "Gap Mom" finds agency by wearing "rock star" jeans, or how are "Wal-Mart employees and customers attain[ing] an experience of national belonging simply by shopping and working in the store" (p. 3)?" The Marketing to Moms Coalition is a "dedicated to supporting and understanding of mothers as the most powerful consumer group in the U.S."[16] It is a $2.4 trillion dollar market that makes 85% of the buying decisions in their households. These demonstrations of the insidiousness with which our new realities are bonded with a consumer culture and the ways in which even I was complicit in this lead this author to believe that we must all want less, shop less, and truly change the way in which we collaborate with the planet.

During the period of 2004-2006 I worked with Dove on their campaign for "real beauty" as part of both the Mamapalooza Festival and Mamazina Magazine. I appeared in Ebay ads touting "Life is Good" and Dixie Campaigns that confused my personal story with the paper product. In my own way, I was part of the system that I was railing against and was not capable of seeing what I was doing. While I was able to draw the line at MacDonalds giving product samples away at my family festivals, other things were not so clear. What was clear, and is still clear to me today, are the ways that consumer culture imposes itself on every facet of American life, including creativity, activism, and identity.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I have searched for ways to position Mom-Rockers within the cultural landscape to interpret their contributions. My argument poses their legacy as

instrumental. They were a visible presence in the national consciousness, paving the way towards new constructions of mother-identities. These mother-identities opened the door to an exploration that led in the direction of matri-theory as a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding the human motherhood experience as well as the issues mothers face. This still stands, but the metamorphosis in ongoing.

In the last section, I have traced the co-option of the mother identity in corporate, capitalist terms, using books like Hester Eisenstein's *Feminism Seduced* to tease out an explanation for what happened to mom rock. I also highlight germane aspects of mother identity today, either situated in the academy, or in its position within the greater landscape of our consumer society. Some mother-identified groups continue the good work of a non-corporatized ideology making inroads in the academy and beyond (Moms Rising is an activist group at work in Washington D.C investing in political legislation that includes paid parental leave, family health care, and equal pay.) Publications challenging the status quo continue to push the envelope including, but not limited to: Brainchild Magazine, Mutha Magazine, and Literary Mama. However, questions remain about the financial viability of these endeavors.

What is important to emphasize is the notion of how unaware many of us are to the forces acting upon us. The social forces in particular (as emphasized in standpoint theory) rule our destinies with regard to much of our lives. Every person, especially every woman, and certainly every mother should have access to tools that open her eyes to the issues of class, race, gender and consumerism so she can raise her children accordingly. My original attraction to music and its ephemeral qualities are longstanding. In larger philosophical terms I have been comfortable with qualities of performance, festivals, and human interactions with regard to a lifelong career in music. However, I now understand the significance of legitimized, academic fare that results

in language and text that gives access to those wishing to explore the history, sociology, psychology, art, and cultural significance of motherhood. Therefore, I have transitioned from a career in music to this the page. It is in this place that I consider a hopeful future, buoyed up by the academy, its resources, and its potential to impact young minds. By way of a post-script, it is important for me to share what I have learned. Namely, that I currently see the most promising outcome for a modern motherhood movement within the sphere of education and place. Advocating for mother studies within the academy is a practical way to impact attitudes as well as influence young women and men pre-conception. The goal of which is a more enhanced, better-educated life-experience. In addition to that, I remain committed to holding a physical space where mother arts, books, and history can be archived. Therefore the Museum of Motherhood remains at the forefront of my personal ensuing practical activity alongside writings such as the one contained in this edited collection for Demeter Press.

Notes

[1] In the author's words, summarizing Chapter 1.

[2] See Mamapalooza.com

[3] See Deidre M. Donoghue and M/otherVoices.org (June 2013)

[4] Slavery can be perpetuated through emotional and physical violence within the domestic sphere. It can also as described by Harriet Martineau in the 1800s. Martineau describes the indulgences of women by men as a "substitute for justice."

[5] Patricia Hill Collins (Higginbotham 1989; Morton 1991; Collins 1998a, 95-123).

[6] Shut Up and Drive, was a rock musical written and performed by M. Joy Rose throughout New York City. It premiered at The School House Theater in Croton Falls, NY and opened their 1998 season. The Housewife's Lament we performed intermittently throughout New York City from 2001-2005 and debuted at the Duplex in Greenwich Village.

[7] Living in the Shadow of the Too-Good Mother Archetype pg. 42.

[8] http://www.nytimes.com/1997/11/09/nyregion/band-sings-about-what-it-s-like-to-raise-a-family-in-the-90-s.html

[9] Patricia Hill Collins (Higginbotham 1989; Morton 1991; Collins 1998a, 95-123).

[10] http://www.rockhall.com

[11] http://www.academia.edu/1476734/New_Maternalisms_Booklet

[12] Mother Studies and other terms, as well as the timeline presented here are taken from Martha Joy Rose thesis The Journal of Mother Studies: a peer reviewed, interdisciplinary, open-access-digital humanities hybrid project

[13] Web. http://www.workingmother.com/best-companies/2014-working-mother-100-best-companies

[14] See media descriptions of Bitch in the House: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/mar/29/highereducation.news1

[15] See also Mamapalooza performer Sue Fabisch's performance of Walmart Woman: http://www.mtv.com/videos/misc/132932/music-city-madness-sue-fabisch-wal-mart-woman.jhtml#id=

[16] Web. http://www.marketingtomomscoalition.org/docs/2011-SOAM-Highlights.pdf

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Clare Hall is Lecturer in Performing Arts in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. She works with pre-service teachers in primary and early childhood education degrees and brings together over 20 years of experience as a musician and music educator in her teaching and research. Her research in the sociology of music, the performing arts and education focuses on youth identities, creativities and issues of power and social justice in arts participation. Her first book 'Masculinity, Class and Music Education' will be published by Palgrave.

Jennifer Hartmann is an ethnomusicologist, violist, and liturgical vocalist who holds a BMus (history and literature) from Dalhousie University and a MA (musicology) from McGill University. She is currently a PhD candidate at Memorial University of Newfoundland, where her primary research involves the cultural study of wedding string quartets, with a focus on the occupational folklife of gigging musicians. She has also conducted research on the use of bellydance as a coping strategy during pregnancy and labour, inspired by her own experience as an amateur dancer. She lives in Iowa with her husband and two young daughters.

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Martha Joy Rose *Author Biography*: Martha Joy Rose is a musician, concert promoter, museum founder, and fine artist. Her work has been published across blogs and academic journals and she has performed with her band Housewives On Prozac on Good Morning America, CNN, and the Oakland Art & Soul Festival to name a few. She is the NOW-NYC recipient of the Susan B. Anthony Award, her Mamapalooza Festival Series has been recognized as "Best in Girl-Power Events" in New York, and her music has appeared on the Billboard Top 100 Dance Charts. She founded the Museum of Motherhood in 2003, created the Motherhood Foundation 501c3 non-profit in 2005, saw it flourish in NYC from 2011-2014, and then pop up at several academic institutions. Her current live/work space in Kenwood St. Petersburg, Florida is devoted to the exploration of mother-labor as performance art.

Lynda Ross is a professor of women's and gender studies in the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies at Athabasca University in Alberta. She graduated with a doctoral degree in psychology from the University of New Brunswick in 1998. Lynda's research interests focus on the social construction of theory and 'disorder,' attachment, and motherhood. Tying together these interests, her first book on the subject, *Interrogating Motherhood,* was published by the AU Press in December 2016.

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Jackie Weissman is an award-winning documentarian living in Portland, Oregon. Jackie is a founding member and programming chair of Women in Film, Portland (2007), and founding organizer of Oregon Doc Camp (2013), a documentary retreat for seasoned filmmakers. Her most recent film, Rock N Roll Mamas (2013), has screened worldwide.

Amanda Mehl West is an award-winning singer-songwriter, recording artist, music teacher, and mother. She is co-founder of Womb Song U.S., an organization that offers singing circles for pregnant women, as well as labor and postpartum support through song. She holds a B.A. in cultural anthropology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and understands music to be a part of our universal human birthright, playing an essential role in our experience of being alive. She has trained with DONA (Doulas of North America), and lives her life at the intersection of music and motherhood.