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**‘I drum, therefore I am’? A study of kit drummers’ identities,
practices and learning**

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ABSTRACT

Drummers have largely been neglected in scholarly literature on music and education, despite being active in large numbers in popular music and having an increasing presence in the music education arena. The study explores the identities, practices and learning of kit drummers in the UK from an emic perspective, using a mixed methodological approach with a focus on qualitative sociological enquiry drawing on interpretative phenomenological analysis and grounded theory. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 teenage drummers and 12 adult drummers; both age groups were interviewed to allow for consideration of whether adults' reflections on their formative years differ greatly from those of teenage drummers today. Secondary data were gathered from a brief questionnaire conducted with 100 more drummers to support and contextualize the richer interview data. Data were also taken from relevant biographies, audio/visual media and journalistic sources.

A review of relevant literature was undertaken, looking at sociology, sociology of music, education, music education, psychology, psychology of music, ethnicity, and gender. The literature review leads to the proposed new model of the Snowball Self which incorporates the constructs of identity realization, learning realization, meta-identities and contextual identities. The thesis then explores the empirical data. It analyzes the data in relation to the central research focus of identities, practices and learning, and also examines to what extent the data support or refute the suggested model of the Snowball Self.

Findings describe a rich variety of roles and identities in drummers' relationships with musicians and non-musicians. Participants exhibit eclectic musical tastes, and tend as they grow older to feel a stronger sense of what is 'their' ethnic music. Drummers learn in multi-modal ways, usually with a keen awareness of exemplars of their art and craft. The world of kit drumming is highly masculine, which presents a range of opportunities and challenges to drummers of both sexes. Kit drummers' identities, practices and learning are found to be intertwined as drummers each exist quasi-independently in a web of interdependence. Drummers drum; therefore they are, they do, and they learn – in a rich tapestry of contexts and ways.

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution has been made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

Genesis

The title of this study is borrowed from Descartes. For him, thinking, or the capacity to think, is the defining feature of (his) human existence. He writes:

Observing that this truth: *I think, therefore I am*, was so certain and so evident that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were not capable of shaking it, I judged that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking. [1637] (1968: 53-54)

People claiming ‘I drum, therefore I am’ may expect to face more scepticism even than greeted this ground-breaking assertion of Descartes’; we all think, but drumming is done by fewer people and is often regarded as a mere hobby. A few years ago I was having a deep-and-meaningful conversation with an old friend and fellow-musician, whom I had known for more than 20 years. We were discussing the directions of our lives and plans for our respective futures, and he said to me, ‘you *are* drums.’ I did not think very hard about this remark at the time, other than to take more than a little pride in the fact that Chris had noticed this about me – after all, if I was confident about being anything, then that thing was a drummer. The depth of feeling that I have about a being a drummer, how much this identity shapes and defines me, is a character trait that has been observed of other musicians; Shank, following a study of musicians in Austin, Texas, finds that:

within the rock ‘n’ roll scene, musical taste and musical ability are not the surface traits of an individual but must be directly related to some elemental truth about the person performing. They must shape, and in turn be molded by, the most basic longing within that person. (Shank, 1994: 137)

A chance encounter with an advertisement for a t-shirt on the internet one evening 18 months after my conversation with Chris led me to discover the slogan ‘I drum, therefore I am.’ I immediately purchased two t-shirts bearing that legend, confident that it was probably true enough for me that I could wear it. Wearing the t-shirt makes me feel good (and it comes in handy at conferences too), but it set me to thinking about whether or to what extent Chris and the t-shirt could be right. Does anyone take drumming that seriously? The gravity of such a sentiment is clear from what Descartes goes on to say – that ‘if I had only ceased to think... I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence or nature consists in thinking’ [1637] (1968: 54).

From a sincere but fleeting remark by a friend, via a clever t-shirt, to 17th-century French philosophy about the very essence of human existence was quite a journey. I wonder if my participants can handle its implications. If one paraphrases Descartes thus – ‘if I had only ceased to drum... I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence or nature consists in drumming’ – one wonders whether there is anyone for whom so strong a statement might be true. Life, after all, is complicated, and we have many allegiances to keep, obligations to meet and tasks to perform – could drumming mean this much to any person? Descartes may be turning in his grave at the thought of a silly Englishman, 100s of years his junior, arguing that, rather than thinking being the very essence of what makes a person truly exist, that essence in fact lies in drumming. I defer to Descartes and accept that he may well have a valid point in the case of many people. Descartes, however, undertook no sociological research with kit drummers – he was doubtless a busy man. So it now falls to me to see whether or how and to what extent my borrowed and adulterated proposition may be true: ‘I drum, therefore I am’?

Research focus

I began this study with the notion of wishing to investigate drummers' identities, what drummers do, and how drummers learn to do what they do. Two groups of drummers were investigated for the study – teenage drummers, and adults. The teenage drummers were required to be aged between 13 and 19 years and admit either to taking regular lessons or to playing the drums frequently – or both. The adults had to be over 30 years of age and must have been playing drums as a significant part of their life for at least ten years. These caveats were added to the age groups because I was interested in people for whom being a drummer was likely to be a significant part of their lives and identities.

After settling on what (or, rather, whom) I wished to investigate and what it was I wanted to find out about them, I needed to frame this for the purposes of research; to this end I contrived the research question 'How are drummers "drummers" and how do they learn to play?' It is from this question that the subtitle of the study developed to define the lines of enquiry: 'A study of kit drummers' identities, practices and learning.' In order to maintain a tight focus for my study seven sub-questions were devised. These sub-questions expand on themes from the title, and incorporate recurrent, interesting and relevant themes suggested by the review of literature carried out early on in the study. They are:

- 1) How big a part in the life of a drummer is the identity of 'drummer'?
- 2) In what situations, in what ways, and to what extent do drummers feel included or excluded as drummers?
- 3) How do drummers think that others perceive them?
- 4) How does a drummer see his or her place in the historical and cultural musical landscape?
- 5) How do drummers learn their art and craft?

6) How, if at all, do drummers engage with the internet?

7) What roles might issues of gender or ethnicity play in contributing to the identities of drummers?

These sub-questions formed the basis of the questions that I asked in the interviews and questionnaires that were subsequently conducted with participants (these questions are included in Appendices A and B).

Initially, I had wanted also to explore the issue of class as it affects drummers' identities. However, after reading Bourdieu (1984), Grusky & Sorensen (1998) and Kourvetaris (2006), I decided that this is too complex an issue to be included in this study; space does not permit me to do it justice. Bourdieu has the following to say about class:

The individuals grouped in a class that is constructed in a particular respect... always bring with them, in addition to the pertinent properties by which they are classified, secondary properties which are thus smuggled into the explanatory model. This means that a class or class fraction is defined not only by its position in the relations of production, as identified through indices such as occupation, income or even educational level, but also by a certain sex-ratio, a certain distribution in geographical space (which is never socially neutral) and by a whole set of subsidiary characteristics which may function, in the form of tacit requirements, as real principles of selection or exclusion without ever being formally stated. (Bourdieu, 1984: 102)

It is principally because of Bourdieu's work on expanding the definition of class that I shall not be dealing with it in this thesis, for, as he writes, to do so would require that I 'consider everything which, though present in the real definition of the class, is not consciously taken into account in the nominal definition' (Bourdieu, 1984: 103).

Bourdieu's work challenges commonplace notions of class in exciting and important ways; to ignore his thinking altogether would be careless and un-scholarly. However, aside from the aforementioned complexity inherent in his re-thinking and reconstruction of the term, his concepts are likely to be at odds with the understandings of the study's participants who, it is perhaps reasonable to assume, may be unfamiliar with Bourdieu's work. For this reason I decided that to include a

serious consideration of class in this thesis would be unfair to the participants, as it would require me either to re-frame their responses to questions, or to ignore their responses altogether. Bourdieu's 'class' would be a fascinating lens through which drummers might perhaps in future be studied.

Drummers' kits and kit drummers: some historical context

The drum kit (or 'drum set' more commonly in US English parlance) is a relatively new musical instrument, dating from around the beginning of the 20th century (Budofsky, 2006). More accurately, it is a collection of un-pitched musical instruments generally viewed and played as component parts of one instrument – the kit. The drum kit developed along with the musical role of the drummer – this role is discussed throughout this thesis, especially in Chapter Four. A standard contemporary drum kit has come to comprise a bass drum (played with a foot-pedal), a hi-hat (also operated by pedal), snare drum, one or more tom-toms, and a selection of cymbals. There are, however, as almost as many variations on tuning preferences, configurations, dimensions and sizes of drum kits as there are exponents of the instrument. Probably the most important technological developments to enable the playing of the whole drum kit by one musician were the development in around 1910 of the modern bass drum pedal and during the 1920s of the hi-hat as an instrument that could be played with both the feet and hands (Peters, 1975: 182-183).

The history of drumming is, of course, far older than the story of the drum kit. Drums are widely held to be the oldest of musical instruments made by humans; they are found around the world, and are not indigenous to any region or race. Soebbing (1965) traces the history of drums back to the Stone Age, citing discoveries from Germany dating to c. 3000 BCE and differently shaped drums coming much later from Africa to Spain in 711 AD. Precursors to the snare drum include the Tabor, dating from the Late Middle Ages (Soebbing, 1965: 6), to which in Scotland around this time cat-gut snares (strings laid across the skin) were added. Moore (1965: 7) traces snare drums back to Turkish Janizar bands of the 13th century, while Peters (1965: 8) notes snares being added to drums as early as 600 BCE in Arabia. According to Soebbing (1965: 6) the 'Swiss drum' can be traced back to at least the

17th century. This drum stands about two feet tall, produces a low tone, and is perhaps the most obvious ancestor of the tom-toms used in today's drum kits.

Kit drummers and their instruments were first to be heard playing jazz from around the turn of the twentieth century; this music then morphed from the late 1940s into the wide range of contemporary styles that surround us in Western cultures today – styles such as rock 'n' roll, hard rock, country, funk, soul, gospel, heavy metal, etc. (Frith et al, 2001; Longhurst, 2007). Drummers' roles in the musics that they play today emerged from cultural developments in the United States of America during the late nineteenth century:

The history of jazz percussion has its more recent origins in the washboards and other primitive media that were the recourse of the folk-blues artists, the performers in New Orleans' Congo Square in the late nineteenth century. They also used drums of various sizes, pummeling some with their fingers, fists, and feet, and hitting the large bass and snare drums with mallets and sticks, as they played bombastically in the brass bands.

(Peters, 1975: 181)

The city of New Orleans is where the various musics of West African slaves and their descendents, along with the musics imported from all over Europe to the New World initially combine to create the rhythm-orientated music that became the forerunner so much of today's contemporary music (Scherman, 1999). Drummers who play jazz have often played, and continue to play, a range of other styles of music (Justman, 2002; Scherman, 1999). There is a reciprocity and cross-pollination among drummers and their playing (explored below), so it can be misleading to locate a drummer only in one narrow stylistic category (Hart, 1990; Bozzio in Phillips, 2010).

What we already know about drummers

Most people, if they know the names of any members of a given band, will probably be able to name the singer. It is rare, I would suggest, for a person, unless a particular fan, to know the names of the other musicians in a band – including the drummer – especially if the names of musicians are glossed over in the marketing, such as in the Dave Matthews Band, Bill Haley and the Comets, or Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble. The same is true when music is sold under one person's name but even a casual listen (or a glance at the liner notes) reveals the presence of so many more musicians: David Bowie, Miles Davis, John Mayer or Stephen Wheel. Drummers also tend to feature infrequently in music videos, so, unless they go to see a band perform live, I would argue that the majority of people rarely notice drummers or seek to find out about them. For this reason, there may be a paucity of understanding in society at large as to what drummers are and do.

Monson (1996: 50) observes that 'the drummer is generally the member of the band most underrated by the audience and least discussed in the jazz historical and analytical literature.' Indeed, when drummers do feature prominently in mainstream popular culture they are often ridiculed in some way, as highlighted in the BBC documentary *I'm in a Rock 'n' Roll Band: The Drummer* (BBC, 2010). A scene in the popular film 'rock-umentary' *This Is Spinal Tap* (Reiner, 1984) focuses on the tragic/comedic demise of each of Tap's many successive drummers. One drummer died 'in a bizarre gardening accident,' another 'choked on vomit (someone else's vomit),' and two others were victims of spontaneous combustion! While this film mythologizes rock drummers and hints at their perceived dispensability, it is probably surpassed in its influence on the popular consciousness regarding drummers by a bootleg recording of UK rock band The Troggs. The recording is undated, unofficial and un-catalogued, but can be traced through hearsay to some time in the late 1960s or early 1970s; familiarity with this recording, known as *The Troggs' Tape*, is a rite-of-passage of sorts among popular musicians. On the recording, the band are trying to record a song and have apparently been working on it for some considerable time that day. The guitarist plays for four bars, and another member of the band shouts an excited 'Yes!' When the drummer then fails to start playing, that member screams a

desperate ‘NOOOO!’ Here is a partial transcript of some of the conversation between Ronnie, the drummer, and another, anonymous, member of the band:

Other member - Just listen for a sec.

Ronnie - You can say that all fuckin’ night, but I *cannot* feel it any other way than I’ve been playin’ it.

Other member - You have played it *tonight*.

Ronnie - You’d better fuckin’ forget it then cause I ain’t gonna be able to do it and I’ll tell you that now.

[Some time passes, while they try to play the song]

Other member - It’s easy – you’ve *done* it *tonight*.

[More time passes]

Other member - It’s exactly the same rhythm as you were playing *before* – it’s da da da da da, cha.

Other band members join in, repeating – da da da da da, cha.

Ronnie - Just shut yer fuckin’ mouths for five minutes and give me a *fuckin’* chance to *do* it!

Other member, to himself - ‘fuckin’ drummer, I shit him.’

[A few seconds pass]

Other member counts the drummer in – A one, a two, a one, two, three, four – you’re doin’ it *fuckin’* wrong!

Clearly frustrations are running high in this recording session. I am not aware of a recording similarly lampooning another instrumentalist or member of a band; perhaps this recording has influenced popular impressions of drummers.

Arguably the most powerful image of the drummer in minds of the general public is ‘Animal’ from Henson’s *The Muppet Show* (Henson, 2007a & b). Although this television series no longer airs in the UK, the films are still widely distributed and the

Muppets are popular characters on www.YouTube.com. Animal is possibly the world's best known and best loved kit drummer. He plays drums for The Electric Mayhem, the house band in *The Muppet Show*. A mad, barely articulate creature with ravaged pink/purple hair, he assaults the drums as hard and as loudly as possible; whilst pounding his kit, he shouts 'aaaaaagghhh!!!' a lot. (During my tenure in most of the bands with whom I have played, one musician or other has told me that I remind him or her of Animal – surely a compliment?!) It is probably no more than a coincidence that the man who played drums for the puppet Animal off-stage is a namesake of Ronnie, the troubled drummer in The Troggs. Ronnie Verrell was a highly respected British jazz musician who played in Ted Heath's orchestra for over ten years, drummed on many recording sessions, and led his own band for several years.

Compounding the popular public ridicule of drummers, there are websites dedicated to drummer jokes; the easiest of these to find is www.drumjokes.com. I recall upon regular visits to my local music shop in the late 1990s, spotting by the sales register a book entitled *101 Drummer Jokes*. Although I never purchased a copy, I would browse it each time that I visited in order to be able to ward off an interlocutor with the punch-line to any joke with which he or she might attempt to woo me. Sadly, I have been unable to trace a copy of that book during the course of this research. Drummer jokes are still rampant in the music colleges, rehearsal rooms, rock venues and orchestra pits of the world today – they also crop up throughout the various chapters of this dissertation.

Drummers are not alone among musicians for being singled out as objects of ridicule, but while viola players, banjo players, trombonists and, to an extent, bassists are also on the receiving end of mockery from time to time, it seems that drummer jokes are more prevalent. Monson concurs, noting that 'audience members and even some musicians have a tendency to deprecate the musical knowledge of the person sitting behind the drum set' (Monson, 1996: 50); as the unemployed musician character, Jeremy, says in an episode of the situation comedy *Peep Show*, 'anyone can bang shit. Give a chimpanzee a double espresso, you've got yourself a drummer' (Armstrong et al, 2010). Were I a viola player, perhaps I would find that viola-player jokes are the more common; a similar study into the identities and learning of viola players would

undoubtedly be an interesting avenue for the right researcher and may reveal a similar level of popular lampoonery. The crucial epistemological point to note about drummer jokes is that they are based on observations of and assumptions about drummers made by people who are not drummers. Drummers' own voices have rarely been heard or sought, beyond the pages of music magazines catering specifically for drummers. As the character of Pete Best (the Beatles' original drummer) says in the film *Backbeat*, 'drummers don't talk' (Softley, 1994). This being said, there has recently (2009/2010) been a veritable surge in publication of autobiographies by high-profile drummers; perhaps my study arrives at a time when public consciousness about drummers may be shifting to one of greater awareness and respect. At the end of the 1996 film *That Thing You Do*, for instance, a record company executive characterises each member of a recently-split rock 'n' roll band; he says to the drummer 'you are the smart one' (Hanks, 1996). Perhaps this is also true for other drummers – drummer Terry Bozzio (2010: 3) believes that 'we are a group of highly dignified, philosophically evolved individuals.'

When audiences experience live music, I would suggest that their awareness and impressions of drummers are somewhat heightened. For instance, people will often comment on my playing after a performance, and I am sure that in many instances this is not because of the musical quality of the performance, but rather because it is visually obvious what I am doing. In a similar vein, the drummer for Christian glam heavy metal band Stryper listed their drummer Robert Sweet as 'visual time-keeper' in the sleeve of their 1986 album *To Hell With The Devil*, although he was also distinctly audible! (Stryper, 1986). For less sophisticated members of an audience, the visual prominence of a drummer could be why we are so noticeable, even though bassists, guitarists and other band members may be involved in far more challenging musical practices, including maintaining a keen awareness of less drummer-ly concerns such as melody and harmony. I have heard orchestral conductors say that they wave their baton at certain sections of an orchestra during performances, not to remind their perfectly competent professional musicians that they ought to be playing, but rather to cue the ears of the audience for what to listen out for next. We drummers effectively wave our own batons.

Aims and relevance of the study

Studies of how musicians are musicians are few and far between, although there are some published studies and there is a wealth of related literature in the fields of psychology, music education and sociology. Frith (1983) and Bennett (2000) have studied teenage music fans; Bayton (1998), Cohen (1991), Fournas et al (1995), Monson (1996) and Shank (1994) have conducted research with bands; Green (1997), Whiteley et al (1997) and others have explored issues of gender and music; Béhague (1994), Bertrand (2000) and others have explored music and ethnicity; Bennett (2008) has discussed what it means to be a classical musician; Hargreaves et al (2002) have investigated musicians from a social psychological perspective, and work continues at Glasgow Caledonian University and the Royal Northern College of Music (amongst other places) in that discipline. Monson (1996) appears to be alone in having focussed on drummers; her research explored improvisation in the context of small jazz bands. Green (2002, 2008) and Lebler (2007) have looked at how popular musicians learn; scholars including Bamberger (1991), Campbell (1998), Durrant (2003), Hallam (1998), Hallam & Creech (2010) and Jorgensen (1997, 2003a & b) have explored music learning; and numerous other writers such as Brabazon (2002), Buckingham (2005), Csikszentmihalyi (1991), and Wenger (1998) have looked from numerous angles at various aspects of learning beyond music.

Despite the rise of the drum kit as an instrument available for formal study throughout the UK education system in recent years, precious few texts about drummers are available to music educators. A notable exception to this is the spectacularly inaccurate chapter (in this author's opinion) and erroneous appraisal of the physical and psychological requirements to play drums in Ben-Tovim & Boyd (1990); their writing points to an almost comprehensive absence of knowledge about how drums are played or learned. Drummer Mickey Hart commented after a trip to the Doe Library at Berkeley College in California:

Why were so many of the books on drums so thin? And why, now that you mention it, were there so few? Why were there shelves full of books about the violin and walls full of books about the piano but only a dozen or so about drums [?].... I wheeled to my guide, who

nervously backed away murmuring something about there always being gaps in the scholarly record; if there weren't gaps, there'd be nothing for aspiring Ph.D.s to do. (Hart, 1990: 30)

This thesis attempts to fill part of the gap that Hart identifies – a niche currently also becoming occupied by the several recent autobiographical books about drummers, to which I referred above.

After a century of denying that the drum kit is even an instrument in its own right, in January 2009 Trinity College London admitted the drum kit to the list of instruments on which one may apply to sit the recital examination for an FTCL (Fellowship of Trinity College London) diploma (Trinity College London, 2008). There are several institutions around the UK where one can study drum kit with all the legitimacy and rigour attached to the more traditional instruments in Western cultures. The drum kit has been in existence since around the turn of the twentieth century (a precise date is difficult to ascertain), and perhaps now it is coming of age. For this reason it has become difficult to ignore drummers as an important group in music education. I agree with Mueller (2002: 598) that it is sensible for music educators to conduct studies such as this one – he writes that ‘music sociologists investigate social contexts of young people’s musical experiences, and music educators should follow their lead.’ I read Bogdan & Bicklen’s advice as an imperative, for they state (1993: 215) that ‘all educators can be more effective by employing qualitative research in their work.’

Meanings and boundaries of the word and notion of ‘identity’ are contested and confused – these are discussed at some length in the coming pages. Despite the apparent general lack of consensus as to what identity actually is, however, it has recently become something of a hot topic in research circles, perhaps especially in education. At the Sociology of Music Education symposium in Limerick in the summer of 2009, over half of the presented papers mentioned the word ‘identity’ in their abstracts. Perhaps it is fortuitous that this thesis is being written in the spirit of the *Zeitgeist*. A significant feature of this study is the contribution of a new theoretical framework for exploring identities, practices and learning, and the consideration of how well that framework deals with the data.

The new framework, the Snowball Self, helps to explore drummers' practices as they contribute to the realization of identities and learning. 'Practices' include everything that drummers do, including performing, recording and rehearsing on the drum kit, interacting socially with fellow band members, writing music, learning to play their instrument, and any other activities described by participants. Different drummers engage in different practices; they also often do many similar things. These are compared and discussed to present as broad a picture as the data allow, of what drummers do and how this contributes to making them who they are.

Concepts of 'learning' and accounts of drummers' own learning experiences are discussed in reference to literature on education and music education, and are also considered in light of the Snowball Self. A central theme of this study is that I take a broad view of learning in various ways and contexts in order to try to capture as much as possible of what and how drummers learn. Learning is discussed in terms of its relationship to identity and practices – what practices drummers engage in when learning, and how learning contributes in turn to practices and drummers' senses of who they are.

Summary of aims

Overall, this study aims to reach a deeper understanding of the identities, practices and learning of kit drummers, by conducting research with teenage and adult drummers. My interest is to find out as much as possible about what it means, to my sample of drummers, to be a drummer, and about how they learn and/or learned to be drummers. Enfolded within this over-arching aim are the following foci:

- Drummers, as other musicians, occupy a particular musical niche in an ensemble – this study aims to discover how drummers see their positions in bands.
- Adolescence has been identified as an important time for music learning and for the construction and construal of identity; this study investigates the significance of adolescence in terms of drummers' identity trajectories.

- Drummers are sometimes mocked in popular culture and in musical circles; this study looks at what drummers think others think of them.
- As drummers and popular music feature increasingly in formal music education environments around the world, there is an imperative for educators to have a better understanding of how drummers learn. This study explores learning practices, experiences, concepts and constructs of which educators should be aware.
- In my model of the Snowball Self, I present a new framework for considering the interconnectedness of learning and identity. Data are considered in light of this model with the aim of gaining a fresh perspective on the integration of drummers' identities, practices and learning.
- The study investigates and discusses issues of gender and ethnicity as they relate to drummers. These are complex topics, and important to grapple with in order to understand drummers and their identities.

For whom is this study intended?

I find that at parties the conversation inevitably turns at some point to drumming and drummers – I can never resist mentioning that I am a drummer, and generally people are (or politely claim to be) interested in the fact. People often seem to have a close friend or relative who plays drums, or maybe their husband/nephew/sister used to play in a band. And many people have always fancied having a go at the drums – ‘perhaps I’ll give you a ring and you could give me a lesson.’ In smaller performance venues where the audience is close to the stage, people appear to find it difficult to avoid the temptation to touch or hit part of a drum kit as they walk past. If they do not actually hit anything, they will often look at it longingly, visibly suppressing (I like to think) the instinctive human urge to drum! The issue of the pervasive attractiveness of drumming would be a subject for investigation in another study, although an

impressive start is made by Mickey Hart in his book *Drumming at the Edge of Magic* (Hart, 1990).

This study is a window on the world of drummers. I hope that this study will be of interest to sociologists of music and of music education, to music educators, and to drummers. Certainly the eagerness expressed by several of the adult participants to read the finished thesis suggests that drummers are keen to see themselves and their practices represented and discussed in print. As popular musics involving drummers become ever more pervasive in society and integrated into music education programmes, curricula and institutions around the world, this study adds rich, qualitative knowledge and understandings about a significant group of musicians. As is apparent from the data, drummers are central to many styles of music; the time has come for sociological and educational communities to acknowledge and examine who drummers are and what they do. The International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) kindly allowed me to present papers at its conferences in 2008, 2009 and 2010 about various aspects of this study, and the presentations appear to have been well received; it seems that the sociological community is keen to learn about drummers, and values this research. The international Society for Music Education (ISME) and other educational organizations and institutions have also accepted my submissions to present my work from this study at several conferences. In the words of jazz pioneer Charlie Parker, ‘now’s the time.’

Suffice to say that the present study, or at least aspects of it, seems to have an appeal in and beyond the academic community. Indeed, I would argue that if the world’s knowledge about drummers is largely based on a ‘70s comic puppet and the untimely deaths of the fictional Spinal Tap’s ill-fated tub-thumpers, then it is surely high time for a serious piece of scholarly research about drummers. The music world would, after all, be lost without us – as drummer Rashied Ali once said, ‘a band is only as good as its drummer. If the rhythm ain’t correct, then the group’s not happening’ (Ali, quoted in Wilmer, 1976: no page no.). Here is a chance to get to know some of us drummers a little better. Hart believes that only drummers can really know about drums, finding that ‘the real knowing is in the playing. Drums give up their true secrets only to players, not to Ph.D.s’ (Hart, 1990: 22). Whether or not Hart has the same instinct about drummers’ secrets as about those of their instruments, we cannot

be sure. He is onto something here though – he understands that the insider’s perspective is vital to gaining real, qualitative understanding. As a drummer, I act as guide and interpreter for the un-inducted, for the gentile outsiders to the drummers’ web.

Methodology

A qualitative paradigm

Having chosen to research drummers for my PhD, and having defined the research questions, selecting a suitable research paradigm was a crucial next step. As far as I can tell, research in the social sciences exists primarily for the purpose of better illuminating areas of human experience that have previously been ill understood or that have gone largely unnoticed. To this end, a qualitative approach seemed preferable to a quantitative one; I wanted to collect rich data containing lots of words describing human experiences; what I absolutely did not wish to end up with was just a pile of numbers somehow purporting to quantify, yet ultimately (indeed, inevitably) serving to obfuscate what I suspected and hoped would be a hugely colourful series of snapshots of experiences of being a drummer. My thinking equates to what Goulding, in her discussion of grounded theory, describes as a postmodernist perspective – a ‘rejection and denial of the possibility of absolute “truths”, and questioning of Western metaphysics with its perceived aim of defining, naming and knowing the world’ (Goulding, 2002: 30-31). I warmed to the words that ‘the study of uniqueness can be handled in a disciplined and scholarly way with qualitative inquiry’ (Bresler & Stake, 2006: 271), and chose to undertake my study according to the philosophy of rigorous qualitative research methodologies.

As a drummer and a writer I have often found mathematics, certainly in the arithmetical sense, to fall far short of addressing my needs. While it may be, on one level, the role of a drummer to keep time in a band, it is that which a living, breathing, emoting musician adds to the mere functionality of a pulse that gives me the joy I feel when I engage with the instrument. It is possible for a musical artist to conjure with drums more shades, pigments and emotions than any sequencer or metronome will permit. So it is with words as well. I have occasionally wrestled with self-levelled accusations of laziness on account of my refusal to bend to the strict discipline of graphs and statistics. However, it has become obvious throughout this research that I have created a far heftier and more fascinating workload by largely avoiding the more cut-and-dried solutions offered by certain quantitative methodologies.

Perhaps, then, it is the *inability* of words to describe things precisely that draws me so to them for this study. Graphs and pie-charts can be too obvious, too crude, leaving one wondering what the people represented by the numbers were actually feeling, thinking or saying. For me, for this study, the great thing about using a qualitative methodological approach is that:

qualitative methods can be used to uncover the nature of people's actions and experiences and perspectives... the equivalent cannot be tapped easily with quantitative research... qualitative research and analysis give the intricate, most relevant, and problematic details of the phenomenon. (Glaser, 1992: 12)

I am not alone, then, in my reticence to embrace numerical representation of human experience for these reasons. Smith et al (2009: 30), working in the realm of social psychology, issue a caution against positivist research in many contexts, finding:

problems with nomothetic inquiry... where data are collected, transformed and analysed in a manner which prevents the retrieval or analysis of the individuals who provided the data in the first place... typically achieved by measurement (transforming psychological phenomena into numbers), aggregation and inferential statistics.

In prose, by contrast, one can sense an artist-researcher striving to portray, to depict, to describe, unable and unwilling to assign a quantity or a measure to that which he or she senses instinctively is too rich, too experiential, too human to be assigned a number or a plot on a graph. A writer attempts in words to distil the essence of phenomena which ultimately must evade capture. Readers may be guided towards an understanding, but will always be left filling in the gaps through their own interpretative engagement with the text. It is precisely because of the ineffability of experience, and of words' perennial proximity to, yet eternal inadequacy to create, an accurate reflection of music and the human condition, that their creative employment seems best to fit the present study.

This study was carried out under the watchful eye of the Department of Arts and Humanities, and it will hopefully qualify me as a Doctor of Philosophy. Arts, humanities and philosophy are surely fields that demand a deep engagement with, and as thorough an analysis as possible of, rich and descriptive data. However, despite a

strong predilection for qualitative data, I have gathered and analyzed some quantitative data to support the interview data. Responses to brief questionnaires were collected in order to provide secondary data to gauge a slightly broader, rather than deeper, sense of drummers' responses to the research questions. The reason for this was to hint at possible trends in a broader cross-section of the drumming population, so that if a majority of responses to any questionnaire item appeared to contradict data from the far smaller number of interviews, then this would serve to suggest that interview data may be anomalous in terms of the wider drumming population. The secondary data, however, do not contradict the primary data; rather, the quantitative data bolster the findings of the primary interview data.

Selecting a mode of enquiry

This study is a sociological one. Simmel writes that:

“the motive (of ‘pure sociology’) derives from two propositions. One is that in any human society one can distinguish between its content and its form. The other is that society itself, in general, refers to the interaction among individuals.” (Simmel, 1950: 40)

My study meets both of Simmel's points. With regard to studying the form of society, my research question states that I am looking not merely at the fact that there are drummers, but at *how* some of those drummers are drummers. To address Simmel's second point, this is also fundamentally a study of drummers (including myself) interacting with other humans – musically and non-musically, consciously and unconsciously, in the present as well as in the past. According to Mueller (2002: 584), ‘sociology of music is the application and development of sociological theories and methodologies to investigate musical behavior and social action in dialogue with disciplines such as musicology and music education.’ The gathering and analysis of data have been undertaken in line with and in the spirit of sociological studies of music and musicians, and music education; these include work by Becker (1973), Bennett (2000), Bennett (2008), Cohen (1991), DeNora (2000), Finnegan (1989) Fournas et al (1995), Green (2002, 2008), Bennett (1980) and Willis (1978). As a member of the organizing committee of the 2011 Sociology of Music Education

Symposium, and having attended the Symposium in 2009, I am aware that sociologists of music education internationally incorporate a reasonably broad spectrum of work in various disciplines into their conference, with a particular fondness for blurring the boundaries between traditional ethnography, ethnomusicology and sociology. Ethnomusicology is, at its core, the study of musical phenomena using ethnographic modes of enquiry, which have considerable overlap with those used for sociological research. Indeed, the committee's *de facto* leader, John Kratus, has said that he plans to give a presentation based on ethnographic research carried in 2010/11.

The field of the sociology of music shares this penchant for merging disciplines and for embracing ethnographic modes of investigation. At the IASPM UK and Ireland conference in Cardiff in 2010, for instance, I presented a paper billed as an auto-ethnographic study of a band in which I play; an updated version of this paper (co-authored with Alex Gillett) has been accepted for presentation at IASPM's international conference in Grahamstown, South Africa in July 2011. A colleague and fellow musician, Titus Hjelm, also plans to write an auto-ethnographical study of a band in which he plays (he is that band's bassist). The contemporary overlap between disciplines is not all that new, for Bennett (1980) repeatedly locates his study in the discipline of sociology, yet also refers to his work as 'ethnography' (1980: vi). Bennett's methodological approach has a good deal in common with that of Monson (1996), whose work I cite below.

Stock writes that in ethnomusicological research, 'direct interaction with musicians... provides new perspectives on a range of issues not yet fully addressed in published writings' (Stock, 2004: 19). Direct interaction with drummers has been a vital part of gathering all of the data for this study; however, my study is by no means an ethnomusicological one in the proper, traditional sense of the term since I have not immersed myself sufficiently in the particular community that I have investigated. Indeed, due to the construction of modern Western civilized societies and the roles and functions of kit drummers therein, it is not possible in the UK to immerse oneself in a 'community' of drummers (my position as an insider to the drumming 'community' is discussed below, on page 34). The type of interviews that I have carried out are common fare in both sociological and ethnographic enquiry, while the

gathering of questionnaire data places this study outside of any truly ethnomusicological methodology. I am member of the Society for Ethnomusicology, and as far as I can tell, the principle difference between sociological studies and ethnomusicological research is that the former tend to be carried out by members of Western democratic societies in their native cultures, whereas the latter tend to be undertaken by Western researchers in foreign cultures.

I have, then, drawn upon the literature where research methods recommended themselves to me for the purposes of conducting this study. This thesis is to an extent an auto-ethnographical piece, yet I feel that it sits most comfortably under the inclusive and accepting umbrella of sociology for sociology of music and of music education seem to be the most encompassing of the relevant disciplines. I have adhered to broadly recognized principles of common sense and good practice in line with disciplines that have informed my methods. One element of sociological and ethnomusicological enquiry that I was, however, unable to incorporate into this study is recording my observations of drummers being drummers. It had been part of my original research design to watch each interviewee playing in either a concert, a rehearsal or a lesson. I was unable to do this, though, due to various limitations of time, mostly revolving around my work timetable, the scheduling of concerts and a lack of communication from some interviewees. As an example, I had to wait more than two years for an opportunity to see one of the adult participants in concert, following gig cancellations and postponements; I eventually caught him in action 27 days after initially submitting my thesis!

For me, two of the most appealing elements of this style of qualitative research are an emphasis on my interpretation of data (more on this below) and on being descriptive. For this reason it is necessary to mention the influence that phenomenology has had on my methods. Spurling (1977: 21) writes that, for a phenomenologist, 'the study of consciousness in the world is a study of consciousness as embodied, and hence a study of the body as experienced.' Likewise, Thapan (1997:1) reminds researchers that 'all humans are embodied creatures and not just Cartesian minds that happen to be located in some biological matter.' Embodiment is not a primary focus of this study, but I draw on this notion as it becomes relevant to the data. For instance, Gunaratnam (2003: 7) highlights the importance of recognizing 'the mutual

constitution of embodied experience and social discourse.’ Taken at face value, this states an obvious truism – that social discourse is not possible in the absence of the people who engage in that discourse, and by the inescapable nature of mammalian anatomy ‘people’ means humans as embodied. However, the crux of Gunaratnam’s point is that researchers should not ignore this fact, for in certain contexts a drummer’s experiences as embodied become all the more important.

Cresswell (2007: 57) agrees that ‘a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences* of a concept or a phenomenon;’ this partly fits the approach that I have taken to this study, although I have not presented the data according to strict phenomenological principles since I have not only described the meaning for others of their experiences, as strict phenomenology would require, but have also interpreted them. A methodological approach that embraces the (to my mind) perhaps inevitable subjectivity inherent in qualitative data analysis is ‘Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis’ (Smith et al, 2009). As its name suggests, there is a focus in this approach on the researcher’s awareness of his or her interpretation of observed phenomena. Smith et al draw attention to interpretation of phenomena at more than one level. First of all, participants interpret and express their experiences, which the researcher then interprets. The authors then describe ‘a third hermeneutic level; the imagined reader of our eventual write-up. The reader is trying to make sense of the researcher making sense of the participant making sense of X!’ (Smith et al, 2009: 41). I hope and believe, moreover, that this hermeneutic journey goes beyond the three levels identified here. Indeed, in some way it has already done so when I have presented preliminary findings from this study in posters and spoken presentations at conferences and have engaged in debate with fellow academics; each person’s engagement with my research, and each conversation, can be seen as another instance of hermeneutic engagement with – and, therefore, interpretation of – the data. Bresler & Stake point to this type of creativity and engagement as a requirement on the part of the researcher when analyzing data, adding that ‘data analysis is an art form’ (Bresler & Stake, 2006: 296). Several writers describe the rigour and thoroughness, the constant re-evaluation of the study and the data that are embedded in the fabric of qualitative research (Angrosino, 2007; Bresler & Stake, 2006; Robson, 2002; Smith et al, 2009; Stock, 2004).

An Emic Perspective

I began this research because of the enthusiasm that I have for drumming and drummers but, somewhat naively, I did not fully realize that, in researching others of my kind I would be privy to certain things that the rest of the world perhaps is not. Tiryakian writes that ‘realization of the “we-pole”, which is embodied in various intersubjective relationships stemming from it (the “we” of... the professional or occupational group)... leads to the discovery... that... my reality is a shared or a conjoint reality’ (Tiryakian, 1973: 193). Tiryakian is talking in broader social terms than of one drummer such as myself relating to the (slightly) wider world of other drummers; but his point holds, in my case very strongly – I quickly realized just how much I already knew about drummers, having been one myself for over 20 years. When writing this study, drummer jokes kept popping in to my head: probably they would not have done this had I not grown up playing in bands where they were constantly touted as words of wisdom and funny-because-it’s-true ridicule. I was already aware of many books about drummers and by drummers – I owned several, and I knew which of them I had lent to friends or family. Most (if not all) of my friends are musicians, and are therefore used to working with drummers and have plenty to say on the subject. I am fortunate to play drums in a variety of professional and non-professional contexts, from musical theatre productions and dinner jazz quintets to punk, stoner rock and folk bands. I have also taught scores, maybe 100s, of drummers in various situations – in bands, in private lessons, in homes and in schools. I have an awareness, then, of least some of the ways in which drummers engage in performing and learning – how they go about being drummers.

Drummers do not, as rule, tend to meet that many other drummers, especially outside of schools or music colleges. The principal reason for this is that most bands require but one drummer. Even at the music college where I studied there were only one or two other drummers, and we no longer live close to one another; perhaps because of this I was not prepared for the ease with which I was able to talk with the drummers I interviewed for my pilot study. They and I shared what Tyriakian has called ‘an “assumptive frame of reference”... a general orientation to the world within which human subjects act and react toward others, make projects, and evaluate events.’

(Tyriakian, 1973: 199). The orientation that I share with the other drummers in this study is a frame of reference that people who are not drummers more than likely do not share. Jorgensen rightly points out that an “Assumptive Frame of Reference” (ASR)... is socially as well as individually constructed’ (Jorgensen, 2003a: 29). No two drummers will possess an identical frame of reference, as our personal and social lives will inevitably have been different; however, we have enough in common with one another that it has become clear to me that this study is to a large extent an *emic* one.

Harris explains the difference between emic and etic perspectives:

Emic statements refer to logico-empirical systems whose phenomenal distinctions or ‘things’ are built up out of contrasts and discriminations significant, meaningful, real, accurate or in some other fashion regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves... etic statements depend upon phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers.
(Harris, 1976: 334)

An emic perspective for Harris is one focussing on the point of view of the participants in research, whereas an etic perspective is one that focuses also upon the perspective of the researchers. For Feleppa, moreover, the emic perspective requires a mutual cultural understanding between the researcher and the researched; he (1986: 244) writes that emic research involves the ‘sharing of particular concepts and rules by inquirer and subject’ – clearly the present study fits the bill, as I am a drummer, researching drummers. He also states that ‘advocates of “emic” analysis seek a form of understanding that is, to some extent, like that which subjects have of themselves and their world’ (Feleppa, 1986: 243); it is not so much that I sought this type of understanding, however, but that I have found myself with it. When interviewees mentioned notable drummers or described practices in learning or performance I was often able to relate closely to these, knowing of most of the drummers and having had similar experiences myself. I feel that the quantity and richness of data collected, along with the interpretation and analysis of those data, would be of a far lower standard had I not been in a position to converse knowledgably and passionately with interviewees. I have been and remain a part of the symbolic interaction that is the subject of the study.

Feleppa (1986: 243) goes on to say that emic researchers are 'wary of excessive reliance on "etic" analysis – given, roughly, in terms of inquirers' imported conceptions.' I have expressed my objections above to taking a more objective approach than I have done; I believe that the approach taken best fits the subject under investigation, and that my position as an insider to the world of drumming and drummers adds quality to this research. I have been careful throughout to remain aware of my emic position, however, lest I assume too much of my non-drummer readers. The insider's perspective is one that brings deep, rich and useful insights that would simply not be available to another, more etic, observer. Had I not shared an assumptive frame of reference (Tyriakian, 1973; Jorgensen, 2003a) with this study's participants, our interviews would have been vastly different in substance and duration. Of course, the other side of that coin is that I may, through a blinding haze of subjectivity, miss out on much that might be seen far more clearly by the coolly distant and objective etic researcher. Such dispassionate work, though, would probably be of little interest to me, so I am happy to be a card-carrying emic researcher. I take comfort from Bresler & Stake (2006: 278), who write that 'in music education, we have a need for... experiential understandings of particular situations.'

I am aware that as a drummer over the age of 30 who spent seven years as a teenage drummer, and with a broad range of educational experiences, while my position in this research is distinctly emic, I am, of course, no longer a teenage drummer and I do not do exactly the same things as my fellow adult drummers; my perspective is, therefore, also an etic one. Nettl (1983: 140) suggests that 'one may look at culture, at music, at music-as-culture from the viewpoint of a member of the society being studied or from the viewpoint of the analyst.' In the case of the present study, however, it is unnecessary and problematic to make such a distinction, because while I am an insider to the world of drummers and share many experiences and points of reference with participants, I have chosen to step back from my own and other drummers' accounts in order to analyze the data. This study, then, blends emic and etic perspectives inasmuch as I write not only about my being a drummer but have also elicited 'patterns in the behaviour stream' (Harris, 1976: 330) of drummers as a social group.

Researchers in the sociology of music and music education are often also musicians and/or teachers, and these perspectives inevitably colour their understanding of the worlds which they investigate, describe and interpret. It is my task to acknowledge and to remain aware of my subjectivity and its effects on this research; as Merriam & Simpson say:

Being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis carries with it a responsibility to identify one's shortcomings and biases that might impact the study. One does this not to make a qualitative study more 'objective', but to understand how one's subjectivity shapes the investigation and its findings. (Merriam & Simpson, 1995: 98)

Thus an emic perspective is neither good nor bad; although I have to admit that I rather like it and find that it suits this study very well. I hope at the end of this study to be able to admit, as Bennett does, that:

I have attempted to remain as faithful as possible to the fieldwork experience while at the same time giving clear indications of where the research participants' accounts of their everyday experiences finish and my own interpretations of such accounts take over. (Bennett, 2000: 3)

Literature review

In order that this study would not stand isolated and alone in the cold winter of academic irrelevance, a review of pertinent literature was undertaken before data gathering began. This helped to afford the study a theoretical perspective and an epistemological *raison d'être*. In Chapter Two I examine literature on identity and learning so as to provide a framework for the discussion of these themes throughout the thesis. In Chapter Three I focus very briefly on adolescence because this has been identified as an important phase in life for developing interest in becoming a musician. By initially focussing on the possible significance of generational differences, I was drawn to literature on adolescence and identity. I have not explored the adolescence literature in great depth, as this is not a primary focus of the study; rather, the short review is included to help contextualize the discussion of identity trajectories in that chapter. In Chapter Five there is a review of literature pertaining to

issues of ethnicity in music; and in Chapter Eight sex and gender issues are explored in reference to relevant literature. Nonetheless, a disclaimer may be necessary to explain some of the fun I have had with this study. Cohen (1991: 7) includes a paragraph's apology for the absence of references to academic literature throughout her book (although she does reference a lot of it). She excuses herself because when she conducted her research there was precious little academic writing on her field of research. The same is true for me inasmuch as there is precious little academic writing about kit drummers; so I have had to rely on many colourful and interesting non-academic texts and other media, anecdotes and encounters to raise and discuss the issues. Much of the literature on drummers is in the form of autobiographies and interviews conducted with drummers by journalists and in some cases by fellow drummers. Where this literature is cited in the study it is used as data, given equal value as the interview data. The only difference in the presentation of data from books and those from interviews is that the interview data are presented in the past tense, and those from books are presented in the present tense.

One book in particular has been used extensively throughout the thesis; this is Bill Bruford's *Bill Bruford: The Autobiography*. Bruford had initially agreed to take part in this study as an interviewee, but had retired from drumming by the time I came to arrange a time for us to meet in early 2009. When I asked him if we could still arrange an interview as planned, he told me that his book was about to be published and that I should buy a copy; any questions that remained I would be welcome to ask him via email after I had completed reading the book. The autobiography answers all that I would have asked Bruford in an interview, and much more besides. It offers insights that he possibly could not have articulated so well in conversation, and I understood immediately why an interview seemed undesirable and unnecessary to Bruford. If I seem to lean rather heavily on this text, I do so because it covers so many issues so well, and provides data common to many participants but expressed more eloquently than some were able to do face-to-face.

I have, of course, been able to read many interesting and enlightening texts on the subjects of identity and learning. Texts abound on identity and music, as does literature on adolescence. Less writing is available on the phenomenon of adulthood, perhaps because to those doing the writing it is a less intriguing stage of human

development than the overtly challenging period that occurs in the psycho-social realm of Western teenagers' adolescent years. This review of scholarly texts – primarily although not exclusively from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, social psychology, education, and music education – gave rise to my new model of the Snowball Self. The Snowball Self is a graphic representation of the theory that I use to explain data and interpret them in terms of the interrelated and complex phenomena of multiple identities and learning. As such, it underpins much of my interpretation of the data. This theory took me somewhat by surprise, as it had not been my intention to seek or build a theory at this stage of the study. On the contrary, in fact I had assumed that I would work towards a theory after the grounded theory model (Glaser & Strauss, 1968). The literature review continued, although less intensely, while data were gathered and analyzed. While the literature had pointed the data gathering in the direction of the seven sub-questions, in a sustained act of selfless reciprocity the data from time to time indicated potentially worthwhile avenues for investigating new literature. Trips along blind alleys occurred sufficiently infrequently for this approach to spawn a veritable mountain of fascinating findings.

Interviews

Twenty-seven participants were interviewed in an in-depth, semi-structured way, using questions derived from the seven sub-questions of the research question – the interview questions are included in Appendix A. These interviews were recorded onto memory cards via a Zoom H2 digital recording device and those data transferred to my computer's hard drive, listened to and transcribed in detail; their analysis is described below. Second interviews were undertaken with the teenage participants where possible, to which they were asked to bring a selection of recorded music that they liked. Second interviews were not sought with the adults, since it was felt that these might intrude too far upon busy schedules and multiple commitments. This is not to suggest that teenagers have entirely uncomplicated lives, but rather reflects my own experiences of my career trajectory as a drummer, i.e. that I have found my life increasingly complex and difficult to organize since the heady, relatively commitment-free days of adolescence. Six teens were unable to accept the invitation to a second interview due to their own busy lives.

Twenty-four interviews were conducted with 15 teenagers and 13 interviews were conducted with 12 adults. Where teenagers were unable to attend second interviews, this did not seem to have an impact upon the quality of the data. Second interviews served to bolster, rather than substantially to enhance, data from first interviews with participants. The only adult to be interviewed twice was Guy Richman; this was because we ran out of time on the occasion of the first interview. His second interview, then, was simply the second half of the first interview, rather than the ‘musical preferences’ interview carried out with teenagers.

It had been my intention to interview 12 to 15 teenage drummers and only six to eight adults, since it was assumed that far more data would be forthcoming from the more experienced adult drummers than from their younger counterparts. However, as adult drummers with variously intriguing profiles became available for interview, and more than expected responded to requests for interview, the sample size grew.

Qualitatively, I feel that this increase in size improves the study’s richness of data, as well as these data hopefully serving to strengthen the credibility of any claims I may make following analysis. The adult drummers did, as anticipated, have a lot more to say than many of the teenagers. Teenagers’ first interviews lasted, on average, for a little under half an hour, with second interviews lasting up to an hour. Interviews with adults lasted generally in the region of an hour, although a small number ran for closer to two hours. The length of individual interviews does not necessarily reflect the quantity or quality of the data that they produced. Much interview time, especially with adults, was spent talking as peers, not specifically addressing issues related to the research question or sub-questions. Teenagers’ longer second interviews ran for the time that they did because of the participants’ enthusiasm for the music to which we listened – some were eager to show me *everything* that they liked! Due to the amount of data and the recurrence of themes and similarity of responses among participants, it has been possible only to include a selection of these responses in most instances. Where this is the case, the data are representative and typical of those from the sample as a whole.

In a few instances, due to the flow of the conversation, I omitted to ask participants some of the interview questions. Despite this, the research question and its sub-

questions were answered sufficiently in all cases; part of the beauty of the semi-structured interview is that one gains an impression from many data that crop in the natural course of a conversation, rather than as a result of questions designed to elicit responses on a particular theme. For instance, although in a couple of cases I did not ask participants ‘how important to you is being a drummer?’ it was glaringly obvious from our conversation that the answer to this question could only have been something like ‘extremely.’ Several of the adults provided long, rambling monologues that touched on just about every aspect of each sub-question, without being asked many of the questions. Often a grunt or a nod of my head was sufficient to prompt an interviewee to speak at length about the experiences of being a drummer. In line with the interviews that Monson carried out for her research, I ‘hoped to create a kind of interaction that had more in common with everyday conversational situations... than did a traditional interview’ (Monson, 1996: 18).

While many interviewees said similar things about being a drummer, some expressed themselves more fluently than others, and in ways whose depth is lost in audio recording and transposition to the printed page. For instance, when talking with Sean Lee and Jamie M. I spoke at some length about my various experiences as a drummer, and the participants would nod, smile or speak mono-syllabically to show empathy and recognition. Conversely, other participants such as Guy Richman, Ian Paice and Luke had so much to say, and spoke so well, that my role in the interview involved little more than occasionally steering them in the right direction for the study and acknowledging their remarks.

Bresler & Stake (2006: 295) warn that semi-structured interviews ‘are costly to administer and time-consuming in analysis,’ and Robson too acknowledges the difficult road chosen by the semi-structured interviewer: ‘this makes life harder rather than easier – though also more interesting’ (Robson, 2002: 167). Wengraf sums up by saying that ‘semi-structured interviews... may yield much more than fully structured ones can, under the right conditions. Under the wrong conditions, they may yield nothing at all. They are high-preparation, high-risk, high-gain, and high-analysis operations’ (Wengraf, 2001: 5). These authors warn of tough times for the qualitative researcher, and I now understand what they mean! Some interviews lasted for more than two hours, which provided wonderfully rich data but took countless hours to

transcribe and analyze. As Robson predicts, however, my data are indeed very interesting (I think!), and have yielded a richness and depth that I possibly would not have discovered by any other means than those employed.

Questionnaires

One hundred questionnaires were completed by drummers who were not also interviewed as part of the study. I was keen to be able to write about a percentage, so was glad to find exactly 100 willing participants. The first batch of questionnaires was completed by drummers on the ‘drums day’ of the London International Music Show (LIMS) in London on 14th June 2008. This event took place in a vast area of exhibition space showing off the prowess of some of the world’s most famous exponents on the drum kit and some of the best-looking equipment available to the contemporary artiste. Questionnaires were completed anonymously, although age and gender were noted to clarify whether the drummers were teenagers or over the age of 30, and so that the number of male and female drummers could be recorded. On this first batch of questionnaires, respondents were not asked to identify their ethnicity – an accidental omission, rectified for the later edition of the questionnaire.

Another round of data collection took place at LIMS in June 2009. On this occasion there was no dedicated ‘drums day,’ but drummers were nonetheless present in large numbers, ogling shiny instruments and trying out their skills on demonstration kits. When printing questionnaires for this second visit to LIMS, I was careful this time to include a space for participants to identify their ethnicity. An extra question was also added concerning individuality, question 6a. The final version of the questionnaire is included below, in Appendix B.

The questionnaires may have yielded disproportionately positive data. This is to say that the drummers were visiting London’s Docklands to attend an industry showcase, which suggests that the study could be garnering enthusiasts, possibly doubly high on their art and craft owing to the vast number of like-minded tub-thumpers under one roof, and to the fact that they were surrounded by some of their presumably favourite things – drums, cymbals, music and other drummers. Having said this, though, it is

likely that most participants in the study enjoy being drummers, for drumming is an optional pastime in our democratic society. None of the participants reported having been press-ganged into playing or into attending LIMS!

Between visits to LIMS, questionnaires were submitted to and returned by mail from the students of a drum teacher at Tech Music Schools in London, a music college specialising in contemporary popular musics. Questionnaires were also distributed via email and in person among the drum-teaching faculty and students of the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, another college of popular music in London, where I was, and remain, employed as a lecturer and drum kit teacher.

Ninety-one questionnaires were completed by males, and of the nine female respondents none was an adult; I was unable to find adult female drummers, despite employing an aggressively purposive sampling technique of pursuing women around the London International Music Show to ascertain whether any of them were drummers. Seventy-two questionnaire respondents were teenagers, which reflects roughly the type of ratio of adults to teenagers at the trade shows. This figure also reflects a stubbornness among the population to defy my attempts to balance the sample through selective sampling; there simply were not enough professional drummers around to balance the data 50-50, as might have been desirable.

Data analysis: interview data

Themes initially emerged from the literature review and were organized into the research sub-questions, as mentioned above. These in turn were translated into interview questions, which formed the first filter through which data would be analyzed; this is to say that the interviewees' answers were unavoidably guided by the questions put to them. I listened to the audio-recorded interviews and transcribed these in detail. I then read the transcripts, coding, copying, pasting and grouping responses according to common themes. This process of coding and grouping continued while data were being collected, so that analysis and data collection took place concomitantly. Data analysis of course continued after all the data had been gathered. As Goulding describes of the grounded theoretical approach, in this study

‘the theory... is a product of continuous interplay between analysis and data collection’ (Goulding, 2002: 42). Interview transcriptions were all read a second and a third time and listened to afresh, with corrections made to transcriptions as necessary in order that no data would slip through the net. Some data cut across themes; these data were recorded under both themes, cross-referenced, and also compiled in another document under a separate heading. This lengthy, iterative process of comparing transcribed interview responses with themes from sub-questions, and stepping back to look for other themes, resulted in the organization of the thesis in its current form. Glaser (1992: 21) comfortingly writes that ‘the researcher should not worry’ about undertaking research in this manner; I had been tempted to ascribe the perpetual re-assessment of my efforts to a nervous insecurity about my work, so it is reassuring to find the principle embedded in the qualitative research paradigm.

It is likely that themes could have been perceived or grouped in other ways, but my interpretation of the data led me to the present arrangement. As I have typed this thesis, the interpretation at which I have arrived has continued to make sense and to stand up to my continued analysis. Another very useful way in which data have been analyzed has been, as I mentioned above, through presentations of posters and spoken papers that I have given at various conferences; while in these instances I have been careful always to present the data as preliminary and tentative, the relentless curiosity and various perspectives of colleagues have helped to ensure that my interpretation and analysis of the data have been as rigorous as I would desire.

Data analysis: questionnaire data

These data were mostly far easier to analyze than the interview data. Spreadsheets were created for responses to each question on the questionnaire – titles of spreadsheets therefore corresponded to the themed documents containing interview data. Responses were recorded on to the relevant spreadsheet, and the number of similar matching responses to each question recorded. For the questions based on a Likert scale (see Appendix B), this process was incredibly straightforward. For the more open questions, I was fortunate that the data repeated themselves with surprising frequency, so that it was possible to record several instances of identical responses.

Where responses were similar or expressed similar ideas or sentiments, these were grouped; these groupings are presented unambiguously in the findings. For instance, where I discuss the notion of drummers feeling either ‘a part of’ or ‘apart from’ society, I list the range of responses and make it clear how I have interpreted the answers. I have been careful not to gloss over anomalous responses or to make the responses appear any more or less homogenous than they actually were.

The sample

Since I was interested from the outset in conducting a mostly qualitative study rather than a quantitative one, the decision to opt for richness over quantity of data meant using a necessarily small interview sample. Collection and analysis of large quantities of qualitative data would have taken more time than was available for this study. The sample size directly impacts upon the generalizability of the data. Focussing in this way on a number of individuals, rather than on a larger population, has been called ‘idiography’ (Smith et al, 2009: 29), which ‘does not eschew generalizations, but... locates them in the particular, and hence develops them more cautiously.’ In their work on grounded theory, Glaser & Strauss recommend a similarly cautious approach, suggesting that conclusions drawn from a study such as mine should be considered ‘substantive theory,’ a type of theory that falls ‘between the “minor working hypotheses” of everyday life and the “all-inclusive” grand theories’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1968: 79).

I began this study with the intention of interviewing a representative sample of drummers in and around London. Quickly, however, this intention shifted as it seemed that more interesting data could be gathered through another kind of sampling. Most drummers in London, it appears, are white and male. I felt that richer data could be obtained by making a point of interviewing some drummers who were neither of these; as I arranged and conducted the first interviews it became apparent that a wealth of data may lie beyond reach if the sample remained strictly representative. Issues also emerged through the review of relevant literature, such that it seemed likely that a purposive sample (Smith, 2009: 48-49) might yield the most interesting data. This type of sampling technique is referred to by Glaser (1992: 25 as)

‘theoretical sampling,’ which, according to Glaser & Strauss (1968: 45), is ‘the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1968: 45). To arrive at the desired sample, I used snowball sampling, as recognized and recommended by Smith et al (2009: 48-49). This technique was especially useful in three regards, the first of which was in finding willing questionnaire participants through colleagues at two London music schools. The second useful application of snowball sampling was with female drummers; I was able to use personal contacts and contacts of these contacts to arrange interviews with women and girls. The third area was with teenage drummers; as the study progressed and new legislation made it increasingly difficult to gain access to students through schools, I was able to contact teenage drummers through music colleagues and through teenage drummers’ siblings and friends. Despite considerable efforts I was unable to find or make contact with many non-Caucasian drummers. This does not affect the validity of the study; it is merely worth noting that the ethnic demography of the study is perhaps more representative and less purposive than the gender demographic.

While female professional drummers number but a few in the real world, five of the 12 adults interviewed are women. Of the 15 teenagers interviewed, three were female. The reason for this smaller proportion is that teenage female drummers became very difficult to access; during the period of data collection, enforcement of legislation in UK schools made it impossible to spend time with students without engaging in lengthy and expensive processes with the Criminal Records Bureau on behalf of each school. Heads of Music at three schools nonetheless agreed to allow me access to students, but failed to make good on their assurances due to logistical and internal political reasons. With regard to the ethnic make-up of the sample, it was difficult to find many drummers who did not fit the profile of the white majority. Of the adult drummers, one was of Caribbean descent and all others were Caucasian. Two teenage drummers were of West African origin, and two were of south Asian descent; all others were Caucasian. One of the ‘teenage’ drummers, Sam, had recently turned 20 prior to being interviewed. It was decided to include him in the study, however, because of his (West African) ethnicity; he was only just past being a teenager, and it

seemed more important to make the sample ethnically diverse than to adhere slavishly to the restriction of age.

So as not to create an imbalance in the interpretation of data, I decided to interview only drummers whom I did not know personally. Although I am an insider to the world of drummers, I felt that to involve friends or close colleagues in interviews would allow a degree of intimacy and prior knowledge to creep into some interviews that would not be present in others. This criterion was adhered to in all but three cases. In the case of professional drummer, Ronnie Fawcett, I felt that her age and gender offered sufficient interest and value to the study that the personal connection could be overlooked. Also, our relationship was in any case by no means close; Ronnie had been my teacher for five years, but we had ceased lessons together 15 years prior to the study and we had not been in contact in the intervening time. It is worth reiterating here that Ronnie is a female drummer – the name looks as though it applies to a male, but she asked specifically to be referred to as Ronnie in this study. The second participant whom I knew personally was Gifty. I felt that, because she was a female drummer of African ethnicity, the fact that she had also been a student of mine for 18 months need not exclude her from the study. I had ceased to teach Gifty one year prior to our interview. Natalie was the third participant whom I knew prior to the interview, and she was included because of her gender being a more important factor than our relationship. Natalie and I had known one another for around six weeks prior to the interview, when I began lecturing at the college where she was enrolled to study.

Most of the interview participants came from, or worked in, and were interviewed in the Greater London area. Three female drummers were exceptions to this rule, because it was felt more important to include female participants in the study than to adhere unflinchingly to the original geographical constraint. Gemma Hill is from Swindon and was interviewed in a café there; this is about 90 minutes' drive west of London. Kate Tatum was interviewed at her home in Manchester, a city about three hours' drive north of London. Ronnie, although she grew up in London, worked in and retired to Sussex where she was interviewed in her home about 90 minutes south of London. Only Ian Paice of the male participants was interviewed outside of London. He was interviewed at his home near to Henley-on-Thames, a little over an

hour's drive west of the city. Ian was included in the sample because I felt that his career and experiences as a drummer could lend valuable insights and weight to the study. Questionnaire respondents were not asked about their town or place of residence, but all questionnaires were completed in London.

All of the adult drummers were active professionally except for Ronnie; she had retired around a month prior to the interview taking place, although after she had agreed to the interview. I felt that her age, experience and gender all compensated for her status as the only non-drumming participant among the sample. Gemma Hill and Lisa Tring authored dissertations about drummers and drumming, which I have cited in the text. In these instances, following convention, they are referred to by surname only.

Another consideration when choosing drummers for the study was to aim for a breadth of musical experience, at least as far as could be determined prior to interview. I was keen that findings would not relate only to drummers from any one particular genre of music.

Names of interview participants

Throughout the study, each teenage interview participant is referred to by his or her first name. The exceptions to this are two male teenage drummers who share the name Jamie. One of them is referred to as Jamie M; the other is called Jamie H. It was the request of several teachers and parents that I use only the teenagers' given names in order to help preserve anonymity. Some adult participants asked also to be referred to only by their respective first names, but for reasons of formality and in order to help readers to distinguish between teenagers and adults, adult participants are called throughout by given and surnames. Those drummers who requested not to have their surnames included have been given false surnames. When drummers are quoted in the text, after their name in parenthesis I include the drummer's age if he or she is a teenager, and state 'adult' in the case of the adults. This is not to imply any differences between teenagers and adults, but is instead merely to help readers to know about whom they are reading. All interview participants are listed overleaf in

Table 1. Those adult drummers who have been given false surnames are labelled as 'altered,' whereas those referred to by their true names are labelled as 'real.' More information on the participants and on how the snowball sample was gathered, is included in Appendix D.

Table 1: Drummers, in alphabetical order of given names

Name	Real/altered name	Sex	Age	Main Styles
Bill Bruford*	Real	M	Adult	Jazz/fusion/prog.
Cath Lovell	Altered	F	Adult	Rock/folk-rock/punk
Clive Porto	Altered	M	Adult	Jazz
Gemma Hill	Real	F	Adult	Pop/indie
Guy Richman	Real	M	Adult	Pop/shows
Hannah Sue**	Altered	F	Adult	Rock/punk/indie
Ian Paice	Real	M	Adult	Rock
Jon Hiseman	Real	M	Adult	Jazz/fusion/prog.
Kate Tatum	Altered	F	Adult	Rock/punk
Lisa Tring	Real	F	Adult	Funk/functions
Mike Mannering	Altered	M	Adult	Jazz/groove/pop
Ronnie Fawcett	Altered	F	Adult	Military bands
Scratchy Fingers	Real	M	Adult	Reggae
Sean Lee	Altered	M	Adult	Rock/indie
Callum	Real	M	16	Rock/pop
Chris	Real	M	19	Rock/indie
Ella	Real	F	14	N.A.
Gifty	Real	F	19	Rock/funk
Jamie H.	Real	M	18	Indie/alt. rock
Jamie M.	Real	M	17	Groove/jazz
Joe	Real	M	15	Rock/indie
Luke	Real	M	19	Rock
Matt	Real	M	18	Pop/sessions
Natalie	Real	F	19	Rock/punk
Nathan	Real	M	14	Rock/indie
Nethagshan	Real	M	13	Rock
Rohan	Real	M	13	Rock
Sam	Real	M	20	Gospel
Senan	Real	M	19	Funk

* Bill Bruford was not interviewed for this study, but he is included in this table because, as described above, his autobiography is quoted extensively throughout and used as interview data.

** Hannah Sue is not a drummer, but she is included here because she took part in a pilot interview and provided useful data from her perspective as a female participant

in the popular music industry. Her comments are included infrequently, and only where they support an argument made by other, drumming, participants.

Ethics

Denzin & Lincoln (1998: 103) sensitively advise that ‘qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict.’ It was with this in mind that I approached the study. Ethical approval from the Institute of Education, University of London was requested and received, according to the requirements of the institution. This study has not proven to be ethically sensitive. However, an awareness of ethical issues is imperative prior to carrying out any study. Robson writes that ‘you should familiarize yourself with the code or codes most relevant to your work, and ensure that you follow it/them scrupulously’ (Robson, 2002: 66). I have, accordingly, followed the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines on ethical practice (BERA, 2004); these are the most closely related to my field of research. As well as gaining permission from each participant to partake in the research, permission was, in each case where a teenage interview participant was under 18, sought and obtained also from a parent or guardian.

Interviews with adult drummers were carried out by arrangement with them in their homes, at their places of work, at cafés and public houses. Initial contact was made with individuals by email or telephone, and interviews arranged at their convenience. None was paid for his or her time, but I usually bought the coffee! Interviews with teenagers were arranged through schools, colleges, and mutual contacts such as their parents, friends or a girlfriend, and these interviews took place at schools, colleges, homes and cafés. The interviews all took place in public, apart from the interviews with two teenagers, Nethagshan and Rohan, from Nower Hill School in Harrow. However, before I was able to interview these two drummers, I attended a musical production at the school one evening, after which I met the Head of Music; I was then required to attend some drum lessons at the school and choose participants with the help of the drum kit teacher; after several weeks and several email communications I

was able to meet the boys individually during lunchtime in the school music room for interview.

All interview participants were all informed that they may at any point withdraw from any involvement in the study. All were sent copies of the text for approval before the final version was submitted for examination; in the case of teenagers under the age of 18, the text was sent to their parents or teachers.

With participants who answered the questionnaire, ethical issues were different from those affecting the interview participants. I contacted the organization running the London International Music Show via their website to ask permission to conduct a questionnaire survey there several weeks prior to the event at which I conducted the first round of questionnaires in June 2008. They gave me permission via email, and asked me also to speak with officials on the day at the venue. The staff at the venue (London's Docklands Arena) knew nothing of my communication with the organizers, but said that it would be fine to conduct my research so long as I would not object to being removed if I was found to be obtrusive. The day passed without incident. I was careful when asking teenagers to take part only to ask those in groups or with parents, so as not to intimidate. I asked members of the public two questions: 'are you a drummer?' and 'would you have two or three minutes to spare to take part in some research about drummers?' Very few people decline to take part, but those who did were pressed no further. Questionnaire respondents were not asked to reveal their names, so all responses are anonymous. I repeated the above procedure before the second round of questionnaire responses were gathered at the London International Music Show in June 2009.

The other questionnaires were completed in the spring of 2009 with the help of drum-teaching colleagues at Tech Music Schools and the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London, as mentioned above. These colleagues asked willing students in group-lessons to fill in the questionnaires anonymously, and returned the forms to me. With the final questionnaires being completed in my presence at LIMS 2009, it was easy for me to stop collecting them once I had 100 responses – enough to generate a percentage. All questionnaire respondents were informed that their data could be included anonymously in this study – none objected to inclusion.

Appendices

Five appendices are included in this document, to provide helpful reference material for the reader. These are:

Appendix A : Interview Questions

Appendix B : Questionnaire

Appendix C : Questionnaire Responses

Appendix D: About the Interview Participants

Appendix E: Glossary

Appendices A, B, C and D have been explained already. Appendix E contains a list of drummers to whom participants and data refer, and terms that may require explanation for non-drummers and others unfamiliar with the world and lexicon of kit drummers.

Preview: Chapters Two to Eight

Chapter Two: Identity, Learning, and the Snowball Self

This chapter explores the literature on identity and learning; there is a focus on how people come to have a sense of who they are, and on views of learning that help to contextualize the data in later chapters. From this literature I develop the model of the Snowball Self for viewing the construction and construal of identities over time.

Chapter Three: Identity Trajectories

This chapter refers to literature on identity and adolescence, and to the Snowball Self, to frame the data that are presented concerning drummers' individual senses of how important to them it is to be drummers. There is a focus on multiple identities and how these can change and interact over time and space.

Chapter Four: Hanging Around with Musicians

This chapter investigates what it is like to be a drummer in a band, interacting musically and socially with others, exploring the intra- and extra-musical. Various roles of the drummer in a band are highlighted. Data are also presented concerning drummers' senses of how they integrate with non-musicians.

Chapter Five: Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage

This chapter begins with a brief review of literature pertaining to issues of ethnicity and race in popular musics. Drummers give their views on the importance of the ethnicity of the musics that they play, and participants provide insights into their senses of what is culturally 'home.'

Chapter Six: Learning to Play Drums

With reference to the literature on learning discussed in Chapter Two, participants' learning experiences are discussed. Learning is viewed holistically, and includes a broad range of self-, peer- and teacher-directed practices. There is a considerable focus on drummers learning from perceived exemplars of the art.

Chapter Seven: Gender and Drumming

This chapter begins with a brief review of literature pertaining to issues of sex and gender in popular music, and follows with a discussion of the contested notions of 'sex' and 'gender.' Drummers' experiences and attitudes are discussed in the context of the highly gendered worlds of music and kit drumming.

Conclusions

This chapter summarizes briefly the extent to and ways in which the aims of the study have been met. The model of the Snowball Self is discussed, the significance of the study considered, and directions suggested for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

Identity, Learning and the Snowball Self

Identity

Introduction

The word ‘identity’ has proven tough to pin down, causing, as it is prone to do, widespread confusion; there are perhaps at least as many notions of what identity is as there are academics who have wrestled with the term. Notions and fears of identity theft or identity fraud pervade our lives. In one sense, these are indeed worrying – I certainly would prefer for the details of my bank cards and their respective PINs not to fall into criminal hands. I wonder, though, if this is really anything like as serious, or as implausible, as someone running away with my *identity*! Identity seems to me to be concerned with people’s conceptions of who they are – such as how drummers understand themselves to be drummers. Deny me online access to my bank account; tell me that I do not live in my flat because the telephone line is registered to a lady of another name; send my tax bills to the wrong address – irritating though these things can be, none of them affects my sense of who I truly am and how it is that I am me. Conveniently, there is enough scholarly writing around to support my position.

Numerous authors have written about identity, some calling it by this name, some by another name. Firstly I will deal with its nomenclature and some of its guises, each an attempt on the part of a writer to grapple with what Grotevant has noted as the ‘theoretical complexity’ of ‘the concept of identity’ (Grotevant, 1992: 73). Jorgensen similarly finds that ‘the notion of identity is a complicated construct’ (Jorgensen, 2003a: 28); important here is their point that identity is indeed a notion, an idea – people seem to know roughly what it means, but there is no consensus as to exactly what identity is. In response to this semantic ambiguity, at the 2008 Annual Conference of the Society for Research on Identity Formation (SRIF) in Chicago, keynote speaker Philip Dreyer expressed a wish to hold a ‘Paradigm Party’ in order that the Society might soon know and therefore be in a better position to tell others exactly what it is that it stands for.

The Oxford Concise English Dictionary confidently and concisely defines identity thus:

1 the fact of being who or what a person or thing is. 2 the characteristics determining this. 3 a close similarity or affinity. (Oxford, 2008)

Jorgensen, however, provides a more suitably dialectical definition: ‘the notion of “identity” is itself an imaginary construction, an ambiguous, fuzzy, and complex notion that is subjective and objective, individual and collective, normative and descriptive, malleable and committed, dynamic and static’ (Jorgensen, 2003a: 31). That identity is perhaps best described in such terms – what Giddens (1991: 52) has also called an ‘amorphous phenomenon’ – will become clear during the following exploration of attempts to come to terms with ‘identity.’

Erikson and others (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Cheung & Yue, 2003 a & b; DeNora & Belcher, 2000; Dibben, 2002; Erikson, 1950, 1968; Gracyk, 2001; Grotevant, 2002; Hargreaves et al, 2002; Marcia, 1980; Narvaez et al, 2009; O’Neill, 2002; Shank, 1994; Stets & Burke, 2003; Tarrant, 2002; Waterman, 2007) write about specifically ‘identity,’ whereas Angrosino refers not to identity but to ‘the self’ (Angrosino, 2007: 5), a term also taken up by Jackson & Rodriguez-Tomé (1993: 3). Cheung (2003: 251) considers ‘identity’ but also writes about ‘self concept,’ a term shared by Morrison & McIntyre (1972: 191) and by Hargreaves et al (2002: 2). The Society for Research on Identity Formation (SRIF) proclaims an interest in ‘human self-definition,’ rather than in identity *per se* (SRIF, 2008). Fornas et al (1995: 72) write about ‘identities and self-images’ as though these are not identical; they also consider the notion of multiple identities for one person, an idea expanded upon by Stets & Burke (2003: 132), amongst others. Crocker & Park (2003: 303) in turn write about ‘genuine self-esteem’ which ‘refers to a true sense of self-worth, self-respect, and acceptance of one’s strengths and weaknesses.’ Hampson talks about both ‘self-perception’ (Hampson 1982: 282) and ‘personality’ (1982: 285), which appear to be interchangeable terms referring to identity. Lamont conceives of identity in terms of ‘self understanding’ and ‘self-other understanding’ (2002: 41) while Kirchler et al (1993: 8) describe adolescents’ exploration of ‘autonomy’ in a way that sounds a lot

like identity. Hegel (1807: 421) describes ‘individuality’ as a construct that seems to fit under the umbrella of contemporary ‘identity’ concepts.

I am sure that many of the authors listed here have made their decisions to talk directly or indirectly about identity with an acute awareness of Grotevant’s and Jorgensen’s warnings about the complexity inherent in the very idea. For my purposes, I shall assume that they all mean broadly similar things, contributing to a fuller, more rounded understanding of identity – that sense of *who* a person is and understands him- or herself to be. There is not space here to interrogate all existing theories and ideas about identity, so I borrow from theories that seem best to fit the subject matter.

What is identity?

A key point is made by Grotevant when he writes that ‘a fundamental defining feature of identity is that it addresses issues of self in context’ (Grotevant, 1992: 73). Hall similarly finds that ‘identities are... points of temporary attachment to the subject positions’ that we occupy as we go through life (Hall, 1996: 6). By implication, these authors suggest that different contexts may invoke different identities. Quoting Josselson (1987), Hall writes that “‘identity, then, is a dynamic fitting together of parts of the personality with the realities of the social world so that a person has a sense both of internal coherence and meaningful relatedness to the real world’” (Hall, 1996: 73). Laing, as Kirchler et al (1993) goes so far as to suggest that a person’s identity must include an awareness of others in order for him or her to exist at all:

If a man is not two-dimensional, having a two-dimensional identity established by a conjunction of identity-for-others, and identity-for-oneself, if he does not exist objectively as well as subjectively, but has only a subjective identity, as identity-for-himself, he cannot be *real*. (Laing, 1960: 95)

Identities, then, arise from interaction between an individual and other people. This is not to suggest that a person cannot have a sense of identity whilst alone in a room with a drum kit, or with his or her thoughts; one does not need to be in the company

of another person in order to realize an identity. Identities, however, exist in a sort of psycho-social consciousness. A drummer can be a drummer alone in a room, but he or she is only aware of being a drummer because of knowledge of other drummers and how drummers behave – of what makes drummers drummers.

In Laing's conceptualization of identity, he suggests that identities can be assigned to or even thrust upon someone, as he explains: 'the other by his or her actions may impose on self an unwanted identity. The husband who is a cuckold may have had this identity imposed on him despite himself (Laing, 1961: 82). I disagree with Laing that such a situation would constitute the attainment of an identity. To be a cuckold (or, perhaps, a master drummer) in the eyes and on the lips of another person would constitute a label, but not an identity. A man may well be cuckolded, but until he knows this *for himself* it does not count as an identity. The fact that another person knows that the husband is a cuckold is part of that person's valid knowledge about the husband; it does not, however, become an *identity* for the husband until he himself realizes he has been cuckolded.

There are various conceptions of how identity might be mutually constructed or construed. Shank (1994) writes about how bands develop a sense of identity in relation to their audiences. He believes that it is not, or not only, a deep-seated musician identity that is performed for an audience; during a performance, what we get from a musician in a band is a 'projected identity' (Shank, 1994: 137). This identity is 'imaginary,' and 'must be renewed with each performance... it must be constantly re-performed' (Shank, 1994: 139). This identity is not even that of the musician, ultimately – it is reciprocal, shared with and jointly realized by the audience: 'in performance, the "personality" of the musician becomes a projected image; it represents a desired identity, a longed-for completion... and that remains necessarily incomplete, requiring the audience to fill in the gaps' (Shank, 1994: 139). This is an idea also taken up by Frith, although explained a little more succinctly as '*mutual enactment, identity produced in performance*' by performer and audience (Frith, 1996: 115). I disagree with Shank's and Frith's contention that an individual's identity can be mutually enacted or shared with members of an audience. Of course it is possible to perceive that another person may possess a certain identity; this does

not, however, mean that one inhabits or embodies any part of that identity – one merely observes it.

A person's identity is an identity only for that individual, as in Rainwater's assertion that "we are... what we make of ourselves" (Rainwater, quoted in Giddens, 1991: 75). Others may help a person to realize an identity, for instance by playing in a band with a drummer or by applauding that drummer from the audience; however, this does not mean that that person is a part of the drummer's self, regardless of how closely involved they have been with the creation or reinforcement of a person's identities. A drummer can of course relate simultaneously with both audience and band members – Stets & Burke tell us that 'there are various styles of interaction that are appropriate in each situation for each identity... often we operate in two or more identities at a time' (Stets & Burke, 2003: 132). Laing describes how people might contribute to the realization of one another's identities:

One speaks of a gesture, an action, a feeling, a need, a role, an identity, being the complement of a corresponding gesture, action, feeling, need, role, or identity of the other.
(Laing, 1961: 83)

He explains that all "identities" require an other: some other in and through a relationship with whom self-identity is actualized' (Laing, 1961: 82). Stets & Burke find, similarly, that 'identity is always related to a corresponding counteridentity... when one claims an identity in an interaction with others, there is an alternative identity claimed by another to which it is related' (Stets & Burke, 2003: 132). For these writers, then, assistance with realization of identity is not merely helpful but essential – whether one is aware of the help or not. After all, as Borthwick & Davidson (2002: 76) find, identity 'does not develop in isolation.' However – crucially – contributing to the realization of a drummer's identity gives another person no share at all in the identity of that drummer. The best one can hope for, the closest one can get, is to occupy a 'complimentary identity' (Laing, 1961: 81) for oneself as an onlooker, not as a part of another individual's identity.

DeNora describes the importance of an identity's dual nature, saying that, as well as developing identity in social contexts, 'equally significant is a form of 'introjection,' a

presentation of self *to* self, the ability to mobilize and hold on to a coherent image of ‘who one knows one is’ (DeNora, 2000: 62). This duality is central to an understanding of the nature of identity, for identity is not merely, as Marcia has put it, ‘an existential position... an inner organization of needs, abilities, and self-perception... an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history’ (Marcia, 1980: 159). This element of an identity is essential, but identities, as Laing states, face both inwards and outwards – neither is sufficient alone. Green (2010) talks about ‘what we construe and what we construct.’ She refers not explicitly to identity, but to ‘a set of beliefs’ suggesting that sociologists can consider these in two ways: ‘a) What those beliefs consist in;’ and ‘b) How those beliefs have a material effect on the reproduction and / or production of social relationships and institutions’ (Green, 2010: 8). Construction and construal, therefore, are helpful to explain the dual ways in which people have identities: identity consists in internal understanding of who one is (construal), as well as in being realized externally among other actors in various social contexts (construction).

DeNora also underlines the importance of the temporal aspect of identity – how one has to become who one is, as well as being who one is at any given moment; she talks about ‘identity and its historical counterpart, biography’ (DeNora, 2000, 62). Giddens feels that this sense of a story is the very essence of identity: ‘a person’s identity is... to be found... in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*’ (Giddens, 1991: 54) – an idea also expressed by Hall (1996: 4): ‘identities are about questions of... becoming rather than being: not “who we are” or “where we came from”, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.’ This reciprocal, cyclical nature of identity building – where a person takes stock of who he or she is, moves on, takes stock again, and so on – is also vital to understand how drummers *be* drummers. Becker & Strauss (1956: 263) concur with these authors, writing that people ‘must gain, maintain, and regain a sense of personal identity.’ As Erikson writes, an identity ‘is never gained nor maintained once and for all’ (Erikson, 1950: 57). Frith too observes that ‘identity is *mobile*, a process not a thing, a becoming not a being’ (Frith, 1996:109). I think that no reader of this thesis would identify entirely with her- or himself from ten or 15 years ago, or perhaps even last year – we change, we develop, and so by definition our identities change as well. Jorgensen explains:

I am unsure that even in middle age I can articulate my own sense of self fully, or that I am even entirely or completely aware of whom I am to be sanguine about explaining definitively my own sense of self. Rather, it seems that as I live my life, I am conscious of a changing awareness of what is important to me and who I am. (Jorgensen, 2003a: 29)

Identities are fluid and multiple – changing according to context – but not so fickle that they cannot be recognized and discussed.

Identity as multiple identities

Stets & Burke take up the theme of multiple identities in the context of relating to others. They say that ‘the identities are the meanings one has as a group member, as a role holder, or as a person. What it means to be a father, a colleague, or a friend forms the content of the identities’ (Stets & Burke, 2003: 132). This echoes the thoughts of Hampson (1982: 285) who finds that ‘personality is ... manifested through the enactment by the individual of a series of personas.’ As Stets & Burke explain, ‘most interaction is not between whole persons but between aspects of persons having to do with their roles and memberships in particular groups or organizations: their identities’ (Stets & Burke, 2003: 132). Laing recognizes the multiplicity of an individual’s identities, but argues that most of these are, however, fake: ‘direct relationships with the world are the province of a false-self system... everyone in some measure wears a mask... in “ordinary” life it seems hardly possible for it to be otherwise’ (Laing, 1960: 94-95). Giddens (1991: 58) implies a similar conception of multiple identities, also arguing that ‘all human beings, in all cultures, preserve a distinction between their self-identities and the “performances” they put on in specific social contexts.’ I disagree with Laing and Giddens on this point; I contend that it is entirely possible to interact with society using many identities, each revealing different and overlapping facets of a person – this possibility is by no means contingent upon the falsity of each or indeed any of those identities. Identities, then, be they pretence or genuine expression of aspects of a person, change according to social location and time.

One possible identity – ‘drummer’ – could form a person’s ‘musical identity,’ which, as Borthwick & Davidson (2002: 76) find, cannot be realized in a vacuum. Gracyk (2001: 201) also believes that ‘there is no stable “self” in advance of its public articulation;’ in considering how the individual relates to the rest of the world he agrees that ‘identity can become multiple’ (2001: 204), and goes on to call this phenomenon ‘the plasticity of identity’ (2001: 216). This smacks of multifaceted characters from spy novels: ‘hunter, recluse, lover, solitary man in search of completion, shrewd player of the Great Game, avenger, doubter in search of reassurance – Smiley was by turns each one of them, and sometimes more than one’ (Le Carré, 1980: 236). However, what was true for fictional British cold war spies may also be true for drummers; human beings always and inevitably adopt a number of roles, many of which may have discrete attendant identities. Brabazon (2002: 159), in agreement with the broad consensus, writes that ‘identity is always multiple and emerges in a particular context;’ and for musicians, music plays a special role, as ‘music can be used . . . as a means by which we formulate and express our individual identities’ (Hargreaves et al, 2002: 1), and ‘musical activity can satisfy desires for . . . self-actualisation’ (Hallam & Creech, 2010: 87).

Our changing identities according to the role we are playing at a given time leads Hargreaves et al (2002: 2) to view ‘the self as something which is constantly being reconstructed and renegotiated according to the experiences, situations and other people with whom we interact in everyday life.’ An identity, then, is very active; it is an act that one performs, rather than a hat that one wears. For Gracyk (2001: 204), ‘identity can become multiple if the embodied self performs actions that signify discrete identities’ – he agrees with Giddens (1991), Hall (1996), and DeNora (2000) that it is not merely adopting a given role that gives a person a particular identity; it is also, necessarily, in the acting out of that role that an identity is assumed. Stets & Burke (2003: 134) expand on Gracyk’s point, finding that ‘the core of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its performance.’

Taking a stance on identity

For Gracyk (2001: 203), ‘personal identity is fundamentally performative; the fact of identity cannot be distinguished from the communicative acts that announce it.’ Performance in this sense does not imply pretence; Gracyk’s point, and one that I wish to establish as part of the basis for my conceptualization of how drummers are ‘drummers,’ is simply that it is in *doing* that drummers *are* (‘I drum, therefore I am’). I view identity as something that is ongoing, processual (Beaumont, 2009), biographical (DeNora, 2000), and narrative (Giddens, 1991). I take the stance, as does Rainwater (above), that “‘we are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves”” (Rainwater, quoted in Giddens, 1991: 75). I understand Rainwater’s idea in terms both of how drummers construct identities (Grotevant, 1992), and also in terms of how we construe identities – that ‘the “identity” of the self... presumes reflexive awareness’ (Giddens, 1991: 52); in short, one must identify one’s identities. Wenger writes that we each ‘produce our identity as a very complex interweaving of participative experience and reificative projections. Bringing the two together through the negotiation of meaning, we construct who we are’ (Wenger, 1998: 151). Identity is therefore comprised of 1) *doing*, 2) *being*, and 3) *reflecting*, and 4) *knowing*. As Wenger (1998: 153) observes, ‘the work of identity is always going on.’

Identity as part of a group

A crucial fact of identity is that we all realize our identities in relation to the others with whom we associate; Adorno (1974: 154) notes that ‘not only is the self entwined in society – it owes society its existence in the most literal sense.’ As Fournier & Lamont (1992: 12) point out, however, ‘differentiation is a crucial aspect of social life’ – i.e. we are not all the people around us; one must choose with whom one associates. Hargreaves et al (2002: 7) explain how, from an early age, an awareness of social groups helps to realize identities in music: ‘children’s development of musical identities... [is] shaped by the individual groups and social institutions that they encounter in their everyday lives.’ Hogg explains in more detail that groups:

profoundly influence how we view ourselves; they influence the type of people we are, the things we do, the attitudes and values we hold, and the way we perceive and react to people around us. Groups furnish us with an identity, a way of locating ourselves in relation to other people. (Hogg, 2003: 462)

Bennett (2000: 195) highlights the role of music in helping to develop awareness of and relationships with others, observing that, 'in a very real sense, music not only informs the construction of the self, but also the social world in which the self operates.' Frith (1996: 110) similarly remarks that 'music seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective.'

Hetherington notes that people associate with one another in groups according to choices, rather than through more traditional associations such as ethnicity or class over which people have little control. He identifies 'a community of choice, whose sense of belonging and authenticity may not be attached to issues of nation or ethnicity but to... the desire to express oneself through a particular style of living' (Hetherington, 1998: 50). He attributes this situation to the late 20th and early 21st - century phenomenon of:

the deregulation through modernization and individualization of the modern forms of solidarity and identity based on class, occupation, locality and gender and the recomposition into 'tribal' identities and forms of sociation. (Hetherington, 1992: 93)

The concept of the tribe has all but replaced that of the subculture, which has fallen out of favour with contemporary sociological thinking, in part due to the inherent subordinate other-ness implied by the notion of subcultures, and also due to the implied exclusion from 'proper' culture; if you are in a subculture, you are, by definition, not truly part of the wider, main culture. Bennett & Kahn-Harris explain:

The central tenet of subcultural theory's project – the demonstration of subcultural groups' self-effected distance from dominant cultural ideologies – has become essentially redundant in social settings characterized increasingly by cultural pluralism.

(Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004: 15)

Chaney (2004: 47) also argues that ‘the concept of subculture has become redundant’ because ‘this idea – subculture – developed as a way of trying to describe a distinctive type of structural conflict in modern societies.’ He contends, further, that ‘the once-accepted distinction between “sub” and “dominant” culture can no longer be said to hold true in a world where the so-called dominant culture has fragmented into a plurality of lifestyle sensibilities and preferences’ (Chaney, 2004: 47). Here Chaney recalls Hetherington’s (1998) ‘community of choice.’ He expands on this idea, observing:

the active use of culture by its inhabitants who, refusing to be governed solely by nostalgia and tradition, select and re-combine in order to let the panoply of cultural choices available function as resources for new forms of creative expression. (Chaney, 2004: 41)

The implication here is, contrary to the implications of the subcultural model, that anyone can get involved with any group or groups, picking and choosing their way through available associations. It is a feature of society also recognized by Sweetman, who observes that ‘identity has increasingly become a matter of choice’ (Sweetman, 2004: 81). With the pace of change and dissemination of information so widespread today, Reimer explains that the inevitable upshot of this type of behaviour is that people can easily switch identities and affiliations:

With a rapidly changing environment, containing continually new impulses mainly via the mass media and travel, comes a *pluralization of life possibilities*. Each individual can constantly choose among different alternatives and the choice is not definitive, but can be altered or made again. (Reimer, 1995: 67)

This phenomenon is also identified by Bennett, who finds that ‘the forms of association and social gatherings in which young people become involved are not rigidly bound into a “subcultural” community but rather assume a more fluid, neo-tribal character’ (Bennett, 2000: 79).

Martin neatly summarizes the demise of the use of ‘subculture’ to describe groups of people, arguing that:

any group or association whose members subscribe to an identifiable set of ideas could be described as a 'subculture'... would there be any value in doing so?... It may... be more useful to regard organized patterns of social life as a perpetual process... in which people pursue their interests in the light of a whole range of possible values and beliefs. (Martin, 2004: 25)

Martin's point is that sociologists can go round and round in circles for as long as we like, describing things as we wish; but ultimately we need to find the most suitable means to deal with the issue at hand.

What, then, does tribal membership look like? Hetherington (1992: 93) finds that groups 'are highly self-referential and involve creating a medium of symbolic practices through which a particular lifestyle emerges;' the more the members of any group pursue the group's common interest, then the more – qualitatively as much as quantitatively – its members will have this in common. Stets & Burke describe this behaviour in terms of commitment to an identity:

What importantly influences the salience of an identity is the degree of commitment one has to the identity. Commitment has two dimensions: a quantitative and a qualitative aspect... quantitative refers to the number of people you are tied to through an identity, and qualitative refers to the quality of the relationships with the people to whom one is tied through an identity. (Stets & Burke, 2003: 135)

It certainly makes sense to say, as Stets & Burke imply, that a drummer is sure to be more or less comfortable with his or her identity in an environment, depending upon how he or she interacts with those around. Hetherington (1992: 94) further observes of groups that 'adherence to... modes of living are often deliberately accentuated,' amounting to an '*enactment of lifestyle*' (Hetherington, 1992: 87), thereby perhaps deepening the sense of being a part of a community – of being not only a part of a given group, but also distinctly separate from outsiders to that group. Stålhammar's ideas follow Hetherington's, as he suggests that members of any group share a unique semiotic system; this seems likely to be as true for drummers as for any other group. According to Stålhammar (2006: 127-8), 'the groups' in-jokes, ironies, jargon, associations, relations, style, and appearance are but a few of the factors that make up the diffuse symbolism that an outsider may find it difficult to understand.' These very

things are also those which, presumably, an insider has little difficulty in understanding. It is for this reason the emic perspective that I have on this study has, I believe, provided an insight in to the world of drummers that other researchers may lack. Of course, an outsider may not, in the event, find any things difficult to understand, but an insider will probably still find such phenomena quicker if not also easier to grasp than a more objective researcher.

Aside from more or less alienating outsiders, a group's semiotics serves other ends:

The symbols play a part in making the group's identity clear both within the group itself and in relation to the world around. They help the members to create a picture of, and give character to, the group to which they belong. In that the members feel at home in the group's world of symbols, bonds are formed that give the group cohesion... within the groups there is constant attention to the symbols. (Stålhammar, 2006: 128)

Stålhammar's observations are, in a way, glaringly obvious – of course drummers will pay attention to those things that make them drummers, otherwise they would not be very good at being drummers! It is important to note, however, that thus is the group constructed, and thus are the individual identities of those in the group realized: if you understand the signs then you are in the group – if you don't then you are not. This sense of a group identity can lead not only to a feeling of exclusivity but also one of superiority; Becker (1973: 86) identifies an aloofness in his study of jazz musicians in the American Mid-West, 'a feeling that musicians are different from and better than other kinds of people.' Crocker & Park suggest a reason for this, in that 'people are adept at choosing as relevant to the self, only those things on which they tend to outperform others' (Crocker & Park, 2003: 294). This makes sense, for if it is important to be different it would make sense from the point of view of a person's self-esteem to be recognizable according to qualities that single one out from the crowd in a positive, rather than a negative way. Perhaps because of this, then, Becker suggests that, beyond mere reverence, 'the musician is conceived of as an artist who possesses a mysterious artistic gift setting him apart from all other people' (Becker, 1973: 85).

Another important point to take from Stålhammar (2006) is that clique-y in-groups become exclusive not because of any deliberate attempt to leave people outside of them, but instead because people necessarily form groups by pursuing shared interests or activities, thereby inevitably excluding those who do not share those pastimes. Maffesoli also believes that it is such a common set of values that holds a community together, finding that ‘social groups organize their territories and ideologies around the values which are their own’ (Maffesoli, 1996; 145). The notion of a community being united by a shared passion is not unfamiliar in sociology – Hetherington too speaks of ‘impassioned group identities’ (Hetherington, 1992: 94). If Maffesoli is right, members of a group can become so absorbed by values established within that group of which they are a part that an individual can begin, subconsciously, to express the views of the community to which he or she belongs. As Maffesoli puts it, ‘that which we think of as a personal opinion belongs in fact to the group of which we are a member’ (Maffesoli, 1996: 76). Hogg, similarly, has suggested that ‘our sense of self derives from the groups and categories we belong to, and in many ways individuality may “merely” be the unique combination of distinct groups and categories that define who we are’ (Hogg, 2003: 462).

I contend, contrary to Hogg and Maffesoli, that the converse may also be true; this is to say that people belong to a given tribe because of their beliefs and passions – the tribe is identified and labelled after it has been constructed by individuals with shared values and interests, not the other way around. The relationship between the group and individuals is, ultimately, symbiotic and reciprocal. Gracyk observes that:

only social conventions make our gestures comprehensible, and thus make sincere (or insincere) expression possible in the first place. There is literally nothing to reflect on about one’s identity prior to positioning oneself in relation to such public ‘gestures’ as forming an interest in certain musical forms and styles. In forming preferences, we address basic questions of identity: ‘what kind of a person must I be... in order to sympathize, or identify, with *this*?’ (Gracyk, 2001: 202)

The influence of a group is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in terms of a person’s ethnicity or gender; people often have a very clear sense of how they would define themselves in ethnic or gendered terms. Although gender and ethnic groups are perhaps larger than those to which Gracyk refers, they serve well as examples of how,

as Maffesoli and Hogg find, an individual's sense of identity is defined more through adopting characteristics typical of the groups to which we belong, than those groups are defined by individual members. For instance, I am British, and I feel certain that until my dying day my enculturated sense of British-ness will have more of an impact on my sense of who I am, than my sense of who I am will have on other Britons' sense of ethnicity! Wenger (1998: 146) explains the dichotomy of tribal memberships eloquently, thus: 'taken separately, the notions of individual and community are reifications whose self-contained appearance hides their mutual constitution. We cannot become human by ourselves... Conversely, membership does not define who we are in any simple way.'

Learning

Introduction

Drummers play music that, for the most part, falls under the broad umbrella of 'popular music.' Popular music in education has become the subject of much recent research (Green, 2002, 2008; Lebler, 2007; Rodriguez, 2004), and is increasingly featured as the focus of conferences in music education. At the International Society for Music Education (ISME) World Conference in August 2010 there was a panel discussion focussing on practices in popular music education around the world along with several individual papers on the subject, and in February 2011 the theme of the Eighth Suncoast Music Education Symposium (SMERS VIII) is 'Popular Music Pedagogy.' It is important and timely, therefore, that this study addresses how drummers learn to do what they do. It may help educators to learn not only about drummers' practices, but also suggest ways in which other musicians learn and could learn.

Teaching and learning can be facilitated and experienced in manifold ways; from the perspective of education professionals, the key to understanding success in learning appears to be to keep open eyes, ears and mind. It is vital to remember that humans are inherently able to learn – whether we do so or not is determined by many factors. Durrant writes:

Capabilities are what human beings can possibly do... abilities are what we human beings can actually do... although we have capabilities, this does not necessarily mean that abilities will be learned. Abilities are learned and elaborated only if the people, places, things, and events in our surroundings support that learning. Our experiences, therefore, determine the extent to which our human capabilities will be converted into increasingly refined abilities (Durrant, 2003: 13)

At a time when kit drummers and popular musics generally play increasing roles in music education, as educators 'it becomes imperative that we reflect on the perspectives that inform our enterprises' (Wenger, 1998: 9) in order to maximize the realization of our students' potential.

Learning has been explained in terms of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Rennie & Mason (2004: 110) cite Eraut's (2000) conditions for formal learning:

- A prescribed learning framework;
- An organized learning event or package;
- The presence of a designated teacher;
- The award of a qualification or credit;
- The external specification of outcomes.

These criteria are in line with the way in which Coombs & Ahmed (1974: 8) also define formal learning as that which takes place in an 'institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system, spanning lower primary school and upper reaches of the university.' Of course, learning is not actually provided by any institution – institutions provide *teaching*, presumably in the hope that *learning* takes place as a result. While it may not be necessary to meet all of Eraut's criteria in order to consider that learning is taking place formally, this type of learning is distinct from what has been termed 'informal learning,' which 'results from activities in daily life at work, at home, at leisure' (Rennie & Mason, 2004: 111). Green provides a broader definition of informal learning located specifically in music. For her, informal learning has the following characteristics:

Informal learning always starts with music which the learners choose for themselves.

Therefore, it tends to be music which they know and understand, like, enjoy and identify with....

Secondly, the main method of skill-acquisition in the informal realm involves copying recordings by ear...

Thirdly, informal learning takes place alone as well as alongside friends, through self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning. This involves the conscious and unconscious acquisition and exchange of skills and knowledge by listening, watching, imitating and talking...

Fourthly, skills and knowledge in the informal realm, not surprisingly given the above, tend to be assimilated in haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways, starting with 'whole, real-world' pieces of music. (Green, 2008: 10)

It is not a requirement that formal learning practices exclude learning by ear; traditional formal music education, however, generally involves the use of sheet

music. Printed scores do not, of course, replace listening skills, but they do perhaps in some instances get in the way. It has occasionally struck me as paradoxical how much information one picks up through listening- and demonstration-learning in domains outside of music (such as sports); by contrast the learning of music, the art of performing in sound, has so frequently in formal education been mediated via marks on a page. Music reading skills are usually separated from aural skills in traditional curricula – a direct contrast with what Green (2008: 13) has called ‘holistic’ music learning.

In contrast with such a counter-intuitive, although increasingly unchallenged and deeply entrenched, tradition of formal music learning, Green suggests that informal learning practices are, rather, natural:

Within the project, a number of learning practices seemed to emerge and take broadly similar forms, without teacher intervention or guidance, across all 21 schools. These learning practices can be seen as ‘natural’, in so far as we can assume that they would emerge in similar ways whenever a group of young teenagers was asked to go into a similar situation and carry out a similar task. (Green, 2008: 42)

(The 21 schools of which Green writes are the schools involved in her research into informal learning in English schools.) Green’s claim about the naturalness of informal learning resonates with Stålhammar’s observation of music students in English schools five years earlier: ‘the way they see it, music-making that feels natural and rooted in reality does not fit into the normal school pattern’ (Stålhammar, 2003: 65). Green, then, far from merely being iconoclastic and upsetting the boat of music education tradition, indicates ways that music education could (and, indeed, has begun to) embrace a more intuitive, more readily engaging paradigm.

Green (2002: 59) has observed, that ‘informal music learning practices and formal music education are not mutually exclusive, but learners often draw upon or encounter aspects of both,’ since ‘formal music education has become increasingly available and diverse in content’ (Green, 2002: 5). Formal music education is expanding to incorporate popular music in ways that were not accepted by the educational establishment when many of today’s professional drummers were cutting

their drumming teeth. Bransford (1999: 225) also talks about ‘the multiple ways that students learn’ today, so viewing learning as simply either ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ is not quite sufficient; as Buckingham writes: ‘an easy opposition between “formal” and “informal” learning tends to obfuscate the issue’ of how people learn (Buckingham, 2005: 16). Folkestad would appear to agree with Buckingham, suggesting that ‘formal-informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum’ because ‘in most learning situations, both these aspects of learning are in various degrees present and interacting’ (Folkestad, 2006: 135). He recommends, therefore, that we take ‘a dynamic view in which what are described as formal and informal learning styles are aspects of the phenomenon of learning, regardless of where it takes place’ (Folkestad, 2006: 142).

Crucial to a dynamic view of the continuum of learning practices is what is often referred to as ‘non-formal learning’ which ‘is intentional on the part of the learner and structured in terms of learning objectives, but is not provided by a recognized education or training institution’ (Rennie & Mason, 2004: 111). Mok (2010) defines non-formal learning as that which often takes place in communities rather than in dedicated institutions of learning, and where learning is often guided by adult “mentors” who behave similarly to teachers in directing learning, but in less structured ways than are typical of formal learning environments. Mok (2010: 69) states that ‘with a focus on music-making experience, the purpose of community music-making is to enable people of all ages to make music for the sake of artistic enjoyment.’ Key features of non-formal learning, then, are ‘enabling’ – in that mentors are involved – and ‘enjoyment,’ since assessment or the attainment of clearly defined goals are often not important elements. The boundaries between non-formal learning and formal and informal at either end of the continuum are blurry. Drummers are increasingly able to learn at supervised jamming and workshop sessions like Rock United in the UK and various incarnations of Rock Camps across the USA. Also, educational institutions are becoming involved in organizing and promoting various sorts of community music projects, such as the Guildhall School of Music and Drama’s Outreach programme based in London that works with children around the UK, or the Musical Futures project that is expanding across the UK inside and outside of educational institutions. The blending of learning approaches across the continuum is explored further below.

Enculturation

Bamberger suggests two types of learning that lead to, respectively, what she terms ‘formal and intuitive musical knowing’ (Bamberger, 1978: 173); the intuitive is that which is not formally taught and learned, and chimes especially well with Stålhammar’s and Green’s respective ideas about informal learning being natural, or intuitive. Campbell takes up Bamberger’s theme, feeling that ‘intuitive learning is part of becoming enculturated, and this learning proceeds informally through children’s immersion within and exploration of a culture’ (Campbell, 1998: 48). Green echoes Campbell, writing that ‘the concept of musical enculturation refers to the acquisition of musical skills and knowledge by immersion in the everyday music and musical practices of one’s social context’ (Green, 2002: 22). Although neither Green nor Campbell states this explicitly, enculturation of the kind that they describe of course occurs all the time in the context of formal learning as well as in the context of informal learning to which they allude; enculturation in formal contexts has just not been identified so clearly. Folkestad (2006: 139) evocatively calls musical enculturation across contexts ‘the tradition as the “hidden”, tacit or implicit teacher.’ He goes to explain that ‘learning can never be “voluntary” in its true sense – it takes place whether or not it is intended or wanted’ (Folkestad, 2006: 141). This is akin to what Rodriguez (2004: 21) terms ‘unconscious accumulation;’ Rodriguez is referring specifically to the acquisition of a framework for judging the quality of compositions, but his concept applies equally well as a way of considering how other aspects of music are partly learned.

By engaging in any of the practices along the formal/informal continuum, students and teachers certainly hope to learn, but this intention is no guarantee that learning will indeed take place. Similarly, learning may occur when we least expect it – this is enculturation in action. This understanding follows Rice (2001) and Merriam (1964), who conceive of all education and socialization as part of the enculturation process. I view enculturation, therefore, as a process that embraces all learning practices; enculturation does not in any way define those practices, but it does involve them – they all happen as parts of the enculturative process. Mok (2010: 56) suggests that ‘this definition is therefore somewhat confusing;’ I disagree, rather finding it reassuring that the term ‘enculturation’ can be applied inclusively. This use of the

term tallies with what Jorgensen (1997: 24) calls ‘transmission,’ itself part of her own even wider conceptualization of ‘enculturation.’ The concepts of ‘intuitive musical knowing’ (Bamberger, 1978) and ‘enculturation’ hint at an aspect of music learning that may not be best captured in the formal/informal paradigm. Mok (2010: 82) also finds that ‘there is no clear-cut division among all three types of learning-practice and enculturation;’ for this reason, I propose a new model for viewing learning experiences, that works in conjunction with existing frameworks. This model is on page 93.

Formalizing the informal?

Q: How do you confuse a drummer?

A: Put a chart in front of him

(www.drumjokes.com)

Drummers are, the joke would have us believe, musically uneducated illiterates. For a long while we were excluded from the (formal) music education establishment. Twenty-two years ago Bruford commented that ‘percussion is still not a “real” instrument in any meaningful sense to the thousands of Heads of Music throughout the length and breadth of the UK’s school and colleges’ (Bruford, 1988:123). Finnegan, publishing one year after Bruford, describes the graded music examination system in Britain thus: ‘what is involved is a progressive admission through recognized grades, guarded by specialist teachers and examiners, to the highly regarded world of the classical music tradition’ (Finnegan, 1989: 134). While this was indeed the case in the UK, things have changed quite dramatically in the last 20 years. In 1993 the Guildhall music examination board introduced exams for drum kit, followed swiftly by Rockschool. Guildhall has since amalgamated with another board, Trinity, to form Trinity Guildhall. For each examination board, there are eight graded examinations available; with Trinity Guildhall, examinations require candidates to perform one accompanied and two unaccompanied pieces along with ‘supporting tests’ in other musical skills (Trinity Guildhall, 2010: 2). Trinity Guildhall also now offer, as mentioned above, higher-level performance diplomas to more advanced drummers. As well as serving their own ends, examination passes by these

boards have equivalence to other qualifications available in the United Kingdom, as set out in the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCA, 2008).

Rockschool represents an attempt to combine elements of formal and informal learning practices. For each graded examination there are six set pieces from which candidates must select three to perform; many of these pieces are written as pastiches of famous popular songs and have names reminiscent of the bands or artists who made famous the originals. Alternatively to playing one of the set pieces, candidates may instead choose to perform another piece of music of a similar level of difficulty. As well as printed music from which to learn the set pieces, a CD is provided so that candidates may learn by ear and rehearse with accompaniment. Candidates may enter the examination alone, or as part of a band – bands of peers are encouraged to learn and perform music of the standard required for a particular grade, thus encouraging group learning for those to whom it is suited (Ward et al, 2006). Assessment of examination performances for both the Trinity Guildhall and Rockschool examinations is carried out by professional examiners, many of whom are also music teachers, rather than involving peers as happens in much informal learning. Rockschool (2009) aims ‘to bring the best in pop and rock into mainstream education,’ and it is making a noble attempt at this. The fact that Rockschool still has this aim suggests that there may be philosophical and cultural barriers between perceptions of popular music education and the mainstream. It seems to me, though, that the two are fast becoming indistinguishable in the UK.

The syllabi of Rockschool and Trinity Guildhall will not have had a significant influence on the learning of the adult drummers interviewed in this study, since the syllabi have evolved relatively recently. They may well, however, have had and be having an impact on the learning of today’s adolescent drummers. I certainly incorporate examination resources from both organizations into my teaching, and I know from the various networks with which I am involved (such as the National Association of Percussion Teachers and the Percussive Arts Society) that I am not alone in this practice. As for the original Guildhall drum kit examinations (Richards [ed.], 1993), I learned many useful skills from this course and from the teacher guiding me through it. However, what I learned from Guildhall was of precious little relevance to popular music (as Finnegan identified above) – I learned to play rock

among peers and by listening to recordings. The new Trinity Guildhall drum graded drum kit syllabus (Trinity College London, 2010) offers learning opportunities that may be more relevant to the real world of drumming; indeed the publishers state that 'it is the aim of the Trinity Guildhall syllabus to encourage students to become familiar with what they will be confronted with in the real world of drum kit performance' (Trinity Guildhall, 2010: 5). However, the degree to which this aim is achieved has been called into question, as Smith (2010: 21-25) finds considerable disparity between professional practices and the requirements of candidates sitting for examinations.

At the end of 2008 Trinity College London published its latest syllabus for Diplomas in Music, valid from 2009. For the first time ever, included in the list of instruments eligible to sit for (Masters Degree-level) FTCL performance diploma is Drum Kit (Trinity College London, 2008: 64). Woven into this FTCL qualification are two elements of informal learning – whether by design or by default it is difficult to tell. These elements are:

- 1) If and when I sit for the examination, my examiner is likely to be a peer; not because I have chosen a friend to examine me but because the standard of performance expected is high enough that we should be musicians of a comparable professional standard.

- 2) The music has to be chosen by candidates; apart from one piece that it is stipulated candidates must choose from among three listed. This may be because the designers of the syllabus are sensitive to the typical drummers' informal learning practice of selecting the music that we learn; or it seems equally likely to be because this qualification is breaking new ground and there is no canon of Great Works like there are for the other instruments in the syllabus. Performers on other instruments, however, are also allowed to play pieces entirely of their own choosing. All pieces performed must be approved by the members of the examinations board prior to sitting for the diploma examination.

Popular music has been absorbed by the establishment; however, while formal training offers musicians the chance to develop skills, ‘many of which are intrinsically worthwhile’ (Green, 2002: 213), the acceptance and formalization of popular music education may be ignoring vital elements of traditional ways of learning this type of music. This reflects the feeling among some popular musicians, that their music is not learned well if taught in new ways. Guitarist Jimmy Page says ‘the way I see it, rock & roll is folk music. It isn’t taught in school. It has to be picked up’ (Page quoted in no author, no date: 69). Fellow guitarist Slash also believes that ‘music books can’t teach you how to play properly’ (Slash & Bozza, 2007: 44), and drummer Mike Mondesir states emphatically that ‘YOU CAN’T LEARN JAZZ IN A CLASSROOM! There’s no greater teacher than experience!’ (Mondesir, 2008). Campbell, meanwhile, urges that ‘if children are to become proficient and even masterful musicians, a formal musical education is necessary’ (Campbell, 1998: 49). All of these claims, while well meant, seem somewhat stubborn and inflexible, and do not reflect much of the reality of contemporary music learning practices and experience. Students each learn differently, including how they negotiate and interact with the continuum of experiences from formal to informal learning. As Buckingham (2005), Folkestad (2006) and Mok (2010) highlight, it is important for teachers to be aware of this. Rodriguez (2004) observes in the title of his book that music educators, traditionally operating in a formal learning environment, have begun *Crossing the Bridge* between formal and informal practices; the bridge is being crossed all the time in both directions, and it is a very busy crossing.

Stålhammar observes that incorporating elements of informal learning into traditional modes of delivery ‘presupposes an open perspective, which may very well cause the given framework and patterns to appear as serious obstacles’ (Stålhammar, 2006: 226). It is exciting, then, that university popular music departments are overcoming any such perceived obstacles; one in particular, in the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University, Australia, has adopted ‘innovative learning practices that reflect popular music-making practices outside structured learning environments,’ incorporating ‘a pedagogical approach based on the creation of a self-directed learning community’ (Lebler, 2007: 207). This approach is all the more heartening to read about in light of the fact that ‘the development of student musical abilities does not appear to have been stunted by lack of formal tuition’ (Lebler, 2007: 208). At a

music education conference in Manchester in 2006, tutors from Leeds College of Music described how as part of their undergraduate music degree programme, students are assessed performing in battle of the bands in a local pub, assessed informally by fellow students. At the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London, students on the BMus in popular music performance are also partly assessed by peers, and much learning takes place in peer-directed ensembles.

Green's recent research in English secondary schools mirrors in several ways Lebler's approach; 'in seeking to reflect the informal learning practices of popular musicians the project gave pupils autonomy to direct their own learning' (Green, 2008: 14). One aim of this project was to enthuse teenagers who may feel alienated or disenfranchised by traditional classroom approaches to music learning where, as Stålhammar puts it, 'young people are witnesses to... a cultural dissonance' between the teachers and the learners (Stålhammar, 2000: 43). By intelligently combining learning approaches, 'a cultural consonance is created between teacher and pupil' (Stålhammar, 2000: 43). The institutionalization of such an 'imperative for a more proactive student engagement in the pedagogical processes of music education' (Lebler, 2007: 207) amounts to a sort of formalization of informalization, and *vice-versa*. Widespread hybridization of learning practices and experiences is perhaps becoming the norm, or at least a significant phenomenon in music education. Hallam & Creech (2010: 91) advocate the empowering of student musicians 'to become independent and autonomous' in order that 'learners can continue their engagement with music long after they cease to have tuition.'

Along with affording students a degree of autonomy in the classroom, encouraging reflection upon performance is also urged (Lebler, 2007: 208). Students usually know how good they are in comparison to peers and professionals, for, as Green reports, 'learners assess themselves throughout the learning process, in relation to... the models they are copying' (Green, 2002: 210). Dewey argues that experience is the best teacher in preparing for conducting assessments; he writes:

It all comes back, as we say, to the good judgement, the good sense, of the one judging. To be a good judge is to have a sense of the relative indicative or signifying values of the various features of the perplexing situation... This power in ordinary matters we call *knack, tact,*

cleverness; in more important affairs, *insight*, *discernment*. In part it is instinctive or in born; but it also represents the funded outcome of long familiarity with like operations in the past. Possession of this ability to seize what is evidential or significant and to let the rest go is the mark of the expert, the connoisseur, the *judge*, in any matter. (Dewey 1910, 104)

It is perhaps no surprise, then, for Stålhammar to find that:

music does not have need of... an intermediary in the form of a teacher. It is tested and assessed immediately by the student on the basis of experience and practical everyday knowledge. (Stålhammar, 2006: 227-8)

However, while endorsing the student-centred approach of informal learning and assessment practices, Green worries that ‘such autonomy presents a significant challenge to previous patterns, such as how success and failure are constructed and measured’ (Green, 2008: 14). Her legitimate concerns are addressed in part by Lebler, for respect for student musicians’ awareness of the relative quality of their own and others’ performances has been incorporated into the structure of assessment practices in his department: ‘learning strategies used in this course include self-assessment.’ Lebler (2007: 216) finds that this practice ‘enhances ability to make professional judgements through reflexive practice.’ Lebler’s findings are encouraging, but do not apply directly to the work of Green and Stålhammar, which is focussed in high schools rather in a university department; nonetheless it seems that teachers using traditional assessment practices may be able to learn a good deal from testing new approaches more widely. Green advocates that educators ‘develop approaches that combine best practice, or that offer alternative methods... this could include considering approaches to assessment based on apprenticeship models of learning, as well as how to give more weight to pupil self-assessment and peer assessment’ (Green, 2008: 184). Assessment in music is notoriously problematic (Elliot, 1987; Green, 2000; Swanwick, 1999), so it may be prudent to employ a range of practices. Stålhammar, quoting Ziehe (1986), neatly concludes that learning “‘occurs between tradition and the untried’” (Stålhammar, 2003: 67) – this is as true for the music student as for the educators who decide upon course and programme content, learning and assessment procedures.

Who do you trust?

A very important consideration in learning and enculturation is the question of whence learners choose to seek instruction, information and understanding – to whom does one ascribe the wisdom and right to impart that which one is willing to consider valuable and desirable knowledge? Bourdieu & Passeron (1977) refer to this issue in terms of ‘Pedagogic Authority (PAu).’ They observe that the effectiveness of teaching in a given situation relies on the acceptance by the taught person of the PAu of the teacher:

In real learning situations... recognition of the legitimacy of the act of transmission, i.e. of the PAu of the transmitter, conditions the reception of the information and, even more, the accomplishment of the transformative action capable of transforming that information into a mental formation (training). (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977:19)

For drummers one might add a physical dimension to that training. Bourdieu & Passeron’s point is that ‘authority plays a part in all pedagogy’ (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977: 10), and that, in order for learning to derive from a teaching situation, that authority must in turn be recognized. However, I go further than Bourdieu & Passeron. Authority and recognition of that authority play a highly significant role not only in learning relationships that involve teaching, but in all contexts of learning and enculturation. In choosing to learn or to accept that one has learned, from recordings, peers or any other source, a learner is actively according to that source the authority (PAu) to ‘teach’ them. An example is the PAu that saxophonist Jackie McLean accorded Miles Davis. McLean was a musician in Davis’s band for several years, and learned a lot of his art and craft during that time. Davis writes:

By then he had become a master and could play the fuck out of anything! ...when they asked him where he studied music, he’d tell them, ‘I studied at the university of Miles Davis.’ (Davis, 1989: 145)

While Davis did not *teach* McLean *per se*, McLean nonetheless recognized a profound influence in Davis’s musicianship, and attached to Davis a Pedagogical Authority that was probably largely unintentional on Davis’s part. With the increased hybridization that we see, a key feature of conceptualizing learning practices is that

learners – not teachers – are at the centre of that concept; learners are enculturated in all manner of ways.

Identity is connected to learning

The participants in this study are all drummers. At one time they were not drummers, but wanted to be. Once they have started, they want to continue to be drummers. Achieving these aims involves the acquisition of appropriate and relevant musical and instrumental skills and a host of other qualities, attitudes and understandings. Wenger helpfully explains that identities (in this case as drummers) are obtained in part through ‘learning in the context of our lived experience in the world’ (Wenger, 1998: 3). Learning is part of what drummers do, and can be viewed as part of identity construction and construal. Drummers learn all of this from other drummers, and Wenger observes how ‘for *individuals*, it means that learning is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. For *communities*, it means that learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members’ (Wenger, 1998: 7). Thus is the realization of drummers’ identities bound up with membership of the tribe (Bennett, 2000; Maffesoli, 1996) or community. Learning, however, is not identity, and identity is not learning. Educators spend a good deal more time and energy thinking and writing about learning than about identity – and rightly so. Green writes that ‘identity... [is] intrinsically and unavoidably connected to particular ways of learning’ (Green, 2002: 216). I go a step further than Green, and view all learning as Wenger does – as part of the narrative process of identity construction and construal (recalling Giddens, 1991). Wenger (1998: 5) describes this as ‘a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming.’ Wenger (1998) also contends that learning is an integral and unavoidable part of becoming – and, I would say, of being, which we have to do at the same time as becoming (Beaumont, 2009; DeNora, 2000; Jorgenson, 2003a). Beaumont (2009: 99) describes identities being constructed via ‘a developmental process that involves the actualization or full use of one’s abilities or potential;’ such a process might even be considered to be an education. People’s practices are necessary although not sufficient components of both identity and learning. Learning and identity are, therefore, connected in manifold ways.

The Snowball Self

Identity Realization

The means by which a person comes by his or her identities is contested. Some writers talk of identity *achievement* (Cheug & Yue, 2003 a & b), while others write of identity *development* (Campbell, 1998; Morisson & McIntyre, 1972) or identity *resolution* (Marcia, 1980), and yet others describe identity *formation* (Fornas et al, 1995; Markstrom-Adams, 1992). Newer research (Narvaez et al, 2009: 84) discusses ‘*adopting, negotiating and creating*’ identities, while Green (2010), as discussed already, thinks in terms of identity *construction* and *construal*: these are muddy waters indeed. These means of obtaining identity are not mutually exclusive, nor are they entirely unhelpful; none, though, quite describes the broader picture I see emerging from the literature. ‘Achievement’ is too final for something as perpetually dynamic as identity, and ‘development,’ while encouraging, is not energetic enough. I reject ‘resolution’ for two reasons – 1) it sounds permanent, and 2) it sounds unduly negative, implying that identity is necessarily problematic, which it is not.

‘Formation’ sounds rather military or distractingly reminiscent of synchronized swimming; and while it allows for change, it is not broad enough for it seems not to account for the sort of identity ‘discovery’ discussed by Waterman (1992). Narvaez et al’s (2009) terms of ‘adopting’ and ‘creating’ are very useful and somewhat akin to the model I suggest below. Green’s construction and construal are perhaps the closest to encapsulating the various conceptualizations of identity. I would prefer, however, to take my cue from G.W.F. Hegel, and talk about identity *realization*. While Hegel (1807: 417) describes a person ‘realizing his individuality’ rather than his or her identity or identities, it is safe to treat the terms as synonymous. I choose, therefore, to enfold what I understand to be Hegel’s take on ‘individuality’ within my proposed new model of identity *realization*.

‘Realization’ has two commonly understood meanings which form the basis of my conceptualization of how people live and attain their identities. They are similar to DeNora’s (2000: 62) ‘projecting... and introjecting.’ Active identity realization (AIR) refers to any instance of a drummer constructing an identity (Green, 2010) through engaging with being or becoming a drummer – practising, performing, rehearsing, buying drumsticks, wearing drum t-shirts, etc. and all instances of

intentionally learning to play drums. AIR is the type of constructivist view of identity creation acknowledged throughout the study (Gracyk, 2001; Grotevant, 1992) and summarized by Baumann (1992: 93) who writes ‘it is now the incessant (and non-linear) *activity* of self-constitution that makes the identity of the agent’ (Bauman, 1992: 193). Similarly Waterman (1992: 58) acknowledges that ‘one strives’ to be who one would like to be. In striving to be a drummer, one learns about what that role requires through learning about and being a drummer: this is active identity realization. A person’s active identity realization, then, is the *doing of the things we do* that make us who we are as individuals, as in ‘*I drum, therefore I am.*’

Realization also works according to its other common meaning, inasmuch as an individual’s identity is very much about a person reflecting upon who he or she is (Giddens, 1991; Grotevant, 1992). This resonates with Erikson’s recollection of how James (1884) ‘describes a sense of identity... as something that “comes upon you” as a recognition, almost as a surprise rather than as something strenuously “quested” after’ (James, cited in Erikson, 1968: 20). Waterman, too, writes about identity ‘discovery’ (1992: 59) – a term imbued with connotations of learning, capturing the inseparability of identity and learning. This type of identity realization I call passive identity realization (PIR). Passive identity realization can occur or arise in different ways, and describes an acceptance of and belief about who one is; as such it is a construal of an individual’s identity (Green, 2010). Passive identity realization describes instances of learning that one is and has become a certain way. A person’s passive identity realization is a person’s notion of *who they are*, as in ‘*I drum, therefore I am.*’ This aspect of identity is the sense that a person has of being him- or herself; it is a person’s self-concept, in relation to all that they do, are and learn. Bennett (1980: 4) describes this as a person’s ‘self-definition.’

The two types of identity realization, then, are AIR and PIR – active identity realization and passive identity realization. Conveniently, passive and active identity realization (P & A I R) also make PAIR. So my pair of identity realizations makes for PAIR. AIR and PIR exist symbiotically; the two are mutually dependant. Each is an inevitable and necessary, although insufficient, condition for the other. For instance, each interview conducted for this study required PIR from the participants, requiring them to reflect upon their being drummers. Also, if the interviewees did not actively

realize identities as drummers I would not have known that they were drummers; and if they did not passively realize identities as drummers, they themselves would not have known that they were drummers! This recalls the cyclical nature of identity construction over time, suggested above by Hall (1996: 4). The model of identity realization also embraces Wenger's point that 'identity exists – not as an object in and of itself – but in the constant work of negotiating the self' (Wenger, 1998: 151), a observation also made by Narvaez et al (2009). The complexities and reciprocities between elements coming together to realize identities are explained below and graphically represented in figure 1. Instances of each are highlighted throughout the text.

Learning Realization

It is worth restating here that I view all learning as part of enculturation (Merriam, 1964; Rice, 2001), akin to what Jorgensen (2003b) terms 'transmission.' I find this helpful, for, as Folkestad rightly asserts, 'music education as a *field of research* must deal with *all* kinds of musical learning, irrespective of where it takes place (or is situated) and of how and by whom it is organised or initiated' (Folkestad, 2006: 137). I try, therefore, to take a broad view of learning. An important part of learning processes that is not especially well highlighted even in the broader conceptualizations of enculturation, is reflection on the part of the learner. By getting caught up in the machinations of how one goes about trying to learn something, what can be missed is that moment of realization when a person knows that they know something, or that they understand something. I propose, therefore, an alternative model to work alongside the otherwise very helpful notions of enculturation and Folkestad's (2006) 'continuum' from formal learning through non-formal learning to informal learning.

'Learning realization' is my new construct for viewing learning. I conceptualize learning, like identities, as realized both passively and actively. Active learning realization (ALR) describes any instance of learning engaged in by a drummer with the intention of learning something – a song, a technique, how a particular drummer plays a certain lick. ALR is what drummers do in order to become more skilled and

knowledgeable members of their community of practice. Passive learning realization (PLR), on the other hand, is learning that happens unintentionally; it is what happens in the gaps between instances of active learning realization. It is what happens when, after spending time on the business of going about trying to learn something, accepting upon reflection what one has learned. PLR also describes what happens when ‘even failing to learn what is expected in a given situation usually involves learning something else instead’ (Wenger, 1998: 8). Passive learning realization can easily escape the attention of teachers and learners, but it is of course upon reflection that we often gain many of our most valuable insights. Through the lens of passive realization, connections between learning and identity are perhaps especially evident, for acknowledgement of learning may have an impact upon a person’s self-concept – their identity – or, if the learning is about oneself, that passive learning realization may indeed be indistinguishable from passive identity realization. This PIR may then lead to certain behaviours (AIR) that may include intentional learning (ALR). It is plain to see some of the ways in which learning and identity exist in symbiosis. Indeed, Wenger views ‘identity as *learning trajectory*’ and finds that ‘*learning transforms our identities*’ (Wenger, 1998: 227). This notion of the trajectory fits well with the ideas of DeNora (2000), Giddens (1991), Hall (1996) and Narvaez et al (2009).

Identities and learning practices combined: The Snowball Self

I propose a metaphor to describe how identity realization and learning realization work together – the self as a snowball; a snowball that one can either allow to roll freely on or off the meandering mountain pistes of life, or that one or (an)other(s) can guide along the slopes and surrounding terrain. In Wenger’s terms, the snowball self helps to explain how ‘we define who we are by where we have been and where we are going’ – in terms of what we do and what we learn (Wenger, 1998: 149). When we guide the snowball along in a direction of our choosing, we know whence we will gather snow (identities and learning), and may have a good idea of what that snow is like – or at least we have every intention of finding out. When another person guides the ball on our behalf or we take a surprise turn, however, we may discover that we have acquired unexpected identity- or learning-snow. If we reach an easy, gentle

slope, we may choose to run alongside our snowball, allowing it to roll freely, bouncing off the occasional mogul, gathering no snow as the surface hardens, or acquiring material of a type unnoticed by us until we turn around to glance at our snowball self and discover that it looks different than the last time we checked. As the snowball rolls, different parts of it will become visible – some more or less so than others, and some parts we may choose to reveal more or less of, according to context. Narvaez et al describe eloquently how this works, writing that individuals’ ‘various identities become active or inactive as people locate themselves in various social contexts’ (Narvaez et al, 2009: 64). It is also likely that snow will fall off, become covered up or be forgotten about, and may need to be replenished by a return to a particular area of the piste. As Marcia notes, ‘the identity structure is dynamic, not static. Elements are continually being added and discarded’ (Marcia, 1980: 159). The Snowball Self is composed from identities and learning experiences: of passive and active identity realization (PAIR), and passive and active learning realization (PALR); these in turn inform and are informed by practices. PAIR and PALR *together* complete the fully realized Snowball Self (see figure 1).

This model of realizing identity and learning realization leaves plenty of room for manoeuvre as one’s identities shift with times and places; they can be realized over and over again, recalling the notions of history (Marcia, 1980), biography (DeNora, 2000), narrative (Giddens, 1991) and identity trajectories (Wenger 1998). I find the snowball particularly helpful, however, as it allows and implies multi-directional movement, whereas trajectories might sound mono-directional (although that is not how Wenger describes them), while history and biography tend to imply a finished product, which identity patently is not. The snowball self also allows for (and strongly suggests) the potential retention of identity- and learning-matter from the past, which narrative does not. I find the snowball self a conceptually and figuratively helpful addition to other extant models of being and becoming. In the film *Fight Club*, Jack prays to his friend and alter-ego, Tyler Durden:

May I never be complete. May I never be content. May I never be perfect. (Fincher, 1999)

Fortunately for Jack, the snowball self illustrates how no-one can ever be complete, even if the snowball should stop moving – identities and learning keep on being

realized, even while the snowball may gently melt (as we forget or discard certain learning or cease to hold a particular identity). Earlier in *Fight Club*, Tyler says to Jack, 'you are not a beautiful and unique snowflake' (Fincher, 1999); Tyler is right – Jack is, as drummers are, not a snowflake but a complex and ever-changing Snowball Self.

The symbiosis of learning and identity can be seen to work in at least the following ways:

- 1) Passive identity realization is a moment of discovery, of learning;
- 2) Active identity realization requires active learning realization (one cannot be a drummer without learning how to do this);
- 3) Passive learning realization is a by-product of active identity realization and active learning realization;
- 4) Active identity realization and active learning realization lead to passive identity realization and passive learning realization, which in turn can lead to active identity realization and active learning realization;
- 5) All realization of identities and learning contributes to the realization of the snowball self.

Meta-identities and contextual identities

For any drummer, being a drummer cannot be the only way in which he or she construes or has a sense of identity (PIR) or in which he or she constructs an identity (AIR). Even as a drummer, there are numerous (perhaps innumerable) ways in which this identity may be realized for different people in various contexts. For this reason, the snowball self incorporates two levels or types of identity – meta-identities and contextual identities. A meta-identity is a larger, over-arching identity that one might experience in a range of situations: such a meta-identity could be 'drummer.' Meta-identities contain and embrace contextual identities, which are the smaller or more context-specific identities that people realize. For me, 'drummer' is a meta-identity; within this I realize contextual identities such as an equal collaborator, a compliant

subordinate, a sweaty rocker and a flamboyant soloist. Contextual identities of course frequently overlap, as do meta-identities (Stets & Burke, 1003: 132). Another meta-identity for me is ‘teacher;’ when I perform in front of students this combines with my ‘drummer’ meta-identity to produce a contextual identity that neither individual meta-identity could have elicited without the other.

Principal meta-identity

A person’s strongest identity I call his or her principal meta-identity; this may not always be the most prominent identity in all contexts, but overall it is a person’s ‘core identity’ (Hargreaves et al, 2002), or what Narvaez et al (2009: 79) call a person’s ‘main identity axis.’ My own principal meta-identity is ‘drummer;’ this concept is explored further in the next chapter.

Meta-identities

The large circles inside the snowball represent meta-identities, one of which is ‘drummer’ which in this diagram is also the principal meta-identity. This is the identity that is of most significance in that person’s sense of self. Two other meta-identities have been included in the diagram; this number is not significant, but is intended merely to show that there are probably other meta-identities in a drummer’s life. The meta-identities overlap to show that drummers do not stop being other things simply because they are being drummers. Any meta-identity could probably overlap with any other to any degree; the restrictions of two dimensions and paper make the model appear more static than the reality may be. The possible intersection of drummers’ meta-identities is explored briefly below, particularly in the chapters on ethnicity and gender.

Contextual identities

The coloured circles within the principal meta-identity of drummer represent contextual identities. The colours and numbers of contextual identities in the diagram are entirely arbitrary, serving only to differentiate one from another. The ring formed by the contextual identities derives only from the space on the page, and again has no meaningful significance; as with the meta-identities, any one contextual identity could possibly overlap with any other to any degree, depending on circumstances. There would almost certainly be contextual identities included in each of the meta-identities in a more complete model of a person's snowball self, but none is included here as none was uncovered during the study. Contextual identities are integral to the model of the snowball self and to the constructs of identity and learning realization. A person's identity is always experienced according to context (Grovent, 1992; Hall, 1996; Hampson, 1982; Stets & Burke, 2003). Each of these individual contextual identities contributes to a person's overall identity – to his or her snowball self. A person's sense of who they are (PIR) is forever shifting according to the context of what he or she is doing, where, for what reason, and with whom (AIR). Certain identities (passive and active realizations of self) will be realized in more than one context. It is, therefore, essential not to lose sight of identity as being highly dynamic – as the snowball describes.

An important set of contexts in which drummers realize their identities are the various groups in which a drummer finds him- or herself. Each group is its own context, as well as having potential to be a multi-dimensional place providing numerous others. Perhaps the most important group of all is the community (Budofsky, 2006; Wenger, 2008) or tribe (Bennett, 2000; Maffesoli, 1996) of kit drummers. This is surely the principal context of all drummers' passive and active identity realization; it is the forum for the realization of the drummer meta-identity and the backdrop to all realization of contextual identities as drummers. It is impossible to realize a drummer identity outside of that context, for as soon as one does something as a drummer – playing the drums, listening to recordings of drummers, even thinking about drumming), one is involved in the realization of an identity as a drummer. Throughout the thesis I explore the self-referential nature of the drumming tribe for its members (Hetherington, 1992; Stets & Burke, 2003; Stålhammar, 2006), and the ways in which

being part of this collective helps as a part of drummers' self-definition as drummers (Gracyk, 2001; Hogg, 2003; Maffesoli, 1996). The community of drummers, albeit perhaps a rather loose and tacit construct, is the unavoidable arena for the passive and active realization of drummers' identities as drummers.

Boxes

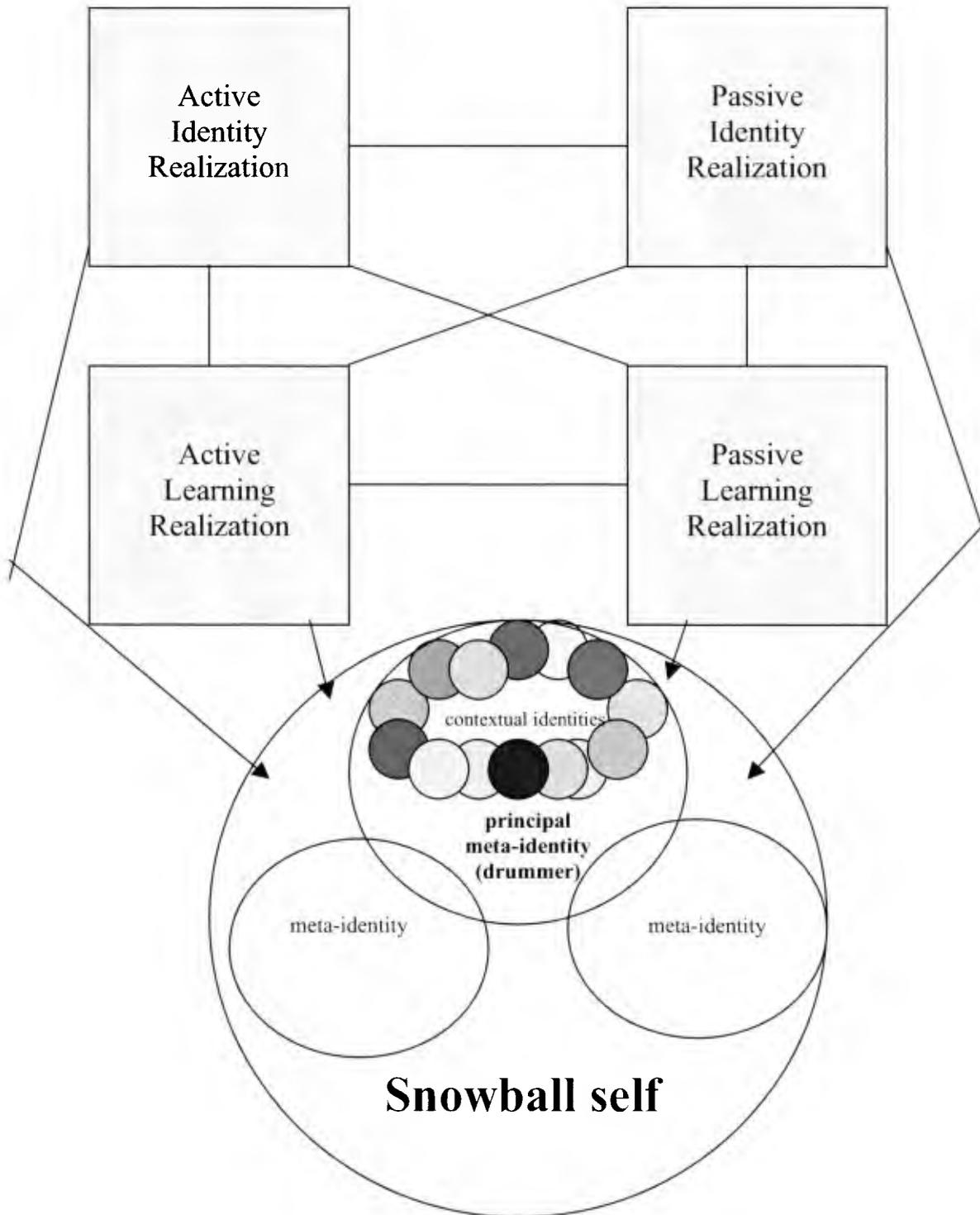
Passive identity realization, passive learning realization, active identity realization, and active learning realization are in rectangular boxes; unlike the snowball, the shape of these containers has no figurative meaning. They are all of equal size, to show that none is of any greater importance than another. AIR, ALR, PIR and PLR appear in no particular order. The lines joining the boxes have no arrows on them, because any of the boxes can affect or be affected by any of the other boxes. The placement of the lines has no significance other than to show that all boxes are connected. As well as being inter-connected the boxes are each joined to the snowball. There are arrows on these lines, as they are uni-directional.

Rainwater (quoted in Giddens, 1991: 75) explains again, more eloquently that I am able, what this diagram describes: “we are not what we are, but what we make of ourselves”.’ This idea manifests itself in drummers' learning, being, doing, and reflection on these things in a psycho-socio-cultural environment. It can be used to explore how, for each participant, ‘I drum therefore I am.’

The snowball self model is pictured overleaf; the ‘snowball’ is depicted at the bottom of the page; this position reflects only the easiest way that I could find to represent it graphically, and is not intended to imply any sense of hierarchy.

Figure 1: The Snowball Self

Snowball Self, showing passive and active identity realization, passive and active learning realization, principal meta-identity, meta-identities, and contextual identities



CHAPTER THREE

Identity Trajectories

Introduction

Erikson quotes James (1884), who finds that a person is most comfortably him- or herself when performing those activities which resonate most positively for them. Erikson works on the assumption that where James writes ‘character,’ modern commentators would use ‘identity’:

A man’s character is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says ‘this is the real me.’ (James, quoted in Erikson, 1968: 18)

Waterman (1992: 57) describes how people, as well as finding their identities to be especially well realized in one role or another, determine through their actions the importance for them of a particular identity. He describes this as ‘the strength of a person’s investments in particular identity elements and the centrality of that identity to the manner in which she or he chooses to live.’ Waterman’s argument supports the commonsense notion that where one has heavily invested of oneself, one may feel the strongest sense of identity, and that since this is a matter of choice, that ought to be good. Laing, along with Giddens (1991: 36), describes this certainty-of-self in terms of ‘ontological security,’ and reiterates the importance of the social context in attaining this:

The individual, then, may experience his own being as real, alive, whole; as different from the rest of the world in ordinary circumstances so clearly that his identity and autonomy are never in question; as a continuum in time; as having an inner consistency, substantiality, genuineness, and worth; as spatially co-extensive with the body... He thus has a firm core of ontological security. (Laing, 1960: 41-42)

Waterman explores identity through his interpretation of ‘Eudaimonism,’ a construct related to ontological security, which ‘is an ethical theory that calls upon people to recognize and live in accordance with the *daimon* or ‘true self’” (Waterman, 1992:

58). Waterman recalls Laing's assertion (1960: 94) that 'every man [and woman] is involved personally in whether or to what extent he is being "true to his nature".' Lofty aims such as Waterman's are not always achievable by actual humans in the real world; Waterman (1992: 58) indeed acknowledges that 'the daimon is an ideal;' it seems to be an idealized form of what Hargreaves et al (2002) call the 'core identity' and the 'main identity axis' of Narvaez et al (2009: 79). For drummers – who enjoy drumming – perhaps Eudaimonism is more happy reality than utopian idealism; being a drummer may become a person's principal meta-identity.

Activities where one combines effort with a successful, positive outcome are described by Csikszentmihalyi as '*flow activities*' which 'have as their primary function the provision of enjoyable experiences;' he believes that 'making music' is 'designed to make optimal experience easier to achieve' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991: 72). He also writes (1991: 71) that 'an activity that produces such [flow] experiences is so gratifying that people are willing to do it for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it.' While Csikszentmihalyi is not discussing quite the same thing as eudaimonism, flow activities appear to have a place in Waterman's construct as they are meaningful experiences for the agent; a principal meta-identity would also provide a context highly amenable to accommodating and providing flow experiences. Waterman explains the importance of 'establishing personally meaningful identity commitments through a process of exploration' (Waterman, 2007: 293). He goes on to say that 'with the exploration of a variety of possibilities, there is an increased likelihood that individuals will identify possibilities consistent with their talents and dispositions' – perhaps possibilities that also bear the hallmarks of flow experiences (Waterman, 2007: 293). Much of the exploration to which Waterman refers takes place in adolescence.

Adolescence

‘Adolescence’ is a word that is almost onomatopoeic in its marriage of ‘adulthood’ and ‘pubescence,’ encapsulating as it does the nature of that often clumsy and awkward time following childhood, but before adulthood has taken hold or maturity has been reached by an individual. Adolescence and teen-hood are not equivalent terms; the former refers to a developmental stage of indeterminate length, and the latter is bound by the linguistic description of a system of cardinal numbers. There is far more talk in the identity literature about adolescence than teen-hood, although a person’s teenage years usually comprise the greater part of his or her adolescence. Throughout this study I refer to the adolescent group of participants as teenagers rather than as adolescents in order to help distinguish them aurally from adolescence, and because I find it a friendlier, less clinical term.

Adolescence is a time when people go overtly about ‘the development of independent personalities’ (Frith, 1984: 6), or, as Kirchler et al (1993: 148) explain, ‘adolescence... allows the adolescent to explore autonomy.’ Laing has put it thus:

The heightening or intensifying of the awareness of one’s own being, both as an object of one’s own awareness and of the awareness of others, is practically universal in adolescents. (Laing, 1960: 106)

Frith (1984: 6) calls it the ‘time of the transition from childhood to adulthood’ – childhood and adulthood are of course also social constructs, but they are far more ancient and culturally more widespread than adolescence. Frith locates the genesis of teen, adolescent culture in the USA in the 1920s and ‘30s, when ‘the high school and college began to replace the family as the centre of middle class youth’s life’ (Frith, 1984: 12). It is important to note that adolescence is a culturally constructed phenomenon, created and vigorously sustained by Western societies since around the middle of the twentieth century; as Kohen-Raz describes it: ‘a typical *human* phenomenon created by the temporal gap between pubertal physiological maturation and the attainment of human adulthood, determined by psychosocial criteria’ (Kohen-Raz, 1988: 117). Session drummer Bobby Graham’s biographer notes of Graham that ‘he, along with millions of others, became “teenagers” a word and concept which

crossed the Atlantic in the early years of the 1950s.’ (Harrington & Graham, 2004: 15). Although a relatively new socio-cultural phenomenon, adolescence has quickly become an important one.

Adolescence in the UK, as in the US, is spent largely in formal education, or at least education is the conspicuous backdrop to the life of most teenagers. While they are encouraged to develop as individuals, it is at this age that people are expected to begin to adopt roles that they can carry through to personal and developmental maturity. Teenagers try out a variety of roles and identities, where opportunities are available, to see which have the best fit. Stålhammar (2006: 232) finds that ‘for young people music and identity go together;’ adolescents make important decisions about how important music is to them, and in what ways it will be important. Tarrant et al (2002: 135) find that ‘the appeal of music during adolescence stems from its ability to address salient developmental issues’ such as ‘acquiring a set of values and beliefs, performing socially responsible behaviour, developing emotional independence from parents and achieving mature relations with peers.’ Similarly, Fornas et al believe that ‘the great interest in and use of music... in adolescence proves that such needs are strong in that phase of life, in which rapid identity development produces an insecurity that has to be countered by ephemeral self-confirming experiences’ (Fornas et al, 1995: 254). If a person finds drumming to provide this self-confirmation, presumably he or she is likely to maintain that identity and keep drumming into later life. Erikson also pinpoints adolescence as a crucial time for the development of identity, stating ‘we have learned to ascribe a normative “identity crisis” to the age of adolescence and young adulthood’ (Erikson, 1968: 17). Erikson means ‘crisis’ more in the sense of a significant event or series of events, than in the sense of a disastrous time, so adolescence is held to be a crucial and exciting time for identity development.

Despite the prevalence of adolescence in the literature on identity, identities in relation to music begin to be realized long before people reach this stage of development; this is perhaps especially clear with regard to music. There is evidence which strongly suggests that unborn children begin to develop musical tastes from their mothers’ preferences during the final trimester of pregnancy (Welch, 2001). As Lecanuet has also noted, ‘it can be said that prenatal musical experience... may

contribute to shaping auditory abilities and to developing long-term preferences for or general sensitivity to the type of sounds experienced' (Lecanuet, 1996: 25). Clarke et al find that preferences developed at such an early stage may well change with exposure to other music later in childhood (Clarke et al, 2010: 128). Lamont (2002: 47) writes that 'inevitably some children will form negative musical identities whilst others will form more positive musical identities.' Lamont's point presumably applies to teenagers and adults as much as to children. I would dispute her suggestion, however, without wishing to treat it out of all context, for it seems unlikely that anyone would realize a musical identity that is entirely negative; I take a broader view than Lamont of what may be meant by musical identity, for while her notion refers to people's active involvement in musicking I would include music listening and attendant group association, as implied in Frith (1983, 1984, 1996) and Bennett (2000). Our identities in relation to music are realized in various contexts, some of which will be more positive or negative than others.

Teenage kicks

For most of the participants in the study, drumming was an extremely important part of who they are and what they do. For those drummers, 'drummer' was certainly a meta-identity and for the majority it was their principal meta-identity. The only two interview participants for whom being a drummer was not all that important were Rohan (13) and Ella (14). Their ages are significant, for they are very much in an exploratory stage of their identity realizations. It is no surprise that the older drummers all feel a stronger sense of identity as drummers, since they have chosen to stick with drumming into adulthood and have had longer to develop that strong meta-identity. Kit drumming is far too complicated and time-consuming to do frivolously as an adult or older teenager, when we begin to focus our lives on fewer activities that we may explore more deeply.

All of the adult interview participants cited their teenage years as a time of heightening interest in the drums, as the literature cited above indicates they would. This is a recurring theme in drummers' autobiographies also. Fletcher, biographer of Keith Moon (drummer for The Who), writes that:

judging by Keith's own accounts, his life only began when discovered the drums and left school, in quick succession, at the age of 14. To the extent that he had found his vocation in life, that may have been true. (Fletcher, 1998: 2)

Steven Adler, drummer for rock band Guns n' Roses, recalls a similarly epiphanic moment from the age of 14 or 15, when he was captivated by Tommy Lee, drummer for rock band Mötley Crüe:

I remember studying every move Tommy Lee made that day – the way he counted off the next song; the way he twirled his sticks; the way he used those sticks to point at the audience, then at the other members of the band. Those drumsticks became extensions of his hands... Tommy showed me the way, and that way was to be my way. Thanks for being an incredibly positive inspiration, Tommy. (Adler, 2010: 46-47)

Around the same age, Bobby Graham, a session drummer in London, had apparently also decided upon his path in life: 'by the time he reached the age of 15, Bobby's personality was formed' (Harrington & Graham, 2004: 16).

Moving from literature-as-data to the empirical data, three adults described feeling much the same way at that age:

Guy I was very self-consumed with it. I was in no doubt in my mind that this is the way I wanted to go [as a teenager]... that's the way it is. I was, by that time of, um, what 14/15, the mind was made up, but it wasn't even me sitting down going: 'right, make your mind up what you're going to do;' it just was *there*. It was part of my living, breathing, everything.

Sean It's what I wanted to do since I was 14... it's what I've dreamed of doing since I was 14.

Ian Paice I suppose when my father realized it wasn't going to go away that's when he bought me my first kit, for my 15th birthday... my father realized I was sort of getting serious about it.

It seems that this age of 14/15 was a crucial sort of time for realizing that one wished to be a drummer – to begin realizing an identity as one of the group of drummers.

Contemporary society seems perhaps to expect teenagers to be developing preferences and testing the waters of identity for longer than a few decades ago; many of the older teens expressed a similar sort of commitment to being a drummer as their elders described feeling at 14 or 15:

- Chris (19) I've probably been quite lucky to realize at 19 that I've got to make a go of it with music... Yeah, just yeah, no I, just because I really know that I love doing it, that's what I want to do.
- Senan (19) Being a drummer was important 'to the point that I've decided that next year I'm only going to play drums; I'm going to stop working... Yeah, and I'm just gonna get taught.
- Natalie (19) Being a drummer was 'very important; I don't know, it's like the only thing I really like to do.
- Sam (20) Well, it's *really* important 'cause, like, it's just it's kinda moulded itself to kinda just be what I really want to do.
- Luke (19) I *love* playing drums! I couldn't imagine myself doing anything else... I feel happiest playing drums... I love drumming, I love drumming.
- Callum (16) Biggest passion I have; wouldn't trade it for the world.

Gifty (19) was the only older teenage drummer for whom her drummer identity was taking something of a back seat:

- Gifty It's really important, but lately I've been working a lot, so I haven't been drumming as much. I do miss it. On a scale of one to ten of how important it is right now, probably five, or six.
- GDS Okay. So do you reckon it might become more important again if things are bit different?
- Gifty Yeah! I do think of myself as a drummer.'

The difference between the ages at which the teenage and adult participants in the study began to feel that drumming was perhaps their principal identity may be at

attributable, at least in part, to changes in the education system in the UK. Some of the drummers quoted here represent a demographic that did not exist when (adults) Guy, Ian Paice and Keith Moon were in their teens. Chris, Luke, Sam and Natalie were all teenagers studying at Drum Tech and the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, music schools dedicated in part to the study of drum kit in the context of popular music. Colleges of this nature have grown up only in the last 25 years. The UK's minimum school leaving age has increased by four years since Ian and Keith were teenagers; it used to be 14. The youngest teen to express such a strong enthusiasm for being a drummer was Callum (16).

Rohan (13) spoke for all but one of the 13-15-year-old drummers interviewed, saying that drumming 'is *quite* important... Everything's equal that I do, really... I do all sports. I do a martial art, which is great;' he had no special preference for drumming over other pursuits. For Ella (14) drumming was also but one of many things vying for her attention: 'it's probably *not* as important as my school work, but it's important as in I want to do it. It's not compulsory, though, I do it for fun.' Nethagshan (13) stood out among the younger teenagers interviewed, for 'I also play electric guitar but I like the drums most of all... I do it, like, every day and it takes up half my time and stuff.' For Nethagshan the identity of 'drummer' was a strong one, so perhaps he will continue to realize that identity into adulthood.

It is of course impossible to generalize about changes in the significant ages at which drummers now or decades ago began to dedicate themselves to drumming. Due to the research design, I interviewed no adults who had turned away from drumming as part of this study, while it was perhaps inevitable that I should find a few teenagers who may not keep it up. It is true to say, however, that the age of 14 to 15 was a special time for the passive identity realization of 'drummer' as a strong meta-identity for this study's adult participants; it may be that this is the case for today's teenagers too, or that they may be having these realizations slightly later.

Drummers enjoy being drummers

Playing drums is often a logistical nightmare, until one reaches the very top echelons of the profession where drum manufacturers supply whole kits to wherever a musician is playing in the world (Bruford, 2004). Drums are heavy and several; they require a car or van to transport them, which in turn often incurs parking costs and maybe a congestion charge if playing in a large city such as London; drums also take much longer than most instruments to assemble, disassemble and load in to and out of a vehicle. However, despite these and other difficulties inherent in playing their instrument, drummers appear to be extremely happy with their lot:

We may have to lug more gear than our bandmates, not to mention having to essentially build our instrument every time we move it (and then having to tear it down again), but it's worth it: we get to play the drums. (Parillo, 2006: 65)

With his comment that 'it's worth it; we get to play the drums,' Parillo implies that an unbridled enthusiasm for playing their instrument unites drummers, despite inherent hassles in playing it.

Parillo's enthusiasm echoes that of Dottie Dodgion, who says that 'once I start playing... the music takes over... it sure does fill me with great joy when it's right'" (Dodgion quoted in Placksin, 1982: 238). Fagle Liebman recalls that she 'used to think that *everyone* out there in the audience was jealous of me, that they wanted to be where I was' (Liebman quoted in Placksin, 1982: 161). Stephen Perkins clearly loves playing his instrument, so much so that he believes "'nobody in my band wants to play their instruments as much as I want to play drums'" (Perkins quoted in Barker, 2005a: 48). The same sense of joy and satisfaction coming from drumming was evident in the empirical data.

Expressing a similar joy, Sean Lee (adult) said that he kept playing drums because after his first experience of playing them (also his first experience of performing live on the instrument!), he 'got bit by the buzz of it.' He went on to say:

I really love playing live. I love playing live... I don't know what it is – you kind of get, there's a kind of nervous energy going on, but it's all about the moment; it's not about 'let's listen back to that, see if it's great – did you get that right?' You know, it's all about the moment, and it's all about, you know, everyone there enjoying the moment as well... I've got the best job in the fucking world – that's it.

The other interview participants, besides Ella (14), reported comparably pleasurable experiences whilst drumming. Typical responses were:

Jamie M. (17) Yeah, it's amazing! It's weird to explain. It's just the feeling it gives you as you play. It's, it's amazing. It's really, I dunno, it feels good. It feels good to play drums.

Matt (18) Yeah. I wouldn't do it if you didn't; there's no point, is there? I want to play drums because I enjoy it and I like playing, I like playing music.

Kate (adult) When you play it, it's just, like, the best feeling ever... I can't even, like, put it into words; it's just, um, I just get so much pleasure out of doing it, I really do.

These comments from drummers show how identities are formed through a combination of construction through action, and reflection. Having spent time being drummers, the participants know whether or not they like it and can articulate this.

Although they would perhaps not necessarily think in terms of ontological security, several drummers articulate sentiments that chime almost perfectly with one another and with Laing's notion. Neil, an adult questionnaire participant who added his name to the form, writes about being a drummer that 'it's not what I do, it's who I am!' Bill Bruford, in almost identical terms, writes 'it's what I do. And what I do is who I am' (Bruford, 2009: 251). Stewart Copeland adds that for him 'it seems obvious that music isn't just a tool or a weapon, it's what my life is for' (Copeland, 2009: 17-18). Two teen drummers wrote on their questionnaires that, respectively, 'it's my life' and it 'makes me who I am.' For these drummers at least, my t-shirt appears to be correct – 'I drum, therefore I am;' 'drummer' would appear to be for these drummers their principal meta-identity.

Rock drummer Clem Burke seems to speak for many of this study's participants (myself included) when he says:

Drumming is a release. It's a great way to burn energy and it makes you feel better mentally too when the endorphins start pumping. After a show, any artist will tell how exhilarating it is. Whether you're playing in a pub or in front of 20000 people, if you have a positive experience, it's going to make you feel better and enlighten you – make you glad to be alive. That's really what it's all about. (Burke, quoted in Yates, 2009: 67)

Born to drum?

It would hardly be groundbreaking for me to suggest that some drummers seem keener on drumming than others do. However, for some, 'drummer' is an identity that they seem compelled to realize as actively as possible from a young age. On his web site rock drummer John Keeble enthusiastically describes his career path to being a full-time professional drummer; his attainment of success was no accident – from his teens “‘rock star’ was the holy grail’ for which he strove (Keeble, 2008). Guy Richman (adult) recalls a similar level of enthusiasm:

Suffice to say I came out of school with a Grade 1 CSE in French, which qualified as a Grade C at O Level. That was it. Because I was just out the window every day like that [gazing, air-drumming]: 'RICHMAN!' 'What? Sorry sir.' 'YOU'RE STARING OUT THE WINDOW AGAIN,' 'Sorry sir, just practising my drums.' That's the way it is.

Guy, then, was unable to help himself from perpetually constructing his identity as a drummer by engaging in drumming-related activities. It seems that, while at school, Guy already had a strong sense of his daimon (Waterman, 1992) or 'ontological security' (Laing, 1960: 41; Giddens, 1991). The following other drummers expressed a similar sense of confidence in who and what they were:

Chris (19) I think it's pretty crucial really because the problem is I can't really do anything – I'm really bad at office jobs or factory work or anything really like, sort of, which I've done before... I'm selfish, I just love doing it and I just want to play, you know, I want to play the music, I want to play in gigs, and I just want to play whatever, so it's kind of like everything else comes next.

Luke (19) I don't feel like I can do anything else apart from drum. That sounds sad, but part of me feels like I've been born to just drum, 'cause that's all I'm good at, ha! I can't do maths, I can't do reading, I can't do figures, I can only do drumming, man.

Callum (16) I don't really have anything else to fall back on. Probably a bit stupid but, I hope, I have a *little* bit of belief in myself that I can do something with it.

Sean Lee (adult) recalled his great enthusiasm about being a drummer – before even playing the instrument:

Okay, basically, when I was at school, I was going round telling people 'I'm going to play the drums.' Didn't have a drum kit, never played drums before, just going round telling people that, right? And there was a talent contest that was being held at our school. And the drummer had dropped out from one of the bands. So literally, the same day, 'you want to play drums? Well, play drums tonight, then' at this talent show. I'm like 'well, I've never played drums before, fuck!' 'You'll be all right, you'll be all right.' So I had, like, a 15-minute lesson before I played. And it was an absolute shambles, it was a frigging shambles. But that's what got me going. Played in front of about 500 people, first gig. Never played the drums before, and I just got bit by the buzz of it.

Chris Steele (in Hopkin, 2009: 40) has a similar recollection about his formative years just prior to being a teenage drummer, recalling that 'I was obsessed with drums and before I even started learning I was telling everyone that I wanted to be the drummer.' Two other drummers spoke of a sense of knowing that they were drummers, of behaving like drummers before they even knew what one really was. Mike Mannering (adult) recalls how he:

always used to bang around with pencils and stuff. I remember I always used to have a groove going at some point when I was at school... I just had this rhythm that I was playing all the time... I don't know if there's any reason – I didn't sort of see somebody and think 'that's what I want to be.'

Mike began playing drums 'at about the age of 12 or 13.' However, he was able to trace the roots of his drumming destiny back further into his childhood, remembering also:

getting in a real sulk one day at primary school when I didn't get the part playing the little drummer boy, which I thought was rightfully should be mine, 'cause I, I'd never played drums at that point, but I just felt that was me, and I remember getting really pissed off.

Another participant drummer with similar recollections of always being a drummer was Scratchy, who said 'I started playing 'cause it's something that is inside me — drums, rhythm and beats were something that's genetic.' Scratchy did not put an age on when began to play the drums, but felt that it was something that he had always done. Scratchy was without a drum kit at the time of our interview, but was still as much a drummer as ever:

'cause I definitely got this thing inside me, you know, that is, doesn't, erm, you know, it doesn't stop when I stop playing drums. D'you know what I mean? It's still going on in, inside. It's under here, like, you know [points to head] — yeah, well play that. It's definitely something inside me. It's this thing that's inside that you can't explain. Look at it another way: everyone has a heartbeat [makes heart-beat sounds], so you actually are hearing this rhythm anyway, consciously or subconsciously. Some people you know react to it, like me. I, you know, sometimes when I'm just falling off to sleep, and, you know, you've got that period of just before you go to sleep, and you can hear, you can hear your heart, it gets louder. It's like it's really loud, especially if you're lying down, and it obviously, it resonates with the bed springs, and then you can actually hear your heart beating [makes heart-beat sounds]; d'you know what I mean?

The examples of Sean, Mike and Scratchy feeling such an affinity for drumming in the absence of drums suggest an alternative to my premise that 'I drum, therefore I am?' For these gentlemen it may be truer to say 'I am, therefore I drum.'

Complications and multiple meta-identities

'Being a drummer' is maybe a little too simplistic to describe what drummers do, as their identities manifest themselves in a variety of contexts. From my own experience as a drummer, the complexity of my Snowball Self has continued to increase with the roles I have accepted and the responsibilities I have shouldered as my career has advanced. I still think of myself primarily as a drummer — this, after all, is what most

of my t-shirts and many of my actions say. However, I am also distracted and find my attention absorbed on a daily basis by numerous other roles, including being a teacher, a husband, and a doctoral student. The identities I have acquired and nurtured in these other roles are not entirely separate from my life as a drummer, but neither is any one of them entirely co-existent. In many ways they are necessarily mutually exclusive. I still find the energy to fulfil my burning desire to play drums. Bruford, however, responsible over several decades for all aspects of running his career and production company, finds that ‘beneath this administrative mountain, I struggle to play’ (Bruford, 2009: 341). He has retired.

I am still a young man, but have occasionally found the demands of the drums too much to bear. For several years I played with one band or another most weekends – Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Our schedule would often amount to a merciless criss-crossing of the UK in a van, sleeping only in snatches, with adrenalin running high for performances and at zero for the rest of the time. Often, working during the week as a school teacher would be next to impossible. Eventually something had to give, so I left those bands. The drums are addictive though – I cannot give them up. Like Bruford (2009) and Neil (questionnaire respondent) quoted above, some of us have no choice. The wife of Ed Blackwell, an American jazz drummer, comments on her husband that “‘Blackwell lives to play, and he must play to live’” (Wilmer, 1977: 187) – he drums, therefore he is.

Roughly once a year, then, when I am called upon to fill in for the drummer in a friend’s band, the temptation of the music, the thrill of playing this wonderful instrument, providing the groove, making me feel alive, is too much to resist. It is only on the way home in the early hours of a Tuesday from a gig six hours’ drive from home, in the back of a unheated van in late December, with barely a seat to myself and time for only an hour’s sleep before I must rise for work, that I wonder if I can carry on with this. As for finding the time to mark students’ work and study for my doctorate, these factors result in further late nights and more sleep deprivation. Two questionnaire respondents appear to empathize with my situation: a teenager wrote that ‘I feel happy/but sometimes stressful,’ and an adult remarked ‘sometimes it sucks, sometimes it’s the best!’

When I decide to give more time to my research and to the administrative tasks required of me by my day job, I find that being a drummer – my principal meta-identity – has, for better or for worse, taken a back seat. This amounts to a negotiation of the (snowball) self (Hargreaves et al, 2002; Narvaez et al, 2009; Wenger, 1998), having constantly to make decisions about where one's attention should be focused, which identity or identities are the most important or relevant at a given time, and requires taking stock of how the self is being performed and through which identities it is being presented.

Cath Lovell (adult) found that drumming was taking something of a back seat in her life, a fact that she appeared to attribute to her being older; or perhaps not to her age directly, but to having moved on in life and to her priorities having changed. When I asked how important drumming is to Cath, she replied:

Less so now, I've gotta be honest – less so now. It was really important when I was a bit younger. For some reason it was the be-all and end-all of everything. I just felt like I could excel at, er, you know, great heights, but now I just feel like I just want to enjoy it. O, if I did lose my arms and legs I would be distraught, but I think I could definitely take up other things and I'd be quite happy. You know what I mean? 'Cause, like, I've got to that point where I think I've done an awful lot of stuff, so.

For Cath, her identity as a drummer appears to have faded from being entirely dominant. She was not alone among the interview participants in describing this.

The circumstances of people's lives continue to shift and evolve – sometimes directly through the individual's agency, and sometimes not. Jon Hiseman (adult), like Cath Lovell, described how being a drummer changed from being all-important to him, although fairly early on his career:

I was terribly interested with the drums until I was about, until I turned professional. And what happened when I turned professional, aged 22, was that everything else to do with the business flooded in to me. And I took to it like a duck takes to water, you know. And within a month of joining Graham Bond, which was my first professional job, I was handling all the money because nobody else could handle it and it was a shambles, you know... in a way, from the age of about 22, 23, 24, the drums kind of floated down the river. You know, in other

words it was just something I could do, you know. And we were working so much, there was very little time to practise anyway.

Since the interview was instigated by and based around Jon's being a drummer, I focussed mostly on this subject. It became clear fairly early on in our conversation, however, that, while being a drummer was still important to Jon, his main identity appeared to be that of 'record producer.' Playing and working with drums was a component in being a producer for Jon, but in that role his being a drummer was 'not very' important; he said that 'when I'm recording an album... the drums are just done,' just another part of a bigger process, his drummer-ness taken for granted. He still tours, performs and records as a drummer, but since first dabbling in production in the early 1970s, 'I was hooked, and that became my life, basically.... 'cause I had director's control, and once you've got director's control you're not gonna relinquish that.' After several years of actively realizing his identity as a drummer (he began playing in 1956) it appears that, in terms of my model, Jon's principal meta-identity changed from 'drummer' to 'producer,' and that these two meta-identities, while separate, have overlapped in some contexts, as well as 'drummer' becoming a part of his 'producer' identity. Jon also remarked that during the 15 years that he spent making 182 albums for clients, 'I was learning my business,' again highlighting the close relationship between identity and learning – all the time that one is being, one is learning.

For Jon Hiseman then, as with Bruford and I, although in very different respective ways, there has been a complicated realization of the self over time of how one is and – up to the point of reflection, one has become – a drummer. For Bruford it seems as though being a drummer placed various demands on him as a promoter and band member/leader, whereas for Jon Hiseman drumming presented opportunities that he accepted with eagerness early in his career, which in turn changed his relationship to drumming. I began my drumming career with drumming as the focal point; I now, although willingly and excitedly, find that I must strive to keep playing the instrument amid the other roles and responsibilities that my life has acquired through choice and necessity.

Mike Mannering (adult)'s identity trajectory reflects my own more than any of the other participants,' although he spent many more years than I being solely a drummer before adding another profession to his income stream:

I've got through a change in the last sort of eight years, when I decided to study to be an osteopath; but that was quite a struggle, head-wise, to, to think of myself not purely as a drummer... and still now, I find I have to put different hats on. You know, I have my drumming life, and then the straight life, as it were [laughs]. And I'm determined to hang on to that – that's the bit I like, is being a drummer, yeah.

He explained that his reason for training as an osteopath was so that he can play only the gigs he wants to play, rather than playing out of financial necessity; for him, being a drummer remained 'very important.' Ronnie Fawcett (adult) spent a large part of her professional life teaching people to play the drums. She describes how her identity as a teacher, despite many years in that role, came upon her at least in part as a passive identity realization:

Another ex-pupil [than I, the researcher] said to me once... 'think of it, I wish I was like you; think of all those people, they're gonna sit back and think "oo, can you remember, you know, and what we used to do?"' and I sort of didn't look at it like that. Because if it's something that they've achieved, and that they like doing, you actually are one of the important little cogs in their education, their life, their, how they look at things.

Ronnie was the only participant in this study to discuss her role or identity as a teacher. Although Gemma Hill and Lisa Tring both teach, this was not a focus of the interview and they did not talk about it other than in passing.

Physical and emotional difficulties

The general trend for a drummer's drummer identity suggested by many of the data in this study is that it starts out as one of a range of options being pursued as a teenager; it may then become the drummer's all-consuming *raison d'être*. Depending on how drummers realize their drummer identities in the complex world of adulthood, being a drummer becomes wrapped in unique and individual ways in a complex pattern of roles and identities; and then eventually the emotional, physical and logistical strain of playing the drums can become too much to bear – the embodied experience of being a drummer is not necessarily altogether positive. In contrast to the (fictional) fates that befell each of Spinal Tap's drummers, plenty of drummers live into old and late-middle age. Bruford explains how, for him, the joys have finally been outweighed by the hardships and the hassles:

Truth be told, I haven't really enjoyed my music-making for a while... there are bits of the procedure that are intensely agreeable... there also exists the intensely disagreeable... Until recently, I've always found just enough petrol to keep going, but not a drop more. Now I'm running on empty. (Bruford, 2009: 347)

The disagreeable facets of Bruford's drumming life include:

the crippling self-absorption, the shameful navel-gazing, the sleep deprivation, the recurrent self-loathing, the debilitating jetlag, the endless soundchecks, the relentless self-promotion, the email 'interviews', the patient dovetailing of domestic and professional... the never being there, the haggle at check-in, the pushing and shoving – all of it, the whole shooting match, the whole nine yards. (Bruford, 2009: 337-338)

He just seems to feel less willing and able to cope with being a drummer in the way that he has been one, feeling 'an overwhelming tiredness' (Bruford, 2009: 315).

Recalling Lamont (2002), Bruford's musical (or drummer) identity is perhaps now more negative than positive since, as he said (above, p. 98), drumming is 'who I am' (2009: 251).

Because Bruford finds it a horribly conflicting experience to stop being a drummer, finding that 'the feeling of the end of something is unshakeable,' he wonders if

‘maybe it will be death by a thousand cuts’ (Bruford, 2009: 337). I occasionally look with dread to the day when I must, inevitably, concede that the drums have got the better of me. Jon Hiseman (adult) had not retired when interviewed, or at least he was not certain he had retired. When I asked Hiseman if he liked playing the drums, he replied, ‘erm, it’s a, you know, like all, like a lot of people who have a, who are known for something and have done it so much, in the end it’s a love-hate relationship;’ he did not elaborate greatly on this.

Ronnie Fawcett (adult) was about to give away her drum kit in the week following our interview. She mentioned several times during the interview that ‘it’s been hard to let go.’ The final chapter in Bruford’s (2009) book is entitled ‘Letting Go.’ This interesting turn of phrase used by both drummers seems to capture the sense in which the drums which, having been held so dear for so long, must finally be conceded to. The drums have won, they must go, and they are to carry on without Ronnie and without Bruford. Parting is bitter-sweet however, for Bruford (2009: 312) admits (as Ronnie implied through her body language) ‘I still have the passion.’

Ronnie Fawcett did not reach the heights of commercial success that Bruford sustained. She had also lived a longer life than the other participants, affording her career more opportunities to divert its course. Ronnie’s professional career began at age 21 in the band of the Royal Air Force. After playing professionally for some time, she described how her priorities changed. Throughout her life, being a drummer was ‘part of you, it’s the way you are; you eat it, you sleep it;’ however:

I came out [of the Royal Air Force] really because I met my husband, and what I was doing and what he was doing... If I’d had to stay where I was, might as well not be married. That’s how I felt about it.

Despite being a drummer, and this being so important to her sense of self, Ronnie said that:

other things come into life – it depends how you decide to have your music; is your music going to dictate everything? Or, um, you know... yes, there’s certain other things in life. You mustn’t forget, in life, and you obviously don’t want to miss those. I suppose that came with

being, 'cause as I said before, it was getting married to my husband. The decision had to be made. It was me. I had to stop playing professionally, if you like, from that point.

It seems that, for Ronnie, 'drummer' remained an important identity throughout her life. She was a respected and well known performer on the local semi-professional circuit, and then 'various things came in the way, actually, so, I had to care for my husband for many years. I still tried to do some teaching. I did a little playing.'

Another problem facing drummers as they age is the physical effort required to play the instrument. Ian Paice (adult) concisely states that 'getting old is a fucker,' a point explained a little more delicately by Ronnie Fawcett:

I think as you get older - I mean, it becomes harder, and I think that can come into it. Well, it did to me in the end, I suppose. I thought 'yes, I'll play that for you, but if you've got the equipment out there that'll be fine. But I'm not gonna cart timps or whatever from A to B, and all the rest of it. It comes to a point where you actually physically couldn't keep that up, and play. You would be so fagged out, because you couldn't do the two.

Ian and Ronnie operate(d) professionally in different circles – one as an international rock star, the other as a local semi-professional musician playing mostly with wind bands. However, the facts of the physicality of drumming affect players of all stripes even though Ian, for instance, had a crew to move and set up his equipment for much of his career.

Drummers do not need to be in the twilight of their careers in order to feel the strain from the demands of being a drummer or to realize a contextual identity as an ageing drummer as Ronnie described. Guy Richman (adult) felt the ageing process affecting the way that being a drummer was for him. He said 'I'm really feeling it this year – smoking, drinking, getting old,' and went on to describe some of the physical and logistical hardship that comes with the job of playing drums for a show in London's West End:

Aching joints, having to play certain cymbals at certain times, using the best possible setup you've got. Three days in you might get a bit of a twinge in your back, and the heat, being

locked in a padded cell, lack of communication with people. I'm talking about this environment here.

Guy's 'padded cell' was exactly that – a small, cupboard-like room large enough to house a drum kit, with acoustic tiling (padding) on the walls, music stand, spare folding chair, and small fridge. Although not intolerable, this sort of environment is probably not the most suitable for drumming sweatily in a three-hour musical eight times a week. Guy was careful to emphasise, though, that it is in this particular place of work that he has these frustrations; overall he still liked being a drummer, saying 'I love it, I love it. It's – I'm very lucky.'

Sean Lee (adult) explained (above) that when playing in concerts he felt that he had the best job in the world. However, he, like Guy, felt the physical strain of playing full-time:

It is knackerin! I've been in the studio for fucking like six or seven hours a day, and going through the same fucking song; and the way they work is kind of like 'right, just play the beat, and we'll figure out our parts.' 'Yeah, cool,' and then three hours later, and I'm doing these fucking really fast 16ths and that shit – we're talking three hours! I'm sweating like a fucker here! And you're blistering all over your hands.

Sean also mentioned the negative emotions that drumming for long hours in the recording studio can bring on:

Sometimes I hate it... yeah, sometimes it does my fucking head in... sometimes it gets really frustrating when you can't, when you're trying to get something and it's not working or have to really take it and actually figure it out, really get down to brass roots of it, as in, like, the mathematics of it; and I do, I like that as well as I hate it, but it's quite a thinking man's instrument. Do you know what I mean? I hate it. I hate it.

While emotions ran high for Sean in relation to being a drummer, perhaps he summed it up best when he said that, over all, 'it is a major, major part of my life,' capturing the notion of 'drummer' as a meta-identity being realized differently according to context. Rock drummer Stewart Copeland also shows how he feels differently about being a drummer, according to the context. Cited above, he realized through

drumming that music was the purpose of his life, but in the midst of a tour with his band, he feels that 'I'm the problem – the weak link... in this band I'm nothing, no-one' (Copeland, 2009: 244).

Questionnaire data

Questionnaire respondents were asked how important being a drummer was to them. Of the 100, 93 respondents said that being a drummer was either 'extremely' or 'very' important. The age of drummers does not seem significantly to affect the results; of 72 teenage drummers, 66 found being a drummer to be 'very' or 'extremely' important to them, and of the 28 adult respondents, 27 concurred with the teens. Identifying drumming as important, though, is not quite same thing as saying that you enjoy it. Respondents were also asked how they feel about being a drummer; 93 respondents replied with 'I love it,' 'I like it,' 'good,' 'positive,' 'fun,' 'proud,' 'happy,' 'excellent,' 'brilliant,' 'fantastic,' 'great,' 'fortunate,' 'grateful' or 'fulfilled.' Of the remaining seven, five were more philosophical, one said that she felt unusual because she was a girl (a subject to which I return in Chapter Six), and two included negative remarks. As indicated in the Introduction, one might argue that the questionnaires show an untruthfully ecstatic response to a question posed by a fellow drummer in the company of other drummers at an event focussed for a large part on drummers and drumming. These data contextualize and bolster the interview data, confirming that drummers basically like being drummers, although upon closer inspection of course the reality is always more complicated than can be captured with brief answers to a survey.

Summary

Although participants did not discuss 'identity' per se, the data support the intimations of the literature in that teenage years are often crucial to establishing and nurturing an interest in drumming, and to realizing a sense of self in relation to being a drummer. Drummers in this chapter have touched on active identity realization, but the data here describe more passive identity realization and as participants have reflected upon

what it means to be a drummer. The construct of meta-identities and principal meta-identities works in describing the changes in drummers' priorities as their respective snowball selves move through time and space. Wenger proposes 'trajectories' that work in a similar way to the Snowball Self to describe changes in identity; he observes that:

identities are defined with respect to the interaction of multiple convergent and divergent trajectories... the term trajectory suggests not a path that can be foreseen or charted but a continuous motion – one that has a momentum of its own in addition to a field of influences. It has a coherence through time that connects the past, the present, and the future. (Wenger, 1998: 154)

Identities are indeed slippery, complicated, multifaceted things (Becker & Strauss, 1956; Grotevant, 1992; Jorgensen, 2003a). Bill Bruford summarizes how he has dealt with and 'negotiated' (Wenger, 1998; Narvaez et al, 2009) shifting roles and identities over a 40-year career in drumming:

The path to a fruitful career will inevitably involve perpetual change in a continual redefinition of yourself and your goals. So much of being successful in music is no different to being successful in any other field. It hangs on knowing what is and what is not possible and, like the goldfish, on swimming around the rocks rather than continually banging into them. (Bruford, 2009: 180)

The movement of the snowball self describes the same sort of trajectories as Wenger describes (as discussed above), and also allows for the changes in self-definition (recalling Bennett, 1980) suggested by Bruford.

CHAPTER FOUR

Hanging Around with Musicians

Introduction

Drummer Bill Bruford entitled his band's 1999 album release *A Part, And Yet Apart*. This record represented for Bruford a return to playing acoustic drums and jazz. For many people Bruford was intimately connected with electronic drums and with rock music, although he had played acoustic drums and jazz rather a lot prior to this release. The title implies that awareness of group affiliation or association is important to Bruford – enough so as to be emblazoned on the sleeve of the record. By releasing jazz CDs, Bruford allied himself with the social group comprising jazz musicians, but with his history as a famous rock drummer he sensed that he stood apart from many of his jazz peers. A comment from one of Bruford's former band-mates in Yes implies that Bruford was seen as a misfit even in his early days as a rock drummer: 'having a drummer like Bill Bruford... we could have had a more ordinary drummer, but it wouldn't have worked as well' (Howe quoted in Budofsky, 2006: 6). Budofsky (2006: 8) suggests that drummers are all perhaps a little out of the ordinary, always to some degree *A Part, And Yet Apart*, saying that 'these people are an undeniably unique subset of the music community;' in this way Budofsky recalls notions of drummers realizing individual drummer identities in relation other drummers (Gracyk, 2001; Hogg, 2003; Maffesoli, 1996).

It may be helpful to borrow Bruford's phrase to consider drummers in groups, for the album title encapsulates two defining features of any identifiable group. In order to be *a part of* a group, one must have some things in common with others in the group; conversely, these characteristics, and perhaps others, also set group members aside from outsiders – a group can only be acknowledged if it sits demonstrably *apart from* other groups or individuals. This chapter, then, looks at some of the ways in which drummers have their identities: *A Part, And Yet Apart* – how drummers feel at once part of some groups, and at the same time distinct from and much less a part of others. A drummer's actions and self-awareness in different groups are the realizations of contextual identities within his or her meta-identity as 'drummer'. It is worth recalling

Hogg's (2003: 462) observation that 'the groups we are in profoundly influence how others know us – they are the lens through which people view us.' This is true for people in these groups as well as those on the outside.

Drummers in bands

Introduction

Perhaps the obvious starting point for this exploration is the context of bands – small groups of musicians, in which drummers spend a lot of their time. Monson rightly observes that in a band 'a player's instrument certainly defines his or her musical vantage point, but that vantage point itself is often defined in relationship to those of other instruments' (Monson, 1996: 27). While this is true, the data below show that the 'vantage point' can also be very much defined in relationship to the musicians who play those other instruments. The drum kit is primarily an accompanimental instrument. Bands are also the contexts in which drummers' identities are perhaps the most visible, and in which a drummer is most truly a drummer. Identity realization in bands is highly active; here, we come alive. How do drummers see their roles in bands? To come to an understanding of what drummers do, and who we think we are, it seemed essential to tackle this question of how drummers are drummers *where drummers are drummers!* Playing drums in a band, with other musicians, is an inherently collaborative role; what this role means to drummers, and how it is performed in various contexts, is the subject of the next several pages. For drummers for whom 'drummer' may be their principal meta-identity, a band is where drummers may be seen to be living – according to Waterman (1992) – the most eudaimonically, being true to their 'main identity axis' (Narvaez et al, 2009) or 'core identity' (Hargreaves et al, 2002).

What role to play

Q: What do you call someone who hangs around with musicians?

A: A drummer!

(www.drumjokes.com)

The irony in this joke is that it positions drummers apart from other musicians by highlighting their very presence amongst them, the social group with whom drummers are probably most likely to be associated in the public consciousness. Guy Richman (adult) found that:

although I think we're coming out of it there's still this kind of, 'a five-piece band is four musicians and a drummer' attitude out there. There's a lot of that. I don't think it's right and I don't agree with it... You tend to get it out on the road, and again, I think most people are clued up enough to know that that isn't really the case but they'll still play the game to get kudos out of making a joke out of you.

The drummer is not – as I was oft in my formative years reminded – always regarded as the most sophisticated or sensitive of instrumentalists:

Q: How can tell when there's a drummer at your door?

A: The knocking gets louder and he doesn't know when to come in!

(www.drumjokes.com)

Rock drummer Joey Kramer recalls how:

sometimes when we played, I would get complaints from my partners that they couldn't get in touch with me on stage. I would be so into what I was doing that I was on a totally different planet. As blissful as it is to be in that zone, musicians have to be able to feed off one another. (Kramer, 2009: 79)

Drummer Bill Bruford describes how, early on in his career he had a similar sort of conversion experience:

I came to realize the responsibilities of a musician... I began to lower my defenses and my ego, and start listening to myself and hearing myself from the other musicians' point of

view... There is 'life beyond the cymbals', and it is a drummer's function to listen, to hear it, and to distil its essence into rhythm. (Bruford, 1988: 18)

Following on from his comment above, Bruford emphasizes that in order to work with other musicians, a drummer has to play drums with a consciousness and awareness of the musical contribution of his fellow band members:

It has always made me nervous the way some drummers just seem to deal with rhythm, and ignore the other musical elements: melody, harmony, timbre, pitch. Musicians are expensive to hire, and who wants to hire one who deals with only one-fifth of the music?

(Bruford, 1988: 133)

Monson (1996: 62) indicates that such an attitude is to be expected among drummers of a certain standard, finding it 'clear that professional drummers think about melody, harmony, and timbre, just as other members of the jazz ensemble do... they see that rhythm, pitch contrast, and timbre interact in interesting ways in building a performance.'

A keen awareness of how one's instrument fits into the band was a strong recurring theme from the interview data; Sean Lee (adult) said 'I mean, the thing with drummers, if you over-play, it sounds like you're over-playing; it's like "shut up, no-one gives a fuck about drums – we're listening to the song here."' Sean saw his role in the band as a supportive one, a role with which Guy Richman (adult) also identified, saying that 'it's that whole thing of, that whole craft of playing a song and not getting in the way of the vocal.' Drummer Phil Collins also feels that in many musical contexts 'what we do as drummers should serve the song' (Collins quoted in Barker, 2005b: 57).

Joey Kramer describes a fairly democratic way of making music in his band, recalling that 'that's how the band became a band, by listening to one another and sharing each other's ideas and throwing the ball back and forth... The safety of the collaboration allowed me to be myself' (Kramer, 2009: 77-78). Luke (19) described the similarly collaborative nature of his current band, where his role was less subordinate and all the musicians worked together in a conscious effort to create music collectively:

In this band, we're like a machine, man. We're like, we come together and we bring everything to the table. I'll bring my thing, John'll bring his thing, Loz'll bring his thing, Zach'll bring his thing; and together we are. We're good, but we'll come together and we'll just whop out all these ideas, erm, I class myself as part of the band – it's me, Loz, John and Zach. Most definitely. Most definitely. In a band with people like me, we come together, I class myself as in a band; I don't class myself as 'I do this, blah, blah, blah, I want to separate myself from the group.' 'Cause I think that's, that's wrong. You shouldn't do that, you should come together, man. Most definitely.

Chris (19) talked about how the experience of being in a band can bring drummers close not only musically, but also socially and emotionally, to his or her peers. In his current band:

socially it's awesome as well: we go out and drink a lot, at gigs we just have a laugh. After gigs I mean we do all sorts of stupid things like play golf, hang-gliding. [Laughs] With my old band before we went skiing every year as well, just like you're in a little relationship, you know and, er, they're like kind of your dudes, sort of thing. So it's good.

Nethagshan (13) also found that the relationships with fellow band members were 'cool, as best friends.' This is another point of agreement for Joey Kramer, who says that 'obviously the musical connection is critical, but for me, being in a band is also about the camaraderie and the shared commitment. I need that, and it is what gives me a kind of real joy' (Kramer, 2009: 79). Chris (19) described the intra-band relationships that evolve as 'a special bond,' and said that:

it's like cheating on them if you ever play with any other musicians as well, which I find is really weird. It's like, 'o shit, yeah, I had a jam with this bass player the other day,' and they're like, raise the eyebrow and say 'oh yeah, who's he?' It's kind of weird [laughs].

I have experienced the same sort attachment to a band, and have felt like an adulterer when I have played with other musicians. (Should I tell my band? Or is it best if they don't know? Will they ever find out?) Bruford identifies this sort of band culture from around the start of his career in the late 1960s:

The group culture of the day required that you slit wrists, mingled blood, and till death or success us do part. I would have preferred a looser culture, where musicians brought things to bands, stayed for a while, and moved on. (Bruford, 2009: 63)

He suggests that this type of loyalty to one group or another was a particularly British phenomenon, looking to the model of American jazz bands for his ‘looser culture.’ Whether the culture in which Bruford found himself was then or is now indigenous to the British Isles I cannot say. It does seem peculiar to a particular kind of band though; Chris (19) said that this type of close friendly relationship develops ‘especially with original bands, because you feel a bit tighter like that’ than one may do with a band playing cover versions or playing in a more ‘professional’ environment such as a military band or the pit of a musical theatre production in London’s West End. Neither Ronnie Fawcett (adult) nor Guy Richman (adult), who work in these latter two fields, described the kind of social bonding that Luke and Chris described. This is true of my experience in bands as well; when I work creatively with peers on a project a closer relationship tends to develop than in a more professional environment where one is a hired hand, a freelance.

Sean Lee (adult) described what is probably a rarer social environment in which he operates as a drummer – the environment he describes has cropped up in none of the literature or other empirical data:

We’re in a funny band. And, like I said, I’ve known Rupert for years and years and years. Abby, my little sister, is ten years younger than me. I basically taught her how to walk. So, she tries to give me shit, but there’s no way she can give me shit, because I taught her how to walk. Lisa, I remember Lisa – bass player – when she was that high [gestures about three feet off the ground]. So it’s a funny band – it’s not, it really is not a typical kind of band, that I’m in. Any views anyone has, like ‘you play this, you play that’ they just view each other as who they are, as people, not as musicians.

It is no surprise to discover that bands can be socially different from one another, as well as musically. Guy Richman (adult) underlined the way in which human relationships in a group can have a profound effect on a drummer’s approach to the music; he said that ‘you hear how people play with these people, and I can imagine playing with these people and playing completely differently to the way I play this.’

Finding the groove

On a good day, as a result of working collaboratively with one's fellow musicians in a band, a special sort of psycho-social-musical understanding can develop. When musicians know one another so well – musically – that they are seemingly of one mind, musical interactions in real time can produce the rarest and most exhilarating of feelings, differentiated by the participants from those positive feelings described in the previous chapter that derive from drumming anyway. The notion of 'groove' is an important concept for drummers, and although the musicians in this study are a little fuzzy on precisely what groove is, it is apparent that it is an experiential, embodied phenomenon common to many players and one which all seem to understand in similar terms. A degree of commonality among drummers is to be expected in light of the notions of community, group and tribal membership discussed above in Chapter Two (Hetherington, 1992; Stålhammar, 2006; Wenger, 1998). While groove may be a ubiquitous notion among musicians playing in popular and contemporary styles, it is perhaps indigenous to these musics. Since kit drummers operate almost exclusively in these styles, there is no discussion in this study of groove in, for instance, European or Indian classical music environments (in which I have never heard it discussed). It may be that 'grooving' in the ways that described by participants is achievable exclusively in the context of popular musics, or perhaps that it is only in this cultural environment that musicians use this particular term to describe a phenomenon common to many or indeed to all contexts of collaborative music-making.

In the ways that groove is described by drummers, it recalls Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) concept of 'flow' discussed above in Chapter Three, a concept with close ties to the idea of 'play' proposed by Bennett (1980). Bennett argues that 'the "goal" of cultural work is... to share experiences of "the good" which are intrinsically rewarding' (1980: 15); or, in the words of Csikszentmihalyi (1991: 71), an activity so rewarding that people 'do it for its own sake.' Bennett writes of play:

When suitable material environments are combined with developed cognitive and perceptual skills play becomes possible... play transcends both mentality and physicality by combining them into movement. (Bennett, 1980: 15)

Bennett's words parallel and explain aspects of groove that drummers describe – drummers need to be perceptive (perception is perhaps especially heightened when seeking and achieving groove), and it is very much about the materials that one is (in the case of a drummer) hitting. The drummers are aware of something that is indeed transcendent of both the physical and the mental (although it is both felt and understood), and which is combined in the movements of playing the instrument.

Luke (19) described how, with:

the bassist I'm working with at the moment, Loz, we've formed a relationship where I can anticipate what he's doing, and he can anticipate what I'm going to do next – it's really, really, it's a really *mental* connection! It's really, really good. It's really important to have that relationship with a bass player.

Ian Paice (adult) described having the same sort of relationship on stage with members of his band. Ian explained how what Luke described as a '*mental connection*' comes about:

Well, people say it's like a telepathic thing. It's not – it's subliminal; there is something that he will do and it's, it's a nano-second, you know, you don't know what it is, but you know something's gonna happen, you know, erm, so it's not telepathy but there are little signals that build up over the course of weeks, months, years, and you don't even know they're there; you just know something is gonna happen. And at that point you're, you're open for the change, whatever it is, and you can react to it really quickly. Now, if you don't have that little signal, you're gonna miss it. But it's not telepathy, it's repetition of doing things. I really don't believe that that, that exists, not in musical terms – I think it's far too complex for that. But you just have little miniscule little signals you actually give each other without knowing you're doing it. You know, sometimes as a drummer it can just be a push beat; sometimes it can be where you stick an accent on the snare drum and think 'ah, something's gonna change here' or a bass player will just hit and you go 'ah, he's gonna do something.' As I say, it doesn't matter what it is – you just know something's going to happen.

As well as, perhaps a part of, the hyper-sensitivity that can develop between musicians who work together, there is a special kind of togetherness that Sean Lee (adult) described having with his guitarist, Rupert:

I've always been in a band with Rupert. So me and him have this kind of – we know what each other's thinking, a lot of the time... Yeah, there's something really, really odd about it, isn't there? 'Cause it's like; we had a drum tech who – I turned up late for sound-check so he had to do the sound-check for me, and he's a great drummer, he's a brilliant drummer. But he couldn't get the simplest of the tunes that we do. And he was playing all the parts exactly right, but it just wasn't *right*, you know? That's brilliant! I've got it – you haven't!

There is no tangible reason why Sean Lee should 'have it' while his drum tech did not, for as Sean said, the tech was a highly proficient drummer. However, musicians will often find that a certain feel is achievable with some players that remains mysteriously unattainable with even the likeliest of others. There are three musicians with whom I have felt this degree of closeness when performing – when I play with Steve, Hannah or Doug I become part of something so much bigger than the sum of its constituent parts. When two or more of us find the opportunity to play together, it is always a wonderful and beautiful thing, the like of which I have experienced in no other domain. The music is effortless; the sensation is transcendental! Bruford (2009: 347) identifies with this, calling it 'the pure enjoyment of the music-making itself' and admits that 'we musicians go a long way, literally, in search of that most intense of feelings.' In their exploration of this phenomenon, Keil & Feld (1994: 66) refer to groove as the 'vital drive.' Mickey Hart, who has spent over 40 years as the drummer for the Grateful Dead, describes this unique phenomenon as 'the magic ride, the groove' (Hart, 1990: 230). Spurling observes the following, which, although not written in the context of an exploration of musical phenomena, speaks to the experiences of drummers:

There are times of almost total integration between consciousness and body, in those moments when we are truly "at home" in our bodies (such as, perhaps, during sexual intercourse) and experience our body not as a screen between us and the world, but as our opening onto the world. (Spurling, 1977: 24)

I have had conversations with musical colleagues in which we have discussed how the feeling of making music can be akin that of making love; inasmuch as this is another common and shared human experience which can produce feelings of intense

togetherness, recalling Bennett's comment, above, that 'play transcends both mentality and physicality by combining them into movement' (Bennett, 1980: 15).

Ian Paice (adult) talked about treasuring the same sort of experiences occurring on stage with his band. He was relieved to find such moments of transcendence a little elusive:

Coming on stage and being brilliant every night – you can't do it, you wouldn't *want* to do it. Course you want to do it – you can't, because if you were brilliant every night that would just be normal, that would just be average.

Guy Richman (adult), like Ian Paice a highly experienced performer, also found such moments to be elusive. Such is their draw, however, that he said they are the reason he, recalling Bruford's remark, returned to work each day to play the drums:

It's like: you go and play a round of golf and you slice, and you hook, and you hit the ground more than you do the ball, but you'll have one shot and it'll go in a straight line, and you'll come back tomorrow to play golf just to play that one shot again. And that's what music is. You'll have that moment, you'll hit a groove and go 'fuck, yeah' and it's gone. I've always found that a very interesting talking point: define the word 'groove.' What is groove?! Again, to me, there is no definition for it because everybody's perception of a groove is different. To me it's about how it makes me feel when the tempo's right, or the bass player and the drummer they're just chugging away and it hits that pocket that moves you. That's the groove. The hairs on the arm come – that's the groove – when it's in the groove it's when, essentially from my point of view as a drummer, is when the bass player, the guitarist, the pianist and the drummer are all hitting the notes at the same time. That's a groove. It's a oneness, that's what a groove is, for me.

Guy's final comment recalls the ideas of intimacy suggested by Spurling (1977) and Bennett (1980).

The notion of 'groove' is slippery and tough to define, as Guy Richman (adult) showed; but it is something about which drummers frequently talk – all of the adult interview participants and teenagers older than 15 brought it up. Monson describes in similar terms to Mickey Hart and Guy Richman how grooving happens in the context of a jazz band; she calls it a 'satisfying musical journey:'

At any given moment in a performance, the improvising artist is always making musical choices in relationship to what everyone else is doing. These cooperative choices, moreover, have a great deal to do with achieving (or failing to achieve) a satisfying musical journey – the feeling of wholeness and exhilaration, the pleasure that accompanies a performance well done. (Monson, 1996: 27)

A drummer's 'groove,' then, tends to reveal itself only in the company of other musicians – it is a way of playing with people that feels really good. It brings to mind Laing's (1961: 81) notion of 'complimentary identity' – in the right conditions, the presence and feel of another musician's playing can help a drummer to play the drums – as well as to be a drummer and to feel like a drummer – as well as possible. Jazz drummer Rashied Ali puts it thus:

'I sure be trying to get next to whoever I'm playing with. I'm trying to get right inside them, to just *think* with them with one mind... and sometimes we can get so close, man, until we all sound like one person.' (Ali quoted in Wilmer, 1977: 172)

Drummers most frequently singled out the bass as the instrument with which they would seek to establish a groove. Interestingly, the drummers seem to refer interchangeably to the instrument and the player:

Jamie M. (17) When you're playing you're locking into the bass, you're listening to the melodies around you – it's just trying to, everyone's different – you have to try and figure out what they're doing and lock into them.

Guy Richman (adult) The bass player and the drummer together create a meter, and maybe a groove for others to sit on – together we're a platform.

Sam (20) Everything's just based around, like, the bass and drums, and it's just like, okay, well it has to be tight, you know? It has to be solid and the group has to just, it just has to be there and yeah, you know, definitely.

When Sam said 'it just has to be there,' he touched on the ineffability of groove. 'Groove' is probably what jazz musicians in the 1930s and '40s used to call 'swing' –

in the sense of a feel rather the popular big band music style of the time. ‘Groove,’ like ‘swing,’ is both a noun and verb. You can play swing music without swinging, but there’s really not much point – nobody will be dancing, tapping their feet or smiling. As the title of the Duke Ellington/Irving Mills song says, ‘It don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that swing’ (Ellington & Mills, 1931). Anyone can bang out a rhythm, but that’s not the idea – the aim is to *groove*. And you can play a groove without grooving; as Stevie Wonder sings in his song ‘Sir Duke’: ‘Just because a record has a groove/Doesn’t make it in the groove’ (Wonder, 1977). From my experiences as a drummer, it is unusual for ‘groove’ to be used in the context of jazz rhythms where the beat is swung (played with a quasi-triplet feel). It is also uncommon, although not unknown, for straight (even, duplet-based rhythms) to be discussed in terms of ‘swing.’ The terms appear to be to a degree interchangeable, as well as being more-or-less context-specific; this was not an issue that arose from the literature or that was discussed with participants. Another term used by drummers to describe swing and groove is ‘pocket’ (Smith & Bersh, 2011) – Guy Richman (adult) mentioned this, above – although it is less widely used; this may be perhaps because of its limitations as a noun, whereas both ‘groove’ and ‘swing’ are also evocative verbs.

As Duke Ellington also allegedly said about music, ‘if it feels good, it *is* good’ – therein lies the groove, the swing or the pocket. Conversely, if it does *not* feel good, then the effects can be quite devastating for a drummer, as Sean Lee (Adult) expressed (above), saying that in certain situations ‘I hate it.’ Guy Richman (adult) said ‘it’s all about the soul, it’s about your soul.’ If the music is not working well, then Guy experienced a sense that ‘my soul’s dying.’ I know what he means. I have maintained for years that the sensation of a great performance – public or otherwise – is the best feeling for me; a disappointing experience on the drums can be thoroughly and profoundly depressing. Most of the study’s participants did not discuss instances of negative feelings when drumming; the experience of drumming’s emotional rollercoaster is, however, articulated by Mike Mannering (adult):

Do I like playing drums? It depends on the situation... I’ve been in situations where I’ve just thought ‘o come on, let’s get this over with,’ you know – those are the times you don’t enjoy

it. But the times you do enjoy it, you kind of, well, they're the times you remember the least aren't they? It goes the quickest, I think.

The changing sense of the passage of time is something not unique to drumming or even to musical experience, although it is one with which I am happily familiar from drumming. Bruford describes how he experiences as a drummer:

this most delicious of feelings, the sense of having pulled something unique out of the hat... this is what I do it for... I make music like this in real time with a feeling that can be as intense as any other I've known. (Bruford, 2009: 330)

Amen to that. My drum teacher once told me to ensure my playing was always infectious and irresistible – perhaps therein lies the secret of the groove, also helpfully explained by Dr. Evil when he tries to capture the comparably intangible notion of mojo: 'what the French call a certain "I don't know what"' (Myers, 1999).

Groove, continued: The rhythm of life

For rhythm to be infectious and irresistible, it must be shared. Rhythm is part of human biology – it is perhaps the first way in which we experience the world. There is a growing body of research which strongly suggests that humans are neuropsychobiologically (Welch, 2001: 22) programmed to respond to music, and to rhythm especially, more so even than to speech. Winkler et al (2009) find compelling evidence to suggest that a feeling and affinity for rhythm is an innate human attribute – the embodied experience of rhythm (Spurling, 1977) is an unavoidably human one. Ongoing research with infants is being conducted by Burton and associates at the University of Delaware; preliminary findings appear to point in a similar direction to those of the Winkler et al study (2009). Kratus (2010, in conversation with the author) is of the belief that humans are enculturated in the womb, in the incessant, inescapable presence of an audible, throbbing heartbeat that gives us rhythm and leaves us with a need to reconnect with this. Another researcher exploring these connections is Williams (2008: 6), who suggests of Hip-hop music produced for listening to in cars, that 'perhaps the automobile functions on one level as a symbolic

womb... perhaps we feel the regular, booming bass beat in a car stereo as similar to a heartbeat.' Drummer Mickey Hart feels that he is a part of 'the brotherhood of the drum' (Hart, 1990: 211), and 'that you are rhythmically related, and in drumming that's the same as blood' (Hart, 1990: 213). Hart thus invokes a notion of unity and a deep bond among drummers – we have rhythm, the groove, in our very DNA. Maybe drummers, as purveyors of rhythm, are more attuned to this elementally human phenomenon; perhaps part of a drummer's role is to expedite contagion.

Akin to Mickey Hart's awareness of his relationship (culturally as much as figuratively or biologically) with his fellow drummers, Scratchy Fingers (adult) expressed similar sentiments about the understanding of a shared heritage among drummers that is internal and invisible. Scratchy explained:

I started playing 'cause it's something that is inside me. Drums, rhythm and beats were something that's genetic. I mean I re-, I don't know where, you know, I've tracked it down exactly to, you know, my ancestral African family, where I came from, where I think I was a drummer, or, or my grand, or my ancestors were drummers or were musicians, you know?

Scratchy's sense of having rhythm inside him, and having little option but to respond to that by drumming, is something that I recognize very well. I remember that from when I was a primary school student, at around age ten, I have found the articulation of rhythm irresistible. This early sense of the drummer identity as an embodied experience was recalled in interview by two participants:

Mike Mannering (adult) I remember I always used to have a groove going at some point when I was at school... I just had this rhythm that I was playing all the time... I don't know if there's any reason I didn't sort of see somebody and think 'that's what I want to be.'

Cath Lovell (adult) If there was a drum kit nearby in a room I used to actually shake and get sweaty. Yeah. Just wanting to get on it so much. Just, even looking at it was horrible. It was just tormenting me. Well I was, I started when I was 11, I think. I was really lucky, but I, up until that point for a few short years I still used to get kind of anxiety near a drum kit. It was ridiculous. Oh yeah, yeah, I, I used to get anxiety. That's how I knew. It's really weird. It's like falling in love in some ways.

Bruford also describes how for him rhythm was something inescapable and pervasive, and related to something deep inside him:

As a teenager, I would synchronise my being with the clickety-clack of the fast train up to London from Sevenoaks to Charing Cross. Rhythm seemed to be everywhere, but no one else seemed to notice it... I knew it wasn't to be found in machinery but in the human heart – each one with its individual, measurable rhythmic pattern. (Bruford, 2009: 27)

Mike Mannering (adult) described a continued emotional and embodied experience of drumming, when he said about his drumming that 'I'm a sort of feel player, so it's gotta feel right.' The notion of feel is really the same as 'groove' – that intangible *something* that good musicians are aware of and that bad ones patently are not. It is not unique to drummers, but it is an extremely important part of what we do. The word 'feel' suggests tactility, embodiment and emotion – human connection. When a drummer plays, he or she is the embodiment of the rhythm; you have to *be* the rhythm in order to play it.

Drummers also describe a sense of satisfaction derived from sharing the groove. Sean Lee (adult) recalled Frith's (1996) and Shank's (1994) notions of musicians' identities being constructed in collaboration with their audiences, when he said:

Do I like playing in front of an audience? I do, yeah, I do like it. Like I said, I love playing live and hate recording. I don't know what it is – you kind of get, there's a kind of nervous energy going on, but it's all about the moment... and it's all about, you know, everyone there enjoying the moment as well.

Like Sean, Mike Mannering (adult) enjoyed the immediate interaction of an audience with a live band, and with the rhythm that he was creating: he said 'I like playing to people dancing – that's what I like, I do like that.' There is a sense among drummers that as they share their rhythms, these are also embodied by those people who hear and feel them. Wilmer cites an anonymous male drummer who sees a mysterious, intra-musical power in the rhythms created by Sean and Mike for audiences; he believes that women especially may be drawn to male musicians because of it:

“Usually it’s a man up there doing it and it’s a woman out there, and the woman feels that she must have this. The thing he’s projecting, it’s coming from somewhere else but it comes through him and projects to the woman out there. She feels that the spirit is strong but she can’t collect that thing where it’s coming from. And so she has to collect the person it’s coming through!” (Wilmer, 1977: 198)

The drummer here does not suggest that being a drummer or musician is inherently attractive to others – rather, it is something else that is attractive, something that is channelled – embodied – by musicians such as himself: the ‘spirit,’ the groove.

Scratchy Fingers (adult) recalled, in a similar vein, an incident early in a relationship with a woman, when she drove roughly 160 miles after work one Friday evening to hear him play music:

Erm, when she er, turned up er, it was just like erm, when she drove, like, I couldn’t believe, basically, when I was on stage and I saw this woman ‘cause I’m thinking ‘how’d she get here?’ you know? ‘How’d she turn up,’ you know? ‘She’s s’posed to be in London’, you know. And it brought home to me er, like, how important er, erm, like, rhythm erm, and what it does to other people ‘cause, like, this, you know, my rhythm done something to this woman that made her (you know what I mean) risk her life, d’you know what I mean? She must’ve been, you know, doing a ton, at least 90, 100 miles an hour down the motorway to get there. But, you know, she missed the first song, by the way, but, wow! D’you know what I mean? Absolutely amazing, you know? And she just wanted to hear, (you know what I mean?), me playing, drumming, er, and I was just amazed. I just, just find that absolutely amazing, that someone would actually do that, you know, you know, for rhythm.

Particularly striking here is that, like Wilmer’s anonymous drummer, Scratchy Fingers attributed the woman’s motives in pursuing him with such intent not to any innate or affected qualities of his own, but to the irresistible rhythm that he played, that he embodied, that was running through him at all times. Ginger Baker describes a similar experience from gigs in the early 1960s:

One night I became aware of this beautiful dark-haired chick in front of the stage who could really dance...

She moves her body in time to the beat of the drum
A smile of abandon,

Enticing, exciting,
Long legs and long raven hair.

Arrows of instant attraction
Hit home like a sweet neat rum
A flame of passion
Desiring, inspiring
Love and a lifetime as one.
(Baker, 2010: 24)

Like Scratchy Fingers and Wilmer's anonymous drummer, Baker attributes the attraction of the 'dark-haired chick' to the allure of the rhythm and the drums. It would seem likely that it is not only women who are drawn to the rhythm that is irresistibly purveyed by drummers, although perhaps heterosexual male drummers are not often as interested in the effects that their music may have on others of their own sex. (Intriguingly, none of the study's female participants expressed a sense of their grooviness being remotely attractive to males in the audience.) There is an impression from these drummers that a drummer's identity in performance may be in a sense, as Shank (1994) suggests, only fully actualized (Laing, 1968) once it has been acknowledged by an audience. Acknowledgement and recognition by an audience is not, however, to be mistaken for the same thing as being given an identity by that audience. Unlike the suggestions in Chapter Three by Frith (1996), Laing (1961) and Shank (1994), there is no sense here of drummers *sharing in* their identities with audiences; rather, performing for and with an audience is an enjoyable and vital context in which drummers go about the active realization of their identities as drummers. There is a clear sense in which drummers share in a feeling of rhythm, of groove, and in their awareness of how this can affect and effect interactions with people. Drummer Terry Bozzio, remarks thus upon the connection between drummers and the groove; he says that we:

lay down the beat, make people feel it and want to dance, dazzle them with complex polyrhythms or blinding speed and put them in touch with metaphorical vibrations and rhythms of the universe. (Bozzio, 2010: 3)

Bozzio recalls the ideas of transcendence suggested by Hart (1990) and Bennett (1980), and highlights the importance of the embodied experience of rhythm for both drummers and audiences.

Ian Paice (adult) offered a unique perspective on interaction with audiences, as his band has enjoyed a very successful and high-profile 40-year career. He talked about how, during concerts in the first years of the band's life, the band would turn most of their songs into extended group improvisations, as discussed above. Ian recalled that perceived audience attitudes enabled the band to perform in this way, saying that 'the audience were either really into it, and would pay attention to every note, or were so stoned you didn't know what was going on.' He felt that, today, audiences' expectations in concerts have changed, and that this affects how the band members interact with one another on stage. It is as though the songs – the Deep Purple canon – have become reified, and belong as much to the audience as to the band, so that they cannot be altered without upsetting the implied transaction between band and audience. Ian said:

I just don't believe the audiences are the same in what they want, and what they expect is totally different... now some of those songs, the formula is in the audience's mind as well. And if you differ too much from it they'll get very confused. In some of the songs, yes, they will allow you to do that still. Some of them won't; some of them are now entrenched in concrete, and within two or three percent you can't change them very much because they become lesser things, and that's, that's the glory of having successful music, and also the downfall – so many people get to know it.

Ian acknowledged the integral role that audiences play in how the band make music; he was aware very strongly of being a drummer-for-an-audience. Ian's remarks suggest an altogether more down-to-earth understanding of being a drummer than is implied in the metaphorical language of Bozzio (2010), Hart (1990) and other interviewees.

Standing out from the crowd

Usually, as Guy Richman (adult) pointed out, ‘the drummer’s the only guy in the band playing drums.’ Although on one level this is painfully obvious, what Guy meant is that, owing to his or her unique position in an ensemble, a drummer has a degree of autonomy and power. In larger bands there may be several trumpets and saxophones, and there may be a string section; in a rock band there could be two guitarists. There is very rarely more than one drummer in band, so whoever is playing drums in a particular band has the potential to make quite a statement as an individual. On the inside the cover of his 1997 album *Permission*, drummer Pete Fairclough (as mentioned above) asks obliquely ‘whose permission do you need?’ In conversation with me, Fairclough explained how ‘permission’ refers to a musician’s (a drummer’s) choice and conviction to play music in an authoritative and authentic way. The answer to this (rhetorical) question is that one needs only one’s own permission, and that one should be true to oneself in how and in what music one plays – recalling again Waterman’s (1992) ‘eudaimonism’ and the ‘ontological security’ of Laing (1960) and Giddens (1991).

Some drummers embrace and actively seek out opportunities to be individualistic in a band, for as Phil Collins (pop/rock drummer) says:

Of course, if you can get your stuff in there too, that’s great. In a band like Genesis I played what was right for the song, but you want to show people what you can do and Brand X gave me more freedom to do that. (Collins quoted in Barker, 2005b: 57)

I empathize with Collins. I have played in numerous bands where my role has been to play discreetly in the background. This is an important drummer-ly skill, and satisfying up to a point; but it is also important to me to play in bands where I have the freedom to make my mark on a piece of music in a way that is authentically *me*. Luke (19) found frustration playing in bands where he had to constrain himself:

I’ve been in various bands and I’ve just been ‘the drummer,’ where my job is *just* to drum. And its just like, this is bollocks. I’m a drummer, but I have musical knowledge of how to play guitar, and how to play bass and key melodies and stuff like that, and it’s just like, urgh, this is bollocks, screw this! But, at the end of the day, it’s a job really. Yeah, I do the job for

that, but I don't really enjoy it if I'm in a band like that. Bands like that, it's like, even though I'm drumming, doing something musical, and I'm enjoying it, it's like I want to give a bit more.

Luke was not entirely content to remain in the background when he played drums; nor did he think that other drummers should behave in that way:

What really annoys me is when you see drummers and they're just playing the beat. I mean, that's cool, but you've gotta whack the shit into them sometimes! You gotta hit 'em... It's not like drummers should be in the back of the room; it's like I want to be the front of the band – it's just like, that's just the way I am... what I do is a reflection of my personality, basically.

Chris (19), as Luke, felt that a vital part of any drummer's role is to be overtly engaged in a performance:

I think live, personally, I think there's, I think a really important part of it is, er, visual performance as well. I think that's quite important. I think for a drummer you have to look... adds to the whole vibe on stage, and the presence and everything you look like you're really, like, into it and you're giving it some as well.

These were sentiments felt also by Senan (19), who said 'there is an onus on you to actually perform, which I've only just sort of come to accept, 'cause I didn't want to accept it; but I think you do need to.' Luke (19) and Senan (19) touched on what Wilmer (1977: 158) has identified as 'the tradition of the drummer as showman.'

Several drummers feel that standing out as an individual is an important part of being a drummer. Bill Bruford believes that that 'we all want our own personal musical signature, recognizable from a hundred paces away' (Bruford, 1988: 51). John Densmore feels that it is incumbent upon any drummer to 'find your own uniqueness' (Densmore, 1990: 307-8). Joey Kramer also thinks it imperative for players to be recognizable, saying that:

any musician, to really stand out, has to have his own signature, the distinctive things that mark the way he plays. Otherwise, he's just the same as the next pretty good musician, or the next really accomplished, technically adept musician. (Kramer, 2009: 73)

Joe Morello thinks that a signature style of drumming is not only desirable, but inevitable, and that ‘after you’ve been playing for a while you’ll develop an individualized style’ (Morello, 2006: 5). Phil Collins laments what he perceives to be the passing of uniqueness among some contemporary drummers. He says that ‘when I read about today’s very technically able drummers I wonder if they have their own signature, or whether you would know it’s them simply by hearing them. I’ve seen drummers with great technique, but felt nothing emotionally’ (quoted in Barker, 2005b: 56-57).

While Phil Collins seems to equate an individual signature sound with contributing emotionally to the music being played, drummer Ed Blackwell became a famously sensitive accompanist; Wilmer observed of him in performance with Ornette Coleman that ‘he keeps his head down and his lips drawn in; a picture of concentration. Coleman has only to breathe in a different way, it seems, for Blackwell to sense his change of direction’ (Wilmer, 1977: 179). Of his empathic playing with other performers, Blackwell says “‘there’s no certain way to play. I’ve never had no certain way to play the drums, regardless of who I’m playing with”” (Blackwell, quoted in Wilmer, 1977: 187). Blackwell interestingly says that when he plays this intimately with other musicians, he is truly ‘playing my *own self*’ (in Wilmer, 1976: no page no.): ‘I drum, therefore I am’? Perhaps Blackwell’s uniqueness was his invisibility – the antithesis of what Bruford and Morello describe. Opinions among participants were similarly mixed.

Kate Tatum (adult) recognized a quality in her playing whereby she perhaps put her own stamp on the music she played:

I certainly like doing, doing a Bo Diddley. Just ‘cause there’s, so much stuff you can do with it. You can, you know, you can really like kind of like deconstruct it, like [makes drum sounds] Or you can, you know, like [makes more complex drumming sounds] you can just do that like the full thing. Or do it round the kit or do it on one drum or – that’s kind of like one of my favourite things to do. Erm, I think that kind of comes through a lot in my drumming.

While Kate quietly acknowledged that using this particular rhythm in much of what she does may give her a recognizable style, Gemma Hill (adult)'s comments are more guarded; when asked if she had a signature style, she replied:

Mm, not really. I think maybe, if I, er, I don't know, I think I'm just quite straight really. I don't wanna be straight – I'd quite like to have my own thing going on, but I think maybe I'm quite dynamic, um.

Gemma would have liked to be recognizable, but was not confident that she stood out from the crowd. Chris (19), was similarly uncertain, saying 'I'd like to think that... there is some original, sort of, blend of influences there,' although not yet confident that he stood out.

Jamie M. (17) said:

A signature style? Yes, I suppose. I've got; it's weird, it's difficult, it's hard to say. Because, erm, I know what I want to sound like but because of your influences it's hard to, not to sound like who you want to sound like. But um, everyone's different though. Yeah, I suppose, yeah; not at the moment properly, but maybe a bit later.

Gifty (19) was similarly cautious, saying that:

when you listen to music you think 'I can play that but in a different way' – that's what I think... I do have a style, that is... it's not in a really defined way; it's not if you played it to someone else, you can't say 'o yeah, this is Gifty's style.'

Guy Richman (adult), like Ed Blackwell, positively rejected the whole notion of standing out, and for similar reasons:

A signature style? No. Obviously I got into the business and realized that if you're going to be successful, i.e. *work*, you've got to have a command and an understanding of different styles, and different styles of music so I suppose, I suppose if you like, I'm a Jack of All Trades: I can play virtually every style that I *know* musically wise – Latin, rock, pop, funk, jazz. It's that whole thing of... that whole craft of playing a song and not getting in the way of the vocal, and you hear how people play with these people and I can imagine playing with these people and playing completely differently to the way I play this. It's the emotive side of the singer that does it for me. Especially, again, it's all about the soul, it's about your soul.

Both Guy Richman and Ed Blackwell imply the opposite to Phil Collins – that it is in being a background accompanist that one’s emotional contribution is made possible. Lisa Tring (adult) similarly felt much the same way, saying of her own approach to drumming that ‘I just kind of like to make nice music, good music and play for the song really – that’s what I enjoy doing.’

Luke (19)’s preferred approach to playing the drums was just about the polar opposite of providing a sensitive accompaniment. He apparently makes a point of not trying to blend in – the band, rather, should perhaps fit with him:

I think, individual style – I try not to be like everybody else. I try to, like I said try to do my own individual thing, and I don’t try and fit in with bands and stuff like that – you know, I’ll play this, this and this... ‘Cause you know, you learn all your technique and stuff like that, and that’s when you can start putting in your own attitude and personality toward drums.

Sean Lee (adult) presented a different take on uniqueness than all of the other participants. He had only ever played in two bands; in one of those and he had played with Rupert for almost 20 years. He explained how his identity has come about as a drummer in that context:

I don’t think I have got that kind of, but, like I said before, there has been people who have played with Rupert, and I think I get my style off him, if I’m honest. Yeah; so it’s not really my style. If I sat down and played 12 songs with Rupert, and then you actually took the guitars off it, then that would be my style. It’s just about feel, looking at the person you’re playing with. Vibing and stuff. I don’t like that word, ‘vibing,’ but you have to use it now and again.

It seems that Sean, through playing the music that he plays, brought about his individuality through collaboration with Rupert, his guitarist. His drummer identity came from the context of that musical relationship. This is a phenomenon also recognized by Shank in his study of bands in Austin, Texas; he notes that often for musicians, ‘the band becomes the unit of identity construction’ (Shank, 1994: 140), recalling again Laing’s (1961: 81) notion of ‘complimentary identity.’

Questionnaire data

Of the 100 drummers who responded to questionnaires, 34 said they felt that they had a signature style. Seventy-four said that they either have or would like to have a signature style; it is possible (and seems likely) that this percentage would have been higher, had the supplementary question ‘if “no” would you like one?’ not been left off of the first 28 collected questionnaires. Sixteen respondents said that, like Sean Lee and Guy Richman, they did not wish to be recognizable in this way; despite the change in the later questionnaires, the vast majority of drummers appear to desire a signature style.

Drum solos

One way in which a drummer can make him- or herself noticed is through playing drum solos. Max Roach was one of the finest drummers to play the part of soloist. So masterful were his accomplishments that Peter Fairclough describes Roach’s music as ‘Beethoven on the Drums’ (1998, in conversation with the author). This is not to suggest that Roach’s famous jazz drumming sounded anything like the music of exemplary classical composers continuing the tradition of the First Viennese School; rather, the implication is that Roach’s mastery of melody, timbre and form were unprecedented in solo drum kit performance. The ability to play drum solos has, since Roach’s example, arguably become part of the requisite skill set for the competent, all-round drummer. Other exemplars of the drum solo would include Joe Morello, Terry Bozzio, Gary Husband, Chad Wackerman, and Buddy Rich. One of the striking features about drum solos is that they shine a spotlight on the question of to what extent a drummer is perceived to be a part of or apart from the rest of the band. In performing a solo, the drummer is highlighted as a member of the group but is also simultaneously singled out for scrutiny, attention and applause. The same is of course true for any member of an ensemble who takes a solo, cadenza or exposed section of a piece.

Jazz writer Rex Stewart recalls about drummer Sid Catlett that “he topped off the sequence by doing a stick-bouncing and stick-twirling spectacle that caused the whole

house to burst into applause... Catlett's performance was the epitome of grace and beauty” (Stewart, interviewed in Korall, 1990: 192). In an interview at the height of his career in 1941, Catlett was asked whether he considered musicianship or showmanship to be the more important to him. He replied, 'showmanship - think of all the great musicians you've met who are playing for cakes because they haven't got showmanship' (Catlett, cited in Hutton, 1991: 14). Attitudes vary, of course, among drummers; the following conversation about Max Roach shows how Roach's approach to soloing was very different from that of Sid Catlett's:

King - He was very relaxed, um, sort of composed, he didn't throw himself around a lot, you know. It was all very much under control.

Clarke - None of the dance band sort of throwing the sticks about and lots of frenzy

King - Exactly, yeah.

(Clarke & King, 2008)

Roach was a master of purveying emotion. One of the most touching and unforgettable experiences of my life occurred in 1997 when I witnessed a performance by Max Roach, playing a drum kit accompaniment to his son's narration of Martin Luther King Junior's 'I have a dream' speech. Although not strictly a solo, the performance was nothing short of incredible. His drumming was beautiful, generous, emotive. As Roach's contemporary and fellow jazz drummer Ed Blackwell says, “drums... can suggest moods... you can tell stories with drums...the drums can be something just as melodic as any other instrument... if you *sing* with the drums, then you really get it to happen' (Blackwell quoted in Wilmer, 1977: 158).

Roach, Catlett and Blackwell all played jazz, a genre where soloing on one's instrument is a vital and respected skill. For drummers who play primarily or entirely outside of jazz, the skill is not so important:

Sean Lee (adult)

found solos to be pointless

Guy Richman (adult)

To me a drum solo when you're the only one on the stage doing a solo, it's not purveying music, it's just showing off what you've learnt; I've just never been into that.

Sam (20) I don't really spend time on solos – I spend more time just er, well, right now anyway, trying to tighten up my grooves and just my playing in general and, like, yeah, don't really. I mean I could try and chop a few – do a few chops here and there, but no solos, like.

Mike Mannering (adult) I've never really enjoyed – it's stupid, being a jazz player – but I'm not, I've never been into sort of drum solos particularly at all, or that whole side of it – that's not what turns me on about it, at all, in fact – quite the opposite. I get really bored with that whole jazz format of 'everyone take a solo.'

Ronnie Fawcett (Adult) would be ready just in case a solo should be required, but she too did not relish the prospect, saying that:

I mean, if odd little things came in, they came in, but I mean, yeah, I suppose the only thing is, is to have a couple of, well, up your sleeve, of the different types, yeah, so if you are feeling a bit under the weather, or [laughs] you can pull something out of the bag.

Kate Tatum (adult) was not a jazz drummer but nevertheless rather liked the idea of drums solos, saying 'I'll quite happily sit there and listen to drums all night... without anything else infecting it,' but that, 'erm, but I've never actually done one. I've done kinda songs that are based round drumming, like Bo Diddley stuff, er, with screeching guitar over, which is fun, but kinda a drum solo per se, no I've not.'

A drummer who had enjoyed playing countless solos throughout his career was Ian Paice (adult), who admitted that 'I do' like to play drum solos. Increasingly, however, he found that he would rather not play them when performing with his band because:

I'm finding it more and more difficult to play them on stage by nature of the fact that generally they're right at the end of a show, and obviously you're quite tired by that point, you're starting to hear less... and it's very difficult when you, when you've been on a big stage for knocking on two hours and working very, very hard, to have the same command of the instructions to your hands as you would have at the beginning of an act.

He said that 'if there was a place to do a solo in, say the first 45/50 minutes of a show, it would be a lot easier just 'cause I could hear what I was doing.' Instead of playing drum solos in this context, Ian Paice would rather perform them in the comparative

calm of a drum kit master class, where the environment allows for a more nuanced and musical performance:

And it's not just a case of going on with a double kick and doing massively loud triplets for ages – anybody could do that... you try to do stuff which is a little more demanding, it's more difficult. But when I'm doing my own drum clinic, yes I do enjoy it because I've got nothing against me, and I can actually hear everything I'm playing. Erm, and some of the things I like to play are a little more subtle and the notes are far more important, and it's important that not just the audience hear them, but I can hear them too... If the drums are singing to me then I'm quite happy [inaudible], but if they're not going to talk to me then I don't want to play. It's as simple as that.

Ultimately, Ian said:

I will play 'em [drum solos] with [Deep] Purple, but there are nights I won't because the sound just isn't there, I'm not feeling very excited about being on my own, and I haven't got the spirit to do it – I will not feel good about it.

Jon Hiseman (adult) is famous for his drum solos, and said that 'I do like playing drum solos, yes I do.' He found, like Ian Paice, that the context of any solo was all-important to his engagement with it:

Firstly, the acoustics have a big effect on me; secondly the tune that's used to kick me off has a big effect on the drum solo. But don't forget that I did a lot of drum solos with bass or bass players and keyboard players playing alongside me, because I thought that that put – my problem with drums solos is that nothing's in context, and you know... so I've done a lot stuff where I set something up on the feet and play across the top of it, because to me that puts it in context. And again, if I've got a bass player playing a riff alongside me, or a bass player and keyboard player, that puts what I'm doing in context and I much prefer that, you know.

Like Kate Tatum (adult) then, Jon Hiseman preferred drum solos that were not disconnected from the music around them. Jon described the way that he conceived of drum solos:

I try to make it as musical as I can, and I try to make it not technical; I try to have a story and I try to play movements – in fact I don't *try* to do anything, it's just the way I do it. And I don't

have any technical games that I'm aware of, I just have a lot of stuff. And when people say to me 'well how do you put the solo together?' I say 'look, I have a lot of jokes, but I don't necessarily tell 'em in the same order' – that's basically what it's all about. If any chops are shown off, it's only because it's inside the game, and also because I see it as an opening flower – it starts off at one place and gets to another place, and that inevitably means it gets louder and faster. But that's, that's, that's not the meat of the solo to me. And I've used the same ending to all the solos I've done for 25 years, because the ending, again, is just something that you do, but it's not part of the art to me – it's a little game that I play, I have, I've played for years and I don't try to find new ones 'cause I'm not interested in that. The drum solo, to me, is what goes on in the first third or two thirds of it – that's the interesting part to me.

It is interesting to see the way that Hiseman combines creativity with reproduction in his understanding of his solos.

In word-play in the title of his album of drum kit solos, *About Time Too!*, Jon Hiseman implies that the drum solos, as much as the groove playing that he spends the rest of each concert doing, may be about (keeping) time. Over the three years that he taught me to play drums, Pete Fairclough repeatedly reminded me, lest I forget the central point of my art and craft, that whatever I was doing as a drummer, 'it's all about time.' It seems that drum solos split drummers in to two camps – those who for whom the solo is an integral part of what it is to be a performing musician, and those for whom the solo is an anomalous feature of a live set, an unwelcome distraction from the music. In concluding the sleeve notes for his album of solos, Hiseman justifies the recording's release with the words 'I simply felt it was about time' (Hiseman, 1986). These words form a common thread among drummers, and are the subject of the next discussion.

Guardian of the time

Jazz drummer Elvin Jones is quoted as having said that “the role of the drummer is primarily to keep time” (Jones quoted in Wilmer, 1977: 157); this is a recurring theme throughout the data:

Matt (18) I think it’s about time – the main drummer’s job, if you ask anyone, they’re all going to say “time”: you’ve got to keep the band in time.

Guy Richman (adult) Fundamentally a drummer’s job is to keep time... the drummer’s job is timekeeping.

Luke (19) Everybody relies on you to keep in time.

Chris (19) Everyone listens to you for time.

A sense of responsibility has emerged – that it is incumbent upon drummers to keep time for the rest of their band.

Callum (16) introduced another dimension to the role when he spoke about keeping time:

I’d say it’s sort of, it’s sort of like being conductors... you’re going to keep the time, you’re going to count people in and let people know when the section’s coming to an end... everyone seems to turn to the drummer to see where they’re going with the song.

For Callum, the drummer became almost a *de facto* musical director. A similar notion of the role of a drummer in a band is expressed eloquently by Budofsky (2006: 107), who writes that ‘a great drummer is a benevolent dictator, leading by example, not by force. Taking fast, decisive action. Representing the people (his bandmates) with strength, grace, intelligence – and hopefully a little humor.’ Jazz drummer Louis Bellson is of a similar opinion, feeling that ‘the drummer is in the driver’s seat. You’ve got hold of the wheel, and you’ve got to let the band know you’re in control’ (Bellson quoted in Budofsky, 2006: 37). Continuing this analogy, Brabec (2010: 3)

writes ‘a good drummer always drives a band, and all the other musicians simply ride along.’

Ronnie Fawcett (adult) described how, in situations where there is already a conductor, the drummer’s job can become a balancing act, of keeping time – but, perhaps conflictingly – keeping someone else’s time. She said that ‘if you’ve got a conductor or whatever, you’re the end of that conductor’s stick.’ She went on to describe, however, a conflict that can occur between the conductor trying to keep time, other band members’ wavering tempi, and a drummer’s perceived role of being in charge of the time:

And you’re the driver ... and if you let other people take it, it’s just, sort of, not the same – they don’t always want to keep that momentum up, and whatever; being musicians, they pull it around a bit in a sense. But if they’re going to pull it around they’ve got to pull it around over the top of the, the rhythm... No, but you’ve got to make sure the toe stays on that line... if the drummer isn’t secure, the whole band, it can affect the whole band.

Monson finds that this need for control is common among drummers, noting that ‘more than bassists and pianists, drummers tend to stress their coordinating and psychological function in the ensemble’ (Monson, 1996: 63). Guy Richman (adult) described the frustration that can result from the differing perceptions of time between him and the conductor:

My job is to follow that, however [sighs deeply and gestures toward conductor’s podium] I’m wrong in not following him. That’s the bottom line. I should follow him, come what may, but of course that makes things very, very tricky in the pit... his subconscious conducting is slowing down. But that’s what you have to deal with and, again, it’s... I shouldn’t take on the mantel of trying to keep what I think is good time, because my job is to follow him... [but] I personally feel that if I just gave in to that and went ‘oh well, we’re slowing down,’ then my soul’s dying if that happens. It’s not good enough for me.

By talking in this way about his soul, Guy suggests what a central component time-keeping might play in the identity of a drummer. When I watched Guy play for a performance of *Wicked*, the show on which was working, at one point his soul expressed itself quite suddenly – he leaped from his seat during a short break from drumming in one song and shouted to himself (grateful, I am sure, of the sound-

proofed booth in which we were seated) ‘shoot me now! Our conductor’s a fucking yo-yo!’

Control

In bands that do not have conductors, drummers generally have a much greater degree of freedom; as Nethagshan (13) said, ‘it’s exciting, and I’m like the head, it’s the most loudest instrument there.’ Jamie H. (18) concurred, happily finding that ‘well, you kind of control it really – you control the tempo, definitely, like I can slow it down, speed it up, as I please.’ This degree of control seems to be at its height in the context of a jazz band, as Monson observes:

If the soloist, bassist or pianist is out of phase with the rest of the band, a drummer can subtly (or not so subtly) influence the errant musician to get back on track by pushing (or restraining) him or her with the playing of one or more limbs. (Monson, 1996: 65)

Mike Mannering (adult) also identified with these characteristics of his role in a jazz group, defining his role as:

like, vibe controller, I’d say. I think you’ve got, I think you’ve got a big, you’ve got quite a lot of er, yeah, well, you’ve got a hell of a lot of control over how it goes and where it goes – whether you’re gonna be supportive to somebody, or whether you’ve had enough and you want them to shut up [laughs]. Do you know what I mean? Having said that, saxophone players might say ‘well I’m the vibe controller ‘cause I’m the one standing up, doing the solo, and you’re the one supporting me,’ but if the energy drops out of it behind, then you’re left dangling, so, um, yeah, that’s what I’d say.

Senan (19) saw this kind of involvement of a drummer in the music as an imperative – arguing that in his rock band ‘you need to add dynamics, I believe.’ Jon Hiseman (adult) described how he immersed himself so thoroughly in the music surrounding him when he played that:

I’m terribly unconscious when I play – I *do not know* what I’m doing. But what I do know is what everybody else is doing... I never played the drums, but I played the band. And that, actually, is what I do. And I don’t just play the band when I’m – when I play the drums,

people come up to you and say ‘o, that thing you did and so and so and so and so’ and I say ‘well I don’t know, I don’t know, I haven’t got a clue what I did, I’d have to listen to it,’ but I can tell where the bass player made a mistake, or, you know, the saxophone was out of tune.

Hiseman’s comments recall those above of Rashied Ali, about musical intimacy with others on stage. I wonder about Hiseman’s notion of playing the band though, for it seems also as though the band might be playing him. Hiseman also reminds me of advice given to me by my teacher, Peter Fairclough; he told me that while performing in a band the only thing that I should do consciously is to listen – in effect, ‘play the band,’ or be played by the band – inspire and respond to the musicians around you.

In a recent interview, jazz saxophonist Peter King made the following comment, endorsing the approach of drummers like Jon Hiseman and Mannering:

I like strong drummers. They ask, ‘we’re not playing too loud, are we?’ I say ‘no, as long as it’s swinging.’ I like a powerful drummer behind me, yeah... I need that input of the fill-ins when I take a breath, and also the appreciation of the dynamics of where we’re going to or where we’ve come from and, you know, good drummers have that... and it’s so much part of the whole sound of what’s going on, and they’re aware all the time of when you want the energy level to go up, when you want it to relax, uh, when you need them to come in and play something, when you need them to lay back a little bit.

(Clarke & King, 2008)

King is most often the front-man of the bands with whom he works; he sees his drummer as an integral part of the collaborative effort of his performing ensemble, providing as well as responding to inspiration from other players. It seems that the role of the drummer in a band is complex; he or she is expected to lead whilst following, and to drive whilst accompanying. Drummers must be sensitive to the needs and desires of their bands. Wilmer sums up this complicated multi-faceted role by saying that, in jazz bands at least, ‘the main function of the drummer has always been to act as a metronome behind the soloists, and to fill in wherever necessary or possible according to taste and capability’ (Wilmer, 1977: 157). Taste is highly subjective, and perhaps there is an onus on other band members to reciprocate, leaving room for drummers. Often such a relationship can work – Sam (20) describes such reciprocity in action:

I kinda just follow what the MD wants me to do and, erm, it's our band as well but it's, like, obviously we, when we do create stuff and whatever it's just like okay, we just add our ideas to it, so I, I might have an idea that we could use and we just put it together, whatever, so.

Jazz drummer Peter Fairclough also describes mutually generous and symbiotic musical relationships in various collaborations:

Mike Westbrook allowed me a lot of space to play in for 13 years. Peter Wyman was very supportive as was Steve Berry... the Permission band was very accepting of ideas, and Keith Tippett was his usual brilliant self, really encouraging and inspirational.
(in correspondence with the author, 2008)

Drummers, then, can feel like equal and integral members of the bands in which they play, often with an inclination towards leadership – Fairclough's Permission band was one that he directed.

Following the leader

Music journalist Barney Hoskyns views the position of drummer as 'the captain of the band' (in conversation with the author, 2008); similarly, 'Baby Dodds... once called the drummer the conductor of the band' (Wilmer, 1977: 155). Jazz and fusion drummer Peter Erskine feels that drummers are predisposed to having a leading role in ensembles, describing drummers as 'control freaks' (2010, in communication with the author). Drummer Rashied Ali has the following to say about drummers' rightful position in this role, and highlights again the responsibility to the ensemble which leadership necessarily entails:

It seems like drummers are actually natural leaders. With a good drummer there's no end to how far a band can excel because, like, a band is only as good as its drummer. If the rhythm ain't correct, then the group's not happening. (Ali, quoted in Wilmer, 1976: no page no.)

Ali, Dodds and Hoskyns all imply what other drummers above have touched on – that a drummer is often thought of, by him- or herself and by others, as the *de facto* leader

of a band, expected to lead the other musicians – but also simultaneously to follow them.

Drummers officially running bands has not been the norm, but it has in some cases been a superb recipe for musical success – although only in jazz as far as I can tell. Jazz drummer Art Blakey led several formations of his highly successful hard bop band, the Jazz Messengers; Max Roach led various bands under his own name; Brian Blade and Peter Erskine are contemporary American jazz drummers who lead outfits. Other (contemporary, British) drummers to take the reins of a band, including writing the material and hiring the musicians, include Peter Fairclough. He writes about his teacher's response to his thoughts about how his role in a band might be more prominent than is often the case. He recalls:

a comment made by my teacher, Nigel Morris, who said of my aspirations (which he fully supported) 'you will not be allowed to play,' meaning that although he saw some value in the ideas I had, he thought (and he was right) that they would be unwelcome. I overcame this by composing the music and being the bandleader, thus not requiring anyone else's permission. (in correspondence with the author, 2008)

Peter Fairclough continues to release albums and to play music with bands that he leads, or in which he is an equal partner.

Other bands accommodate various levels of contributions from their drummers. Natalie (19), mostly a rock drummer, described encountering resistance to her creative endeavours in a band with whom she was playing. When asked about her role in the band she said:

I don't know. Like, generally, everyone thinks it's keeping time and having a good beat, but I find that boring so I always try and throw stuff in, like, that I think sounds cool, and they're just like 'no, you play that.'

Kate Tatum (adult) also met with resistance to her suggestions, saying of her fellow band members that 'they're fucking awful actually to be honest, when I think about it. I've [laughs] been, I've known Darren for so long, it's like, erm, it's quite dictatorial.' Bill Bruford, in contrast to the totalitarian environment described by Kate Tatum,

remembers his exasperation in bands whose *modi operandorum* were altogether too democratic:

Trying to write the album [with band] U.K. was a little like four writers all trying to write the same novel simultaneously, with only the barest common understanding of the plot... this method of music making was, and is, laborious, exhausting, and expensive, and King Crimson is the last so-called democracy I'm ever likely to work in. (Bruford, 1988: 39)

Bruford explains why one three-week recording session with King Crimson was so difficult:

Robert [Fripp, the band's leader] neglected to tell us that, a few days before the sessions, he had undergone a spiritual awakening... presumably it was in relationship to this that Our Fearless Leader decided to withhold his opinion on all proceedings in the studio... this was spectacularly unhelpful... it is indeed a miracle that any of these records were made at all.' (Bruford, 2009: 63-64)

Following this experience, Bruford felt compelled then to form and lead his own bands. For 30 years, he played almost exclusively in bands for which he not only drummed but also wrote much of the music, selected the members, booked the concerts, etc. As he says:

Little wonder then that the idea of running one's own groups was so appealing. How wonderful to do away with the committee method of music making; how quick and pure and simple to bring your ideas to life when you pay the salary checks! (Bruford, 1988: 39)

It is interesting that Bruford and Fairclough, faced with opposite problems – one with too little creative freedom and the other with too much – arrived at identical solutions.

This following drummer joke suggests that drummers lack creative flair and suffer from an inability to write music:

Q: What's the last thing you're likely to hear a drummer say?

A: 'Hey guys, do you want to play one of my songs?'

(www.drumjokes.com)

Drummers such as Fairclough, Bruford and many others have done a lot to dispel such commonly held half-beliefs by forging careers as intelligent, creative musicians and band leaders. Drummer Neil Peart from Canadian progressive rock band, Rush, wrote all of the band's lyrics over a career spanning nearly three decades, as well as having several acclaimed literary works published alongside. Max Roach was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s in the USA. One of Roach's most famous recordings is his *Freedom Now Suite*, for which he wrote or co-wrote all of the material as well as playing the drums.

Jon Hiseman (adult) has been a conspicuously entrepreneurial drummer. He identified with various drummer-roles described by other participants. Throughout his career he came to be a record producer and a band leader; he explained how these leadership positions might all be seen as extensions of the roles he played as a drummer in bands:

The drummer's the conductor. He's also the catalyst. Because the drums are so loud, you have an enormous amount of control that a lot of drummers don't think about. Erm, you can really shape numbers by the way you play, and by the volume at which you play. And so in the end, you have an enormous control over, over what comes out. And that's a role that I always seen simply as an extension of putting the bands together, choosing the people to be in the bands, producing the recording, you know. To me, that job on the stage, if you like, can keep the band on the straight and narrow. They all have their own visions about what they're doing, and quite rightly, but in the central role of drummer you can actually keep the ethos where you want it, in a way it's much more difficult to do from the bass or the keyboards. And that I've always seen as simply part of the same job. So it's nothing inconsistent, you know... To me, the drums have always been simply an extension of the other roles that I play, you know.

One gets the impression that in any band in which Jon played, he would expect to exert a good a deal of control, especially during performance.

Questionnaire data

When asked to ‘tell me how, as a drummer, you fit into a band,’ 25 of the 100 questionnaire respondents said that they kept time. This was by far the most frequently recurring response, and although not a spectacularly high number it is noteworthy because the responses were unguided and the question open. Other answers varied greatly, including a range of social and musical considerations, and did not contradict or firmly support any of the notions or roles described by interview participants and the literature-as-data (See Appendix C for full details).

Beyond the band

Interacting with non-musicians

It seems that often non-drumming members of society can take a dim view of drummers, as well, perhaps, as other musicians. As jazz drummer Elvin Jones once observed, “‘being a musician doesn’t have much status here in America’” (Jones quoted in Wilmer, 1977: 177). Participants did not comment on the level of esteem in which they perceive musicians generally in the UK to be held, but a dimmer view appears to be taken of drummers than many of other instrumentalists:

Q: What do you call a drummer with half a brain?

A: Gifted!

Q: How do you get a drummer off your doorstep?

A: Pay him for the pizza!

(www.drumjokes.com)

These jokes imply, clearly, that drummers are stupid, and tend to work in low-paying, low-skill jobs, unable to support themselves with their pitiful musical careers. After all, the line of thought goes, drummers aren’t bright enough to be able to handle anything more intellectually challenging than hitting stuff and delivering fast food. The jokes recall the *The Troggs Tape* and the antics of Animal from *The Muppet Show*. While it seemed unlikely to the participants (and myself) that many people

really believe drummers to have learning difficulties, people may be ready to believe that drumming is easy, requires little or no skill, and that those who play drums – since they require no particular ability – may well not possess any. Ronnie Fawcett (adult) found that sometimes, people were ignorant of the skills required of a drummer, contrary to their apprehension of a perceived greater technical and musical facility required to play other instruments. She recalled her irritation at:

the fact that they don't always think it's an instrument, and I think also, because they can see you're just hitting things, that it's easy [laughs]. And yet if they had to go on, some of them couldn't do it.

Guy Richman (adult) tackled this issue head-on, challenging colleagues to do his job. He said:

Whenever I'm on the road I learnt very early that if anybody starts giving you grief and they're part of the crew, just smile and grab the closest pair of sticks to you that you can and say, 'you go and do it,' and just walk away with that smile on your face. And it shuts them up straight away 'cause they know they can't do it. 'I'm just going to the bar, you do the gig. Apologize within the hour and I might do the gig.' That kills them, kills them. Blood just drains out the face like that – great!

Both Guy and Ronnie revealed feeling a certain tension in maintaining a degree of pride about being a drummer in the face of misunderstanding. Sean Lee (adult) found that he tended to clash with those around him in rather a different way after he had finished performing, saying that 'I think I just piss a lot of people off when I'm drunk. Fuck all the [inaudible] But after the show, yeah, drinking, yeah, I fuck a lot of people off;' perhaps Sean's rationale was that he may as well give people a good reason to think poorly of drummers!

Guy found that he sometimes clashed with non-musicians in his current place of work in the theatre. Despite the heat in his small drum booth he:

can't have air conditioning because there would have to be a hose which comes running down here [points] into the lift which is the other side of that wall; that's a health and safety issue. Again, if there was a fire and everybody has to get out of the pit they either come out that way or the other side and there's a hose: that's health and safety. They're not prepared to drill a

hole in the ceiling to sort something out. That's why I'm stuck with this [indicates electric fan]. But I'm loving it because I'm playing their game, I'm playing them at their game. I've got that on [points to fan] - it goes down that microphone, it goes down that mike, and goes down that mike, so everybody in the band who's on headphones goes [wind noise!] through the whole show now... You have to play them at their own game sometimes. You know what I mean?

As Guy carried out his job as a drummer and asserted his right to a healthy working environment, he also realized that he was in a position where he commanded enough respect from his employers that he could be a little mischievous at work. Guy described another situation in which he was perhaps not so well respected by his employers; he:

got a call from [pop band] Westlife. Did that for a year. I didn't really like it that much. Just found it a bit, it was a bit too squeaky clean, and a bit too penny-pinching, like Travel Lodges to sleep in. 'No, I've just been on stage for three hours with you lot, busting my balls and you're going to stick me in a hard bed in a Travel Lodge.'

This anecdote from Guy hints at some of the misapprehension of drummers to which Ronnie Fawcett referred, although it seems to speak more of the attitude of Guy's employers towards musicians generally than particularly towards drummers.

Ronnie Fawcett (adult) continued to describe how people are sometimes bemused about what it is to be a drummer:

You'll get people who look at you, and you can see a slightly blank expression – they don't really understand. And I think 'never mind.' I've come across that so much, and I've come across, of course, 'cause when they look at you, and they get their own picture of you, they would never guess what you do, and they can't really comprehend it, unless they actually see you physically do it.

Ronnie senses that she seems unusual to some, possibly because of her sex. (Gender issues are discussed below, in Chapter Seven). Guy, meanwhile, paints a darker picture of some people's expectations of drummers:

Everybody thinks it's drug misuse, being an alcoholic (well, I've had three pints), but this is the one day a week I get a train into work, so I meet people and I have a good time. I drive every other day of the week. It's *hard*. I don't know if you've seen the papers recently with this article about the study of drummers? I've got the article from the paper. I thought, 'fair play to you, it's about time there was a bit of recognition for it.'

Contrary to his perception of the popular misunderstanding of drummers, Guy felt that he was a musician who deserved to be taken seriously. The study of drummers by Smith & Burke (2008) to which Guy referred, attracted a good deal of media attention in the UK and flung drummers into the public spotlight very briefly in the summer of 2008, focussing on the requirements of physical fitness to play the drums in a professional rock band. Matt (18) felt that the public's perception of drummers was more positive, suggesting that most people consider drummers to be important in the music that they hear:

Most bands have a drummer, don't they? Most bands *need* a drummer. If you listen to most things on the radio you're going to have drums in. And I think most people know that. You can take out a singer, you can take out a guitarist, even. If you play jazz, you just have a double bass and vibraphone – something like that – and drums, but drums are quite important, in most music.

He speaks here not just as an individual, but with an awareness of his membership of the social group called drummers; his experience suggests to him that drummers generally are revered and valued quite highly by others. Experiences and perceptions by the study's participants are, predictably, varied.

Sean Lee (adult) plays in a band who have enjoyed considerable commercial success and media attention in recent years. He described the problem that he faces when what he would perhaps rather keep as an intra-band identity spills into his interactions in public; he said:

That's a funny one actually. I don't really like talking about it, actually. If someone asks me 'what do you do?' I say 'well, as little as possible.' That's my first answer. And if they persist, I'll say I play drums in a band. 'What band?' Agh! 'Cause I know the question's coming. So I could either lie about it – 'o don't' worry, you wouldn't know about it, you'll never have heard of it'... 'O, tell me, tell, me'... Or I could just tell them straight off. But normally when

I do tell them straight out, then I'm put in a certain situation, which I'm not really comfortable in. I try to leave it away from that before it even gets there... Yeah. Because we're not the biggest band in the world, but I mean, there are people who've heard of us, and people do change their... they completely change if they know you're in a band... It's like 'fuck!' It's a bit odd, and I don't want to be dealing with that shit.

Guy Richman (adult), was also keen to preserve his anonymity, in his case in the band of a musical theatre production; he considered, however, how he may have to interact differently with his audience if he were more well known:

If I was high-profile, doing gigs with the likes of The Stones or Bryan Adams or something like that... being on the stage with an icon like that you're going to get your own fans, and there is a duty to that, when they become your fans, to, if they send you, ask you questions and leave emails on your website then you kind of, because you've done that and set that up you have a duty to respond to that. I don't. I don't have that. And I like my privacy.

Like Sean Lee (adult), Guy appeared to relish his privacy, and was glad to be able to reserve his drumming identity for realization on his own terms.

Despite taking solace in anonymity, Guy Richman was keen that the public should know him to be a drummer. On the occasion that I met Guy in his place of work for interview was wearing a t-shirt bearing the legend 'Weapons of Mass Percussion' with pictures of several drum kits on the back. He was also sporting an over-size steel belt buckle in the shape of a drum kit, making it clear to drummers and non-drummers alike that he was a drummer and rather proud of the fact. Indeed, Guy said 'you've got to *live* it, I think... I'm proud of it. I'm proud of being a drummer and all the association that goes with it – it's all about this [held his hand over his heart].' Guy's pride in and commitment to presenting himself as a drummer recall Hetherington's (1992: 87) 'enactment of lifestyle' where 'modes of living are deliberately accentuated' (1992: 94). Luke (19) showed similar dedication to presenting himself as a drummer, although he sported what Ståhlhammar (2006: 128) terms 'diffuse symbolism.' Rolling his sleeve and pointing to three conjoined circles on his forearm during our interview, Luke said 'that was because of Bonham – first tattoo.' Drummers would be almost certain to recognize this (as I did), as would many fans or players of popular music; the symbol was chosen by John Bonham, drummer of Led

Zeppelin, to represent him on the sleeve of the band's fourth album. The tattoo was initially out of sight, so it is possible that Luke would not have shown this to me had he thought of me as an objective researcher and an outsider to the group. By deliberately uncovering this symbol, Luke aligned himself with me as a fellow member of the in-group of drummers. When he showed me, a fellow rock drummer, his tattoo, I knew that I was in the presence of a man who was dedicated to rock drumming. Such subtleties may be lost on a less specialist audience or a non-insider researcher.

The participants seemed very happy for people to know them as drummers. None except for Sean Lee (adult) and Gifty (19) expressed a wish to hide the fact. These responses were typical:

Luke (19) Yeah, when people say 'what do you do?' 'O, I'm a drummer.' That is the *first* thing. I count, I class myself as a drummer. Even when I worked at [supermarket] Morrison's; I'm not Luke Wilsher, head of the floral department – I'm Luke Wilsher, drummer. Yeah, no, I class myself as a drummer. That's what I wanna do, and that's what I'm doing. That's what I want to do for the rest of my life... Yeah, yeah, that's fine with me.

Kate Tatum (adult) I'm just, I'm dead [certain] – I think people just know me as that, I should say. They know I'm a drummer... that's it, I am a drummer.

Nethagshan (13)

GDS What about in school? Do people in school know you as a drummer as well?

N Yes. My family know I'm a drummer, some cousins but... Some people, not just some random person in the street's gonna come and say 'you're a drummer'... I wouldn't be, like, shy to say to someone 'I'm a drummer.' I would actually be quite happy to say it.

Rohan (13) Everyone in my class knows that I'm a drummer, and most people from other classes and my friends all know that I'm a drummer... everyone knows it really... the people I know outside school also know I'm a drummer.

Although she was a keen drummer, Gifty (19) said:

I don't tell people I'm a drummer, but my mum tells everyone I am. She does! We went to church one time, she said 'o, go on, play!' 'cause they have this really good drum kit and I keep wanting to play it. She's like 'why don't you go and play it? Everything's just starting,' and, like, the priest just went 'o, go ahead and play.'

Maybe Gifty was more comfortable being a drummer in private – or perhaps just not among the people who attend her church.

Questionnaire data

In response to the question, 'how do you feel that, as a drummer, you fit into society?' answers among participants were, predictably, varied. A surprising feature of these data, however, is that with so open a question and so small a sample, the data repeated themselves with some frequency. A significant proportion of participants expressed what I have interpreted as a sense of feeling *apart from* society in general, and *a part of* a group of drummers. Six of the nine female teen respondents said that they felt 'proud,' 'different,' 'interesting' or 'on the fringes/edge of society.' Overall, 30 of the 100 questionnaire respondents reported feeling 'proud,' 'different,' 'cool,' 'interesting' or 'on the fringes/edge of society.' I suggest that, although far from identical, each of these responses characterizes a feeling or awareness of difference and separation from others in society, a realization that being a drummer in some way sets one apart and gives individuals a sense of identity as such. Twenty-three questionnaire respondents, meanwhile, reported that they fitted into society 'well,' 'okay,' 'all right,' or 'the same as everyone else,' suggesting that for these drummers, being drummers did not set them apart. Rather, they were comfortable being more *a part of* society.

Seventeen questionnaire participants either 'don't know' or were 'unsure' of how they felt that they fitted in to society (or of how to answer the question). Reasons for this could be manifold, including that these drummers struggled daily with this question but just could not figure out where they fitted in to society at large. Another – more likely – explanation could be that it is something about which the participants never or rarely wondered, and about which they were not prepared to spend time

deliberating when accosted by a total stranger while they were trying to enjoy a day out at a music show. These considerations of course apply to all the responses to all the questions, but, since this was the penultimate and among the more challenging of the questions on the questionnaire, an easy and quick solution to continuing about one's day would have been to respond with an expedient 'I don't know.' All of the most frequently recurring responses to this question were from teenagers. It is difficult to divine any commonalities from among the responses of the adult participants; this is not surprising, as one might well expect older musicians to engage with their instruments and their identities in more disparate and sophisticated ways, as their careers have had more time to diverge in more directions.

Overall, from both data sets it seems that drummers are largely proud of and comfortable with their identities as drummers, suggesting a strong sense of 'ontological security' (Laing, 1960: 42), and that they may be living 'eudaimonically' (Waterman, 1992), in line with their true selves. All of this adds credence to the notion of a drumming community (Budofsky, 2006; Wenger, 1998) or tribe (Bennett, 2000; Maffesoli, 1996).

Fellowship among musicians

Among other musicians, drummers seem on the whole to feel very much at home, although two participants commented on how certain instrumentalists are typically more agreeable than some others:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Sean Lee (adult) | I get along with drummers; I rarely get on with guitarists; I have a soft spot for bass players; and singers – go to the other side of the room! |
| Ronnie Fawcett (adult) | Okay, I used to play the violin, I understand all that, strings, but, um, you still get that feeling, well, in some orchestras maybe, that they feel superior. Yeah. And the nearest to the percussion section, in understanding, is usually the brass section. Or there might be a sax. Then you get clarinets, and then you feel, it is almost, there's a slight split there, I feel, but maybe I'm, well, I don't know. I feel that some of the, um, character, I think you'll find some of the brass and maybe some sax are more in tune in character to |

percussionists, than, I don't know, yeah, I suppose it's certain characters you get; I'm not saying they're *all* like that, but I think there is an element there, definitely.

Much of the time, though, it seems that drummers get along well and feel inspired in the company of other musicians. This comes as no surprise, since it is other musicians in whose company drummers find and enjoy 'the magic ride, the groove' (Hart, 1990: 230). These drummers describe the camaraderie of associating with like-minded musicians:

Callum (16) You're part of something 'cause you're playing the drums.

Matt (18) It's very weird for me because you're going behind... you might play in a thing with, like, five or six bands at a gig - like a gig with five or six bands - and you hang out back-stage, you get to know people instead of like being on the other side. When you go and see something it feels a lot different from when you're actually *playing* that. Even if you're not playing, when you see someone up on the stage and you talk to them afterwards you're in a group, aren't you, with the other people you play with? It's really cool. It's really nice to be able to do that.

Guy Richman (adult) We're in a very lucky situation here, in that everybody in this band does not have an ego; there's no egos in here at all.

Luke (19) I've gotta be doing something musical or in a musical environment. I can't, I mean the weird thing is I can't sit down with my, I know, with people, I can only - what's the word... communicate and connect with other musicians... It's really, really weird, but I see musicians as being on a higher level, 'cause like people listen to music and say 'o, that's a very good song;' but you talk to - musicians'll be like 'yeah, that riff is really, really good,' or 'that middle-eight section is really, really intricate' or 'that sweep-picking bit's fantastic.' You can get really, quite anal, into it - it's brilliant, I just can't stop listening to music... All my friends at school are just like; it's weird - when I left school, people I still talk to are the musicians, are the people in bands, are the people who are doing music production, or... It's mental!

Luke's comment recalls Becker's (1973) observation about jazz musicians behaving with an air of superiority. Bruford writes of wishing to leave a legacy, and of wishing not to be forgotten or to go unnoticed. He writes of exerting painstaking efforts in

avoidance of ‘the two-headed monster – she who must be avoided at all costs – Irrelevance and Delusion.’ He goes on to explain that, for him, ‘to be talked about, to be noticed for your work, is life. To be ignored – the unthinkable makes me shudder – that way lies death’ (Bruford, 2009: 320). Although Bruford does not say it, exactly, his words seem strongly to imply that if you leave behind a legacy of recordings and hard work, then somehow, actually, this *does* make you a bit better than the rest of the population who, well, haven’t achieved quite as much. This resonates with the suggestion of Crocker & Park (2003: 294), that people like to perform in domains where they feel they can ‘outperform others.’

Sticking together

The interviewees from Drum Tech and the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, surrounded as they were with fellow student drummers, took pleasure in the opportunity to mix with others of their kind:

Chris (19) I started interacting with more people, more of people who I thought were like me at the time, basically.

Jamie M. (17) It’s great – drums every day [laughs]. You’re talking to people who are basically like you. It’s good... I tend to hang out with drummers.

Sam (20) It’s cool ‘cause, um, like most, most of the other guys are friendly now, and they always just, just, I mean they’re here for the same reason I’m here. They sort of get better really and truly so it’s just like, well if that’s *your* aim as well then you just do it together sort of thing.

Beyond the music colleges, in the world of professional drummers, participants did not mention spending time with other drummers. From a performance perspective this makes perfect sense – as Guy Richman (adult) said above, ‘the drummer’s the only guy in the band playing drums.’ Guy was the only other participant to talk about interacting with other drummers; he needed to have a network of other drummers available to do his job for him when he was unavailable, a system known in the

profession as 'depping.' He kept 'deps' up to date with the musical he played via Apple's virtual hard drive, the iDisk. He said that:

what I do for the guys that are depping for me, if there are any changes I put all the information on that iDisk, I give them my information to access that iDisk, and they just go up and drag it to the desktop, and it's done.

Another way in which Guy met other drummers was through the ad-hoc system of 'sitting in,' where a musician comes to watch another musician do his or her job with the aim in mind of expanding his or her network of contacts and hopefully being invited eventually to dep on the show. Guy enjoyed sharing with other drummers his insights and experiences. He said that 'I *love* giving it back to people; I love when they ask me questions, like you - not just you but people who just want to sit in with me.' The majority of the drummers interviewed for this study did not have the sort of permanent position in a theatre that Guy did. It is likely to be for this reason that they did not describe the sort of network of colleagues to which Guy referred.

Coming unstuck?

Two participants expressed a sense of feeling distinctly different from other drummers. Jon Hiseman (adult) said (with an air of staggering humility) that 'the only thing I've never been able to do properly is play the drums.' He went on:

I have seen drummers with such facility, such ease about them, and then you have a chat with them and discover that for years they did eight hours practice a day. Well, I never did anything, I mean, that's ridiculous! You know, I mean that's ridiculous! Yes, I used to get home from work and have a knock for half an hour, but I didn't really understand the concept of practising what you can't do. I'd have a play!

Jon Hiseman is widely acknowledged among musicians and fellow drummers as a player of considerable ability and flare, yet he felt to a degree like an outsider in what appears to be his world. Bill Bruford is even more famous a drummer than Jon Hiseman, lauded internationally and consistently for over 40 years by peers and in the

music press; yet his sense of identity as a drummer also appears at odds with what he sees happening to his world. Bruford observes:

The drum industry revolves around the guys with tattoos, now, and World's Fastest Drummer competitions. This stuff is all pumped up by the drum magazines and by retail, who need to shift kits. There is a whole industry egging on a battalion of over-qualified drummers who think music is some kind of athletic enterprise, and who have mistaken drumming to be an Olympic sport. And they're all so damn well-behaved, clutching their latest DVD on '32-Way Independent Co-ordination over 1,001 Ostinati', complete with a seven-hour instructional bonus DVD on how to set up the drums. Oh, but they've never played in a band, let alone one that's produced any music worth a damn. Get outta here. (Bruford, 2009: 338)

Bruford expresses disappointment and bemusement at his perception of a disjunction between how he sees his role as a drummer as a musical creator and collaborator, and what he perceives to be the current prevailing paradigm in the drumming and music media. Both Bruford and Hiseman appear to be philosophically at odds with part of the contemporary paradigm in drumming; for them, it seems rather to miss the point. Perhaps it is inevitable that drummers will feel this way towards the close of their careers. For younger drummers, this is the world that they know.

Summary

The data in this chapter speak more of drummers' practices than of their individual identities, although these things are important parts of the processes of identity realization, capturing the embodied nature of the identity realization experience for kit drummers. For instance, when drummers reflect upon their roles as time-keepers, conductors, vibe-controllers and subordinates they are engaged in passive identity realization – acknowledging what they are, what identity they wear and embody in a given context. We see, then, the realization of contextual identities – as keen soloist, reluctant soloist, groover, leader, etc. – within the meta-identity that each drummer holds as 'drummer'. An especially interesting finding is that most drummers wish in some way to be distinguishable from their drumming peers, but most of those find that they are not. Some contextual identities have come about through effort and intent – such as being a band leader; while this could be considered a meta-identity, it

may also fall as a contextual identity under the umbrella of a person's meta-identity as a drummer. All of the data in this chapter can be interpreted as contributing to the realization of drummer identities – things people do and feel as part of being drummers. There is also evidence of passive learning realization in these data – where Bill Bruford and Joey Kramer confess to learning about their integrative role in bands from peers, and Sean Lee's acknowledgment that his band is unusual; these are things that drummers have learned, but which they did not set out to learn.

Some drummers have similar experiences to others; some feel differently about things than others do. It seems that the groove is a goal for which drummers strive, the nirvana that we seek to attain, and that groove is only achievable in real-time collaboration with other musicians. Mike Mannering (adult) seemed to speak for all drummers when he said that 'what I love is a certain chemistry of a certain bunch of people that play, that it just works.' There are, though, few generalizations that can be made about drummers in or outside of bands. What emerges is a rich texture of complicated and changing relationships, perceptions, attitudes and identities. The construct of the meta-identity and contextual identities holds up as a lens through which to view how drummers interact with their world; they feel and behave differently in different situations and contexts. It is also abundantly clear from the data in this chapter that drummers share many common points of reference and are able to discuss issues raised by me, a fellow drummer, in similar terms; the notion of a drumming community (Budofsky, 2006; Wenger, 1998), tribe (Bennett, 2000; Maffesoli, 1996) or brotherhood (Hart, 1990) is not only plausible but tangible.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage

Introduction

Central to an understanding of drummers' identities, practices and learning is an awareness of the social and cultural contexts in which drummers exist; it would seem churlish to ignore them. I agree with Mueller (2002: 595), that 'musical taste and cultural practices serve to define people's social and cultural identities and their distinction from other social groups.' Garratt & Piper (2008: 77) warn that researchers such as myself may be guilty of a "top-down" or "Euro-centric" perspective and attitude. They point out that the culture of white people of Western European descent is and has been dominant in much of the world for centuries. Stokes similarly warns that 'ethnicities... are defined or excluded in terms of the classificatory systems of the dominant group' (Stokes, 1994: 20); or, as Garratt & Piper (2008: 81) put it, 'any discussion of "black" will tend to default to "white", whether this is acknowledged or not.' In terms of this study, such Euro-centricity is perhaps unavoidable, for I write as an insider to the drumming culture in the UK where I am one of the majority-demographic of drummers. While no apology should be made for this, Mahon makes the salient point that I must maintain an awareness of my (ethnic) viewpoint point and consider how this affects my research:

Acknowledging that our positions influence how we experience and interpret social phenomena has strengthened ethnographic research and writing. Every anthropologist has to take note of his or her position in relation to his or her subjects over the course of a field study, and it is helpful to convey some of this information to our readers. (Mahon, 2004: 23)

Although I am no anthropologist, Mahon's point remains entirely valid. It is inevitable that my thinking and writing will bear traces of the researcher – if it did not it would make for a fairly dull piece of qualitative research. Stokes points out that 'the term ethnicity... points to the central anthropological concern with classification' (Stokes, 1994: 6). Merely talking about ethnicity, then, (or even doing a PhD in the first place) highlights my position as researcher, possibly imposing on data

sociological constructs that would likely be alien to participants. I have tried to allow the drummers to speak for themselves.

What is meant by 'ethnicity'?

It is worth taking up a little space to elucidate some of the ways in which ethnicity can be understood, for Harris & Rampton (2003: 5) acknowledge that 'in everyday discussion, ethnicity is often equated with a "racially" marked culture;' however, as Gunaratnam (2003: 4) writes, there are 'important analytic distinctions between the terms of race and ethnicity.' She also notes (2003: 4) that 'the much used, general conceptual distinction between "race" and ethnicity is that "race" evokes a biological and genetic referent, and ethnicity refers to cultural and religious difference and kinship.' In today's modern societies, however, we are in a position where 'contemporary diasporic ways of life, and multiculturalism in particular, have served to disrupt the binary opposition between the biological and the cultural in the meanings of "race" and ethnicity' (Gunaratnam, 2003: 4). Harris & Rampton (2003: 4) observe that, contrary to the traditional view, 'contemporary academic discussions generally agree that race is a social construction rather than a biological-scientific fact.' Karner similarly remarks up on a shift in understanding, finding that:

while "race" is primarily associated with physical characteristics, it is now widely acknowledged that "races" are social constructs rather than biological givens; the choices of markers *assumed* to be racial characteristics are historically and culturally variable.
(Karner, 2007: 16)

Karner (2007: 28-29) explains how an individual's sense of ethnicity can be understood to refer to their expectations and understandings of what is normal practice, behaviour and custom in a given culture or cultural context – a context that may be defined partially by national borders. Throughout this chapter I refer to ethnicity in these ways – as individuals' responses to the norms of a context defined as sort of national-racial-cultural at-home-ness.

Harris & Rampton outline two ways in which we may view ethnicity. In the first instance:

It is assumed that individuals possess (or belong to) cultures that are relatively discrete, homogeneous and static, and that through childhood socialisation and community experience, ethnic culture provides us with tacit but distinctive, ingrained dispositions.
(Harris & Rampton, 2003: 5)

In the second instance:

Ethnicity is regarded as something that people can emphasise strategically in a range of different ways, according to their needs and purposes in particular situations... ethnicity is viewed more as a relatively flexible resource.
(Harris & Rampton, 2007: 5)

These two ways of regarding ethnicity are referred to throughout the chapter. Thus defined, a person's ethnicity is a meta-identity, in the context of which contextual identities emerge – such as the 'odd-one-out' identity that I realized in the context of playing a festival as the only white member of an otherwise-black hip-hop outfit. Such an identity could not have emerged in the absence of a meta-identity as an ethnically white man. This 'odd-one-out' contextual identity also occurs in the meta-identity of drummer – hip-hop not being my musical home. The two meta-identities, then, intersect with one another.

Ethnicity as power

Garratt & Piper find that in the UK 'particular people, groups and ethnicities become knowable as a category and are seen as a fixed commodity... therefore, identities continue to be produced and reproduced in systems of power' (Garratt & Piper, 2008: 80). Perhaps nowhere is the commoditization of ethnic identity and evidence of white power more overt than in the music business. White people tend to be far more prevalent on the mainstream music scene. By 'mainstream' I mean the music that is marketed mostly by white people to mostly white people – which, in the UK, is most people. Mahon claims that in the mid-1990s the record company 'Sony/Epic erred on

the side of the rock 'n' roll tradition that excluded... non-whites' (Mahon, 2004: 214) by simply refusing to promote or sign bands of dark-skinned musicians playing music in that style. Rock music undeniably is, or rather has become, overtly white music.

Mahon observes that:

rock 'n' roll is rooted in black music traditions, drawing heavily on the musical and vocal inflections, linguistic choices, and body movements that characterize African American Performance. Over the years, this blackness has been recoded and naturalized as white rock 'n' roll attitude. (Mahon, 2004: 204)

This colonization of what is ostensibly black people's music by white Americans and Europeans had become so complete, that when black American musicians wanted to play rock music professionally in the mid-1980s they had to overcome 'the music industry's resistance to Black rock' (Mahon, 2004: 7) and 'limited definitions of black identity' in the context of 'racialized structures, ideologies, and practices in the United States' (Mahon, 2004: 9). She explains:

Participants analyzed the relationships between race, identity, and music and began developing critiques of the racism and stereotypes that operated in both the music industry and in the commonsense assumptions of black and white Americans. Before long, they had decided to call themselves the Black Rock Coalition... for BRC members, then, music was not simply an artistic form in which they had a professional interest. It was a site of ideological and social struggle over the categories and conditions that defined them as African Americans. (Mahon, 2004: 16)

Mahon describes stereotypes fuelled and perpetuated by the powerful music industry, apparently unchallenged, or unsuccessfully challenged, by wider society.

In another example of the ethnically blinkered attitude of the white-controlled music industry, Mahon describes the end of the career of a great Afro/Latina musician at the hands of a major record label in the '90s:

The executive did not want ethnic Sophia Ratmos; rather, 'they wanted a white girl.' The notion that audience members must identify with or desire the people on stage became complicated – even in the multicultural nineties – when the anticipated audience was white and the people on stage were not. (Mahon, 2004: 215)

Any band or musician wishing to become a commercial success is in for a tough time of it, and more than likely destined for failure if they do not have the financial backing of a major record label capable of promoting musicians on a big and expensive scale. It seems that these opportunities might be still further reduced if one is not white. Garratt & Piper worry (above) about the celebration of ethnic differences for fear that labels will stick; Mahon's research indicates that these concerns are well founded – Western societies, while attempting to be ethnically inclusive and pluralistic often perpetuate ethnic musical divisions. Hyder comments on this phenomenon, and warns of taking too much at face value:

The role of music as a medium through which identities are expressed and negotiated is particularly significant in the context of a multi-ethnic society, but should not be taken as representing or reflecting any fixed definition of cultural identity and belonging. (Hyder, 2004: 53)

The ethnic segregation of musical styles described in the USA described by Mahon may exist in similar ways in the UK. From my own experience of the rock and alternative music scenes in London, it is not unusual to find Asian musicians in predominantly white bands; but musicians of African descent are far rarer, and tend to be found playing styles of music that are stereotypically 'black' such as hip-hop, r'n'b, gospel and funk. A band of black rock musicians is certainly not the norm, and because of ingrained social stereotyping in marketing by record companies (not excluding the fact that black rockers appear *actually* to be in the minority on the local scene) Mahon's words about Living Colour would probably ring true in the UK as well. The band's:

bohemian image, their engagement with an atypical musical form, and their refusal to follow a standard middle-class path produced a kind of black masculinity that suggested an adamantly black and progressive consciousness, one that departed from mainstream black working- and middle-class expectations and from the images available from Hollywood and the music industry. They were black and different and proud. (Mahon, 2004: 223)

Black rock musicians, then, present an atypical model of their ethnic group, and this proves to be problematic for the powerful music industry. Drummers' sense of place

in particular ethnic and cultural groups plays out in various ways throughout this chapter.

London and the UK

This study was undertaken mostly in London in the UK, which, as far as I can tell, continues to be a living, thriving testimony to the perceived triumphs and flaws of a multicultural society. People of numerous ethnicities interact daily as peers and equals. This is as much the case in music and education as any other domain. It seems to me, however, as a participant in the both music and education scenes in London, that most of London's drummers, professionally and in education, are white and of European descent. In *The Drummer: 100 Years of Rhythmic Power and Invention* (Budofsky, 2006) and *Drummin' Men The Heartbeat of Jazz The Swing Years* (Korall, 1990), the photographs alone reveal a more balanced representation of ethnicities among the faces of drummers. Still, though, men of African and European descent far outnumber those of Asian origin, and the vast majority of drummers featured are from the USA. In a 12-year teaching career in the UK, I have taught only two Asians to play drums; for reasons I was unable to ascertain, one of these gave up playing after three months of promising progress.

I play some fairly ethnically diverse music in Gillian Glover's band. We incorporate music from West African, Spanish, Cuban, British and Gypsy traditions – not because members hope necessarily to broaden the horizons of the executives at major record labels (although that would be lovely), but because we are happy victims of our social location in the thriving metropolis of London. We, among innumerable other bands, are living evidence of Back's observation that 'urban cultures, in particular, are highly promiscuous in their endeavour constantly to re-make and invent traditions in the present' (Back, 1996: 8). In Gillian's band, we are not attempting in any way to purloin music 'belonging' to other cultures; nor do we try to absorb other musics into an essentially white-European aesthetic. We are just making the music that we make. Some of the band are well travelled and have picked up many influences this way and passed these to the other musicians; others of us have eclectic listening habits. I believe we are innocent of any charge of imposition of cultural hegemony on the

musics that we incorporate – it is simply as Stokes has observed, that: ‘musicians are overwhelmed by a consciousness of other musics’ (Stokes, 1994:16). It feels to me like we just keep our ears open, and our wrists, fingers and voices nimble and willing. Karner (2007: 17) advises that “‘racial’ and ethnic categories are context-dependent social constructs’ (17); the music that this band plays feels perfectly normal in the context of the band. Gillian’s band provides an interesting example of the reciprocity of identity realization in the context of a group, as discussed above (Gracyk, 2001; Wenger, 1998). My identity realization as ‘drummer-in-Gillian’s-band’ is made possible through the other members of the band collaborating with me musically, and through my moulding my playing to my sense of what the band is trying to achieve. Conversely, there are only six people in the band, so my contribution doubtless has a significant impact of the sound of the band. A few years ago, that band changed guitarists, and this change had a significant impact on the sound and feel of the ensemble. I have worked with the current guitarist in other contexts, so it was interesting also to see (or to presume from my perspective) how he moulded his own playing to be ‘guitarist-in-Gillian’s-band.’

Members of the Broken Record Project, with whom I used to play, had a starkly contrasting attitude to our music. Although the membership of the band was more ethnically diverse than is the case in Gillian’s band, the music was far less eclectic and very much in the vein of mainstream, white pop/rock. We were all interested to play other styles of music, and incorporated Galician folk tunes into our live show when playing in Galicia. However, fulfilling and interesting though it would certainly have been to do more of this, it would be likely to have considerably hindered the band in its quest for mainstream commercial success in the UK (which it still has yet to achieve). I am never more aware of my own ethnicity as when playing music that feels ethnically ‘other’ to me; while the Galician folk tunes were fun to play, my contextual identity as an ethnically British musician was heightened during that tour. I experienced a similar, although altogether more terrifying, awareness of my sense of ethnic belonging, when playing drums in successive years in an Irish punk band at a Republican festival in a Catholic area of North Belfast. As Maffesoli (1996) and Hogg (2003) suggest, my contextual drummer identity in these instances was informed far more by my awareness of membership of a particular ethnic group on

those gigs than by the impact my identity as a drummer would have had upon the broader group of ethnically British.

My guess is that some musicians of ethnic minorities in the UK are active in what has traditionally been seen as white people's music for commercial reasons, and perhaps because of a broader cultural hegemony engineered by the music industry. The favourite band of the Indian/South African violinist in the Broken Record Project is Led Zeppelin – four British white men. This violinist has by no means abandoned his cultural heritage. On the contrary, he has immersed himself in musical styles of Western origin – the music that was available to him as culture in his home country of South Africa. Of course, the way that ethnic cultures have been subsumed through colonialism into a hegemonic, Western paradigm in South Africa is not a new story. White, transplanted European culture was thrust upon the nation of South Africa during the Apartheid era and was perpetuated through the formal education system. Hoenigsberg (2002: 142) notes that 'musical education in South Africa excluded African music from the curriculum,' adding that 'cultural inheritance was... something that rode upon the back of a great injustice, which perpetuated... cultural dominance' (Hoenigsberg, 2002: 141). Bourdieu (1984: 250-256) recognizes this sort of situation, which Keddie (1973: 17) describes as one where one group may impose its logic or "truth" on another and that is a form of colonisation.' Keddie is of course not alone recognizing this phenomenon; perhaps we are witnessing colonization of the UK music industry, or even of the music scene internationally. One might call such a phenomenon a sort of 'quiet' colonization, since I do not believe, for instance, that my violinist colleague feels that that he has been unjustly musically colonized against his will, although a more objective view might suggest that he and others in similar positions in fact have been. Quite possibly, the violinist's sense of ethnicity would be interesting to explore in various musical contexts of identity realization.

Trevor Phillips, recently Chairman of the Council for Racial Equality in the UK, has said that multiculturalism, long encouraged by successive British governments, "means the wrong things" and that it encourages "separateness between communities". He believes that "what we should be talking about is how we reach an integrated society... where there are some common values" (Phillips, quoted in

Baldwin & Rozenberg, 2004: 5). To achieve Phillips' aspirations would be no mean feat, for as Back writes:

The politics of multiculturalism is not a matter of somehow simultaneously understanding and tolerating 'foreign cultures' but of facing an imperial history that has brought people from around the globe into intense and sometimes terrible contact. (Back, 1996: 8)

London is a cosmopolitan city, where society looks and feels well integrated. I say this as a musician and an educator; music and education are generally very inclusive and respectful worlds, so I hope that I am not being naïve. It remains true, however inclusive an individual's outlook, that people cannot escape enculturation, and that one's own culture is unavoidably where one feels the most at home.

Teenagers and ethnicity

Jamie H. (18) had been self-taught on the drums. He admitted to having had a rather limited musical outlook:

I've been, I've been listening to, I admit I'm quite narrow-minded when it comes to some music, or I used to be anyway, where I didn't start listening to indie rock and stuff like that. So I haven't listened to much jazz and all that thing. I've opened up recently [laughs].

Jamie H. was typical of the older teenagers in showing an interest in music beyond his cultural comfort zone. The younger teenagers – Nathan (14), Joe (15) and Callum (16) had limited musical tastes and found it difficult to consider issues of ethnicity in relation to drumming. It is not surprising that as drummers grow older they should find it easier to consider such issues and may wish to explore more exotic musics than those that they have always known. Older teenage participants showed awareness of the cultural and ethnic associations with particular musics. They were aware of their own backgrounds, and seemed to demonstrate a respectful eclecticism. Natalie (19) and Senan (19) acknowledged the cultural norms in their experiences of various musics in the UK. There is a sense in their remarks of how certain instruments and musics may be perceived as 'other' in ethnic terms from a particular (in this case, white, Western) cultural perspective:

Natalie (19) In different styles, there's different, like, majorities, like rock's generally white guys that play drums, but then gospel drumming it's generally black guys that play drums. And, like, in different styles, there's different people and ethnicities.

Senan (19) Obviously if you're playing a djembe, or something, then, 'cause that's a cultural instrument, or even bongos or something, because it's not mainstream bands. You don't get, you won't play a gig and get four bands with bongos. So if you're playing bongos you will be playing some sort of Afro style. You could be playing blues, which is predominantly black. At the same time you could be playing metal, which is white.

Senan's main point seems to be that skin colour, as much as instruments, can, rightly or wrongly, be an indicator of the style of music that one plays or will experience as an audience member. Playing a Western-style drum kit is what Senan's ethnic background lead to him to play, as opposed to djembe or bongos which he identifies as belonging primarily to another ethnic group. His identity as a drummer is rooted in an ethnic context. Senan did not suggest that black musicians cannot play metal, or that white musicians are doomed to fail as blues musicians; he pointed merely to perceived trends, trends that he himself bucked with alacrity. As well as being a drummer, Senan produced his own hip-hop music in which he also rapped – a style of music still largely associated with African-American culture.

Luke (19) felt quite strongly about the wide appeal of many styles of music, seeing himself as an inhabitant of a global, inter-cultural musical world:

I think all these barriers and this racial hate is absolute bollocks! It is, to be honest, man. It is, it's completely wrong. I don't see a problem with anyone doing anything, to be honest... I mean, music has no specific thing. People should be doing it – everybody can do it. It's just boundaries people put up, which is completely wrong... I do what I want to do! I like doing Brazilian, Afro-Cuban – stuff like that.

For Luke, all music was available to all drummers, recalling Harris & Rampton's (2003: 5) notion of ethnicity as a 'flexible resource' on which one may draw. Matt (18) agreed, but expressed a little respectful wariness about drumming and music that were not ethnically his. He understood that:

yeah, drumming does come from Africa – if you research it, it does, and it’s important, I think, to hear that and to play that in some styles because you shouldn’t come from a rock background to play Brazilian stuff. You need to look at Africa and Brazil to get that sort of style... the feel of it if you come from a rock background, your feel is straight 16th-notes. You try and play, like, a samba, it won’t sound authentic, so you’ve got to look there.

Matt’s view appears to differ slightly from Luke’s or mine; for where Luke may have been more cavalier about borrowing rhythms and ideas from another cultures, Matt would rather reproduce other ethnic musics in a careful and authentic way, with perhaps a keener awareness of his own ethnicity – his ‘distinctive, ingrained dispositions’ (Harris & Rampton, 2003: 5). I, meanwhile, am entirely comfortable (or perhaps one could say ‘lazy’) as a tourist in styles that I certainly recognize as others’ musics; I ‘mix and match’ whatever I like and can play, like Luke, seeing ethnicity (in music) as a resource at my disposal. Matt was maybe more cautious of taking what could be seen as such a “Euro-centric” approach (Garratt & Piper, 2008: 77).

Jamie M. (17) agreed with Matt (18), finding that if a drummer engages properly with the music he or she plays, ‘you can, like, feel Brazilian if you’re playing it, if you’re playing Brazilian music, that is, but you can also feel like a rock drummer, yeah.’ Jamie M. hinted here at the notion of incorporating different ethnicities into his identities as a drummer according to what music he was playing, in order to play those musics authentically. ‘Feeling Brazilian’ seems to equate to a contextual identity realized in the context of playing music from that culture, as a part of the broader meta-identity of being a drummer. Attempts at authenticity come, however, with a modicum of caution and an awareness that musicians steeped in their own cultural heritage can find it difficult to adopt the stylistic nuances of other ethnic musics. Luke (19) described his experiences of learning with a Brazilian percussion teacher:

Bosco’s an amazing teacher! I know that drumming, in Brazil, we try and play it in time, but he has, like, he can play it and it sounds, like, out of time, yeah, it sounds wrong’ to ears that are used mostly to listening to different styles of music.

Natalie (19) joked that she ought perhaps not to be meddling in certain musics: ‘I feel I shouldn’t be dabbling in Latin just ‘cause I’m not very good at it;’ she acknowledged that the cultural divide was at that time perhaps too great a gulf for her to cross. Maybe in time, opportunity and a desire to learn will serendipitously combine for Natalie.

Gifty (19) was in a unique position among the participants regarding her ethnicity and the music that she played. I interviewed her in part because of her Ghanaian background. Gifty emigrated to the UK as a girl of ten, and began playing drums in London at the age of 16. I was Gifty’s drum kit teacher, and there was no Ghanaian music in her formal learning experience with me; Ghanaian music was not actively discouraged, but it is not my forte and Gifty did not bring any to her lessons or request that she play some. Despite her earlier cultural heritage, the music that Gifty listened to and learned from was ‘mostly European, yeah.’ She did not feel any lesser entitlement to play the music of her adopted country than any native drummer might feel, saying that:

it’s music, and anyone can do it. I think of a drum beat and it’s ‘o, I heard it on the radio the other day.’ It can still be mine. I don’t think of it that way – anyone can do it.

Because of the culture surrounding her, it was as though Gifty regarded Ghanaian music as foreign to her; she said that ‘my uncle’s really into music in Ghana and stuff; I try and listen to his music, and mix it up with what I know,’ but she felt more at home playing the styles of music that were around her and her peers in London.

Rohan (13) was a drummer of Indian ethnicity, born in Britain. In a different way than Gifty (19), he liked to keep the music of his family heritage entirely separate from the culture in which he played the drums. Although he played the Indian dhol drum, he said that ‘it’s a separate thing’ from the music that he played at school. His Indian culture was important to him, ‘because I listen to loads of Indian music and that’s mostly the food that we eat, ‘cause we’re mostly Indian;’ however, he kept this culture apart from the drum kit playing that did. His drum kit teacher was Hungarian, and schooled Rohan mostly in American and British pop/rock styles. Nethagshan (13), whose family came to Britain from Sri Lanka, learned with the same teacher.

Nethagshan, too, was keen not to mix the two cultures that he inhabited. At school when he played drums, he said, 'I'm just a normal person that plays drums;' for him, playing drum kit was located in the US/UK popular music culture. For these two boys, 'drummer' appears as a contextual identity that is realized mostly outside of the home environment, where 'drummer' can also be more comfortably assimilated into a British cultural ethnic identity as a Briton. Gifty, Rohan and Nethagshan all provide examples of how complications can arise in attempts to define ethnicity and race in contemporary societies (Gunaratnam, 2003; Harris, & Rampton, 2003; Karner, 2007).

Where does it come from?

A musician who expresses a deeply felt significance of ethnicity in his music is jazz drummer Milford Graves. He acknowledges the African roots of his art and perceives an Afro-centricity present in all subsequent forays into drumming, saying 'you pick up the drum and you think of the black man. You generally think of Africa and you think, well, this is really his culture' (Graves cited in Wilmer, 1976, no page no.). Graves in a sense attempts to claim African ownership of drumming. He also bemoans the state of contemporary drumming, whose practitioners appear to him to have forgotten their origins in Africa: 'people completely lost their identity and so what drummers have been playing up to now has little to do with their African make-up' (Graves, cited in Wilmer, 1977: 167). Wilmer refers to the jazz about which she writes as 'black music' (1977: 155), implying an ethnic ownership of that musical genre. Peters (1975: 183) writes in his seminal thesis on the history of modern drumming that 'negro drummers were really the teachers of all subsequent jazz drummers.' Black jazz drummers were the first drummers to play in the new music of the 1940s and 1950s – styles such as Motown and rock 'n' roll (Justman, 2002; Scherman, 1999). It is perhaps for this reason that some people (such as Matt [18] above) make so strong a connection between drumming and people of African-American descent.

This study's older participants revealed eclectic tastes in music, both in terms of what they listened to and what they played. When asked, however, about the importance of African musics to them as drummers, most had relatively little to say, finding that it

was not something that they often considered or that was central to their sense of being drummers. Matt (18) identified a belief among some musicians, akin to Graves's notion of the African-ness of drumming – that drumming is somehow inherently more African. From Matt's experience:

A lot of people think – I'm not one of them – but a lot of people think, immediately, if it's a black drummer, they can play, they've got groove, which isn't true. They do have great groove, but so do the white players as well.

As a white drummer, it would be difficult perhaps for Matt (or indeed any other non-black drummer) to concede that before even playing the instrument he is inferior to any black drummer. Moreover, I think that Matt's comment reveals his awareness of the inherent absurdity of the notion that the colour of a person's skin would in any way predicate them to exhibit (or to lack) ability or groove at the drum kit. However, Clive Porto (adult) spoke of the intimate connection between jazz and its rhythmic roots in the drumming of West Africa. He recalled how a trip to that continent the musical link became abundantly clear to him:

I was in Senegal a few years back and there was just like a local thing in dance and drum troupe going on 'round the back of some town... and you could just hear, all I heard was Elvin Jones¹ throughout the whole thing, and I thought 'I've just got to buy some of this traditional music and just play swing time through it 'cause it just all that had that 12/8, all the sixes, all the, all rolled in there, and you could just hear Elvin, playing the ride over the top and the triplets fitting in, you know. You'd really get that swing groove, that real African groove through it, you know. I never did it, of course, but that's where it's from, without doubt, you know.

Clive was the only one of the study's participants to talk in any detail about the connection between African drumming and the music that he plays.

Clive Porto runs a jazz club where once a week he plays drums with guest artists. He spoke about how, despite a broad knowledge and understanding of jazz styles, he had come to accept that ethnically, culturally, that music is not his:

¹ Elvin Jones was a famous African-American jazz drummer.

I've tried to learn to play American swing jazz for the last ten/twelve years, and that's what I do at the club. And every now and then a gig turns up like Annie Whitehead or Chris Bachelor or someone like that who's doing a rockier, more open thing, and it, and I feel really at home with that. And it really makes me realize that I'm playing a second language – when I'm playing American swing jazz, I'm a second language user. I'm like a German speaking English, you know. And I've tried to get, I've tried to make it me, and obviously, like everything else, the more and more you play it, the more you do make it yourself. But it's not me, it's not – that is not my history, that is not my culture, that is not my background, that is not where I'm from. Rock – British rock – is. I think I'm entitled to make claims to that. British pop bands and British blues bands of the '60s – that, that's when I was 16 and 17, and what I started playing, and that is where I still feel at home. And that is probably my authentic voice.

Clive's sense of belonging to a particular, local musical tradition is reflected in Jon Hiseman (adult)'s comments:

I'm European, I play the drums in a European way, I play the drums with a European rhythmic ethos. This is overlaid with listening experiences from, erm, other cultures, obviously, and I can simulate stuff, but I know what I'm doing.

Jon's comment evokes Clive's idea of how playing 'foreign' music is like a speaking a second language.

Another musician who had a firm sense of the difference between 'his' music and 'other' music was Sean Lee (adult). He experienced African music as exotic and strange, and referred to this other drumming culture as Clive did, using the metaphor of language:

It's funny, 'cause I, like, really respect African music. It's amazing – so many different time signatures and fuck-ups everywhere, like the rest of the world can't get their heads around. It's like, but that's natural for them, man; what we have is natural for us. For me, it's something to aspire to, because I think it's totally different for them – they're basically talking a different language.

Sean had also recently been dipping his toes in to African music using his electronic drum kit (V Drums):

Yeah, talking about them V-Drums, I've been listening to African patterns on the V-Drum thing, and you can play along to it and stuff. And it does kind of shift your head a little bit, when you listen to different types of groove. There's not drums in it or anything, you're just listening to music and you're like 'I'll play along with this – that's fucking weird.' So you're playing along with it, and then you actually turn off the actual music – you're playing the same beat and you go 'I've never played that before.' You know - wicked!

Sean also said 'I really want to start getting into reggae stuff. For me, that's weird as well, because it's always like [made reggae drumming noises] – it sounds wrong, but it's right.' Despite the music being foreign to him there may be something integral to the rhythm that enticed Sean as a drummer; he felt drawn to styles of music with which he was unfamiliar, but that attracted him nonetheless – as with the other drummers discussed in this chapter. Mickey Hart, drummer and ethnomusicologist, has a similar attitude of eclecticism. He describes being aware for much of his career that 'I knew I was a practitioner of an ancient art, perhaps the oldest form of music making on earth, an art form that stretched back – who knew how far back it went?' (Hart, 1990: 23). Hart sees the tradition of drumming in which his music sits (broadly rock), as part of the same heritage as all drumming – it is all part of a wide and broadening tradition. Will Calhoun of the band Living Colour, a black American drummer, expresses a similar interest in the broader culture of drumming:

I wanted to discover the history of my instrument, to know where these rhythms came from. It's been a journey of revelation since the mid-1990s. People have been so cool in helping me out and showing me what I wanted to learn. (Callhoun quoted in McLachlan, 2005: 52)

Hart explains the thirst that some drummers have, to experience and to play so many styles on their instrument; he says 'there is a need to drum. I believe that. No drummer really knows why, you're just born with it... this need, it's a birthright' (Hart, 1990: 211). I concur.

Culturally home

Like his some of his peers above, Jon Hiseman (adult) described feeling somewhat inauthentic when performing certain styles of music:

Now, the central reason why I am not a jazz drummer, why my whole life has been elsewhere, is that it was absolutely crystal clear to me by the time I was 20 that I would never be able to play jazz drums from the centre of my soul. This was an American folk music, which in itself was an amalgam of two different cultures; but firsthand at least – you know what I mean? And that all I could ever be was second-hand... I was clear that I could never be anything but second hand as a jazz drummer, and I was everybody's jazz drumming dep! I mean, I could get away with it, you know. I could do it, you know. But the point is, to me, I felt second-hand, I actually felt second-hand.

Like Clive Porto, Jon Hiseman felt a very strong connection to the music that he called 'white rock,' which I am interpreting to be the same music identified by Clive as the British pop and blues bands of the '60s, since Jon Hiseman was a leading figure in several of those bands. Jon felt that this music was ethnically home to him, because it is a music that developed in the UK:

I think white rock, I think we created white rock in a way, because the Americans went the Billy Cobham, Latin-based route, and the LA drummers in a way went the click-boom, click-boom route. And the actual creative white rock drummers – the Ginger Bakers, the Jon Hisemans, the Mitch Mitchells, all that lot – we actually developed a way to play that was a strange amalgam, but it felt like home. And, as I say, I believe very European... Now Ginger always thought he based himself kind of on African drumming, but the point is that I always felt it was too stiff for that, and it was too square for that. And the point is that I think my playing is stiffer and squarer than the Billy Cobham – the Latin-based playing, you see. But again, I could have simulated that, like a lot of English drummers did. But I never felt comfortable trying to simulate it, and I couldn't do it well, and after a month of that I thought 'forget that,' you know.

Bruford seems to sum up Hiseman's experience well when he observes that 'sometimes you have to sort out who you're not, before you can find out who you are' (Bruford, 1988: 114).

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of Jon's ethnic attachment to 'white rock' was that:

I was making the rules, along with other white rock drummers. And that was very, very important to me – I felt that there was nobody I could put a record on and say 'this is the heritage, this is what you ought to be doing...' I felt that I was, I was free.

This sense of ownership, of having invented a style, was expressed by only one of the other participants in the study. Jon Hiseman, however, is a generation older than I, and it is the people whom he lists as his peers whom I cite as some of the strongest influences on my own drumming. Although I am aware of the ancient African roots of the art of drumming and its subsequent history, it is in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s that I locate the genesis of my ethnic drumming identity. Another drummer who influenced my own style of playing, and whose music I regard as central to my sense of ethnic heritage is Ian Paice (adult). Like Jon Hiseman, Ian Paice described the freedom of expression and invention afforded to him by the new shape that blues/rock music was taking in the UK in the 1960s. He recalled:

When Rod and Nick left, and Roger Glover and Ian Gillan came into the band, which then opened up the floodgates for experimentation. Because we weren't relying on somebody else's piece of genius to play around with, we, we were working on the things that turned *us* on. And starting with an original piece of music, then there are no horizons. Everything's open then... that's when the ability to let your imagination wander within the context of the piece of music you were creating happened. That allowed all those great live recordings to happen. You could, you just had a start point and end point, and what went on in the middle was totally up to you.

These comments about creative freedom and feeling at home speak of a strong sense of identity for drummers in the styles of music within and with which they each find they can be drummers. The remarks bring to mind again Laing's (1960) and Giddens' (1991) notion of 'ontological security' and Waterman's (1992) explanation of the 'daimon,' and living for in tune with one's true self. The remarks also recall again Harris & Rampton's (2003) framing of ethnicity in terms of enculturated, tacit understandings acquired over time in a home culture.

Bill Bruford humorously suggests how surprising it is that most of the participants in this study are playing drums at all, in light of our country's indigenous drumming culture:

The British are one of the most determinedly arhythmic nations surely that the planet has yet witnessed; a powerful combination of Puritanism and the rise of Western tonal harmony as the pre-eminent interest in 18th- and 19th-century music ensured that the only thing this nation could think to do with a drum for about three hundred years from the early 16th century to the arrival of Stravinsky at the beginning of this century was to send soldiers to war with it.

(Bruford, 1988: 123)

It is fortunate for Bruford (as well as his colleagues, peers and fans of his music) that he 'freely borrowed from the cultures of others in an effort to forge something for myself' (Bruford, 1988: 123). There is no sense from the participants of the sort of ethnic hierarchy in drumming implied earlier by Graves; jazz music is not held up by them to be any better or worse because of its African heritage, or more correct as an outlet for creating music as a drummer. The important factor for these British drummers was to understand how and where they felt connected to their heritage through their own culture of assimilation of cultural influences, rather than necessarily tracing the tradition to its African roots.

A different mix

Scratchy Fingers (adult) described an upbringing that was at odds with anything described by any of the other participants. He was brought up in an environment where white people were considered perhaps to have had extra-terrestrial beginnings:

You'd hear, like, some of these old, really sort of like old guys saying 'yeah, yeah that's right... he wants to take his rocket, 'cause that's where he comes from,' you know, and I was about, you know, growing up listening to this going 'yeah, oh right, oh right, they come from space. Ah, that explains it,' you know.

Scratchy had since learned that this was not the case! He consoled himself that 'the fact of the matter is, we *all* come from space, 'cause, you know, we're all made from,

you know, from atmospheric stuff.’ The music that Scratchy played on drums was mostly reggae, a style that had surrounded him as he grew up. He was strongly aware of the racial and ethnic associations of that style of music – that it is a music of Afro-Caribbean origin, and that those musicians in the UK who play reggae are mostly from that ethnic background. He said that ‘this is the kind of thing that I really think about quite deeply,’ and that:

it made me think about it, you know, think about that and like where, you know, why is it that there, you know, I’d got a, a white, you know, friend of mine who’s an *excellent*, you know, he plays Reggae guitar excellently, you know, but he’s a white guy.

Retaining any sort of ethnic purity among the musicians in the reggae that he played did not appear to be a concern of Scratchy’s, but he noticed that an apparent mismatch may strike others as unusual, saying ‘d’you know what I mean? And then, you know, I’m not saying that I have that dilemma – I’m just saying, like, that general society’ may not feel as relaxed as he was with a multi-ethnic band playing a style of music with strong ethnic and cultural associations. In a city as cosmopolitan and multi-cultural as London, it seems unlikely that many eyebrows would be raised at the sight of Scratchy Fingers’ white guitarist; from my experience, the norm is for people simply to play music. Scratchy and his white guitarist, though, may, respectively, be examples of both of Harris & Rampton’s (2003) views of how people experience ethnicity.

Questionnaire data

The impression given by the questionnaire data would tend at first glance to contradict much of the interview data, indicating that, overall, ethnicity was of virtually no importance to these drummers. Seventy-four of the 100 questionnaire respondents reported that their ethnicity was ‘not at all’ important to them as drummers. This may arise from the fact that 72 of the respondents were teenagers, who in the interviews also did not report strong senses of ethnicity in their playing. Interestingly, though, teenagers also account for four of the five respondents who said that ethnicity was ‘extremely’ important to them as drummers. Adult respondents

count 22 among their number who felt that ethnicity was ‘not at all important;’ two who found it ‘a bit’ important; one ‘quite;’ two ‘very;’ and one ‘extremely.’ My guess is that for most drummers, their ethnicity may actually have been closer to the ‘very’ and ‘extremely’ end of the scale of importance, but they perhaps did not think about it very much. If I had been asked prior to this study about how important ethnicity was to me in terms of my drumming, I probably would have answered ‘not at all,’ since I like to think of myself as an open minded sort of chap, unbound to music of any particular ethnicity over another. However, upon reflection, and largely as a result of having interviewed Clive Porto and Jon Hiseman (adults) – I have come to acknowledge that ethnicity and my cultural heritage are vital parts of who I am as a drummer. It seems fair to surmise that ethnicity is probably central to the cultural make-up of most drummers – but not all of them have yet noticed, or passively realized this as part of their drummer identity. Drummers’ identity realization with regard to ethnicity appears to emerge contextually, sometimes overlapping with identities as drummers. As Folkestad (2006: 139) writes, enculturation is the “‘hidden” teacher.’ We may not even be aware of what we are being taught until we reflect up on it; this is the very essence of passive learning realization. The context of ethnicity highlights again the intimacy and mutuality of learning and identity, and the overlap between various meta- and contextual identities.

Summary

For several of the participant adult drummers, ethnicity is an important feature of their identities as drummers, despite the difficulty that most interviewees found in discussing the subject. The data suggest a marked difference between the identities of adult drummers and the younger teenagers. Adult drummers appeared to have a firmer sense of ethnic identity in relation to drumming. The drummers at music colleges have a more eclectic view of where they sit ethnically. Perhaps a sense of ethnic identity in relation to drumming is postponed in these drummers, who are exposed to a broader range of stimuli; maybe they will eventually find, as Jon said he did, that certain musical styles feel ‘like home,’ or perhaps they will feel comfortable in a variety of genres and musics. Doubtless the outcome will be at least slightly different for each. This ties in with the metaphor of the Snowball Self, and the ongoing nature

of identity realization, as in the constructs of identity as ‘narrative’ (Giddens, 1991), ‘processual’ (Beaumont, 2009) ‘ongoing’ (Wenger, 1998) and biography (Denora, 2000), and in gaining and maintaining identity (Erikson, 1950). The data also highlight the overlap between meta-identities as drummers and in terms of ethnicity; the contextual identities realized when these two intersect are fascinating to behold.

Several adult drummers express a strong sense of identity in relation to particular musical cultures. They talked about what amounts to musical enculturation (Campbell, 1998; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2002; Jorgensen, 1997; Merriam, 1964; Mok, 2010; Rice, 2001) in terms of its effects on their sense of where they feel they most belong. Jon Hiseman (adult) believed that ‘the trick is, you find your soul when you’re actually dealing with your soul, when you’re actually reproducing your soul... I think that ethnicity is a very important element in the drums.’ Jon’s mention of ‘dealing with’ and ‘reproducing’ the soul in relation to styles of music could be interpreted in terms of passive and active identity realization - firstly acknowledging where one has a strong sense of identity (PIR) and then acting upon that feeling (AIR). Although other interviewees did not articulate this in the same way, the data in this chapter certainly seem like instances of identity construction and construal (Green, 2010) or passive and active identity realization.

As drummers get older, ethnicity seems to be a vital component of a drumming meta-identity. The data in this chapter support the notion of contextual identities more than any data so far, with many participants giving descriptions of how it feels to engage with drumming from beyond their ethnic comfort zone. The active and passive realization of contextual identities in different ethnic musical styles recalls strongly the ideas of multiple identities discussed by Brabazon (2002), Gracyk (2001), Hampson (1982), and Stets & Burke (2003), and notions of a drummer’s sense of ontological security (Laing, 1960) and eudaimonic living (Waterman, 1992).

CHAPTER SIX

Learning to Play Drums

Introduction

In this chapter data are presented and discussed, to gain a deeper understanding of how drummers learn to play their instruments. It is a truism to say that this is one of the most important elements in being and becoming a drummer, although as Sean Lee, Scratchy Fingers and Mike Mannerling (adults) have each described (above, Chapter Four), learning to play can be the result of feeling like one is already a drummer, rather than being just the cause. As set out in Chapter Two, central to my interpretation of the data in the coming pages is a holistic view of learning practices and experiences. While ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ are useful ways of describing learning, I try to avoid viewing these dichotomously. Mok (2010: 60) refers to ‘the autonomous nature of informal music learning-practices, especially those prevailing in the world of popular musicians,’ and posits this as oppositional to ‘folk and traditional music learning [which] involves adults or master musicians in guiding children;’ the data, however, suggest that there is considerable overlap between these modes, as learners engage in different ways along what Folkestad (2006) calls a ‘continuum’ of modes of learning, incorporating also non-formal learning practices. I focus, therefore, on enculturation, in the broad way in which it is used by Merriam (1964) and Rice (2001), akin to Jorgensen’s (1997) use of the term ‘transmission’ and Folkestad’s conceptualization of enculturation as a sort of ““hidden” teacher.’ A key factor of contemporary learning practices seems to be autonomy – drummers are used, to a large extent, to choosing how they learn, recalling Bourdieu & Passeron’s notion of ‘pedagogic authority’ – the issue of from whom a learner (drummer) is willing to learn (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977: 19). I also look at the data in this chapter to see whether or to what extent they fit my model of the snowball self, with a particular emphasis on how data might be interpreted in terms of passive and active learning realization.

‘With a little help from my friends’²

As has been well documented (Green, 2002; Lebler, 2008), much of the learning done by musicians who play popular music is undertaken in peer and friend groups. Green describes how ‘in band rehearsals, skills and knowledge are acquired, developed and exchanged via peer direction and group learning from very early stages’ (Green, 2002: 79); sometimes these stages are ‘so early that the players often have little or no control over their instruments and virtually no knowledge of any chord progressions, licks or songs’ (Green, 2002: 78). Often bands are not formed with the primary intention of learning music or learning to play instruments *per se*, but as a fun way to socialize, a component element of which would be learning – in Rodriguez’s terms ‘unconscious accumulation’ of skills and abilities (Rodriguez, 2004: 21). Cohen observes that:

a band could... play an important cultural and social role, providing an outlet for creativity and a means by which friendships were made and maintained. Basically, most people were in bands for these social and cultural factors. They enjoyed it. They loved playing, performing, and socializing. (Cohen, 1991: 3)

As a teenage drummer I belonged to a band called the Diesel Powered Nuns, a name suggested by a friend with whom I was in another band, the Purple Freuds (we knew nothing of psychology, but were all familiar with the music of Pink Floyd, made a silly pun on a famous name and thought it sounded cool!). The Diesel Powered Nuns functioned as a typical example of peer-directed learning. Our lead guitarist, Matt, would write or learn songs and then show the rest of us what to do; we listened and watched, all learning and practising our parts together, usually in the rhythm guitarist’s parents’ living room. The Diesel Powered Nuns also served as exemplars of what Green terms ‘group learning’:

By which I mean learning that occurs more or less unconsciously or even accidentally, simply through taking part in the collective actions of the group. This includes unconscious or semi-conscious learning during music-making, through watching, listening to and imitating each other. It also involves learning before, during and after music-making, through organizing, talking and exchanging opinions, and so on. Although not directly *intended* to foster learning

² Lennon, J. & McCartney, P. (1967)

experiences, 'group learning' in this definition, both during and outside of music-making itself, tends to lead to the gradual refinement of the musical product. (Green, 2008: 120)

The Nuns used to spend a lot of time together during rehearsals talking about music, girls (we were all boys in the band) and life in general. A good deal of unconscious accumulation (Rodriguez (2004) was achieved, apparently simply by being together.

The Purple Freuds were even more adept at spending entire days together, and the group learning, while often fully conscious and intentional, was in equal measure unconscious and unintentional. There was a sense that being together as a band, whether jamming for hours – just playing our instruments together and seeing what came out – or even if we were outside kicking a football around, inside eating unhealthy quantities of biscuits or telling endless silly jokes, we were doing music just by hanging out together. In this band, there was far less peer-directed learning (although it did occur – Chris, guitarist, was able to play a blues, so he taught the other members what he knew) – rather, for the most part we wrote songs and learned songs together. In the latter instance, we would often listen to recordings together, and try to copy our respective parts of songs by Dire Straits, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin. Occasionally then a little more peer-directed learning would creep in from our keyboard and bass player, Steve, who could hear all of our parts better than the rest of us.

In both of these bands in which I played as a tender 14-year-old, our friendship was of vital importance. Green acknowledges that 'friendship plays a fundamental role within informal learning in the realm of popular music, for reasons tied up with the nature of what is being learnt' (Green, 2008: 121). Joey Kramer, drummer for rock band Aerosmith, is cited above (p. 116), confirming Green's assertion. Finnegan also identifies the type of learning that occurred in my two school bands as quite typical of young pop musicians:

Players could begin at any age, but one common pattern was for a teenager (usually a boy) to develop the ambition to play the guitar or drums, often inspired by a shared enthusiasm for some current popular number or player or by a friend or relation who played himself. Once he knew a few basic chords or rhythms it became feasible to contribute actively to group music-making and, usually without benefit of written music, to develop further skills in a group

context which held not only all the satisfaction of joint musical experience, but also – very often – of peer group involvement in a valued and self-enhancing activity with rewards seen as self-chosen rather than set by external examinations or outside recognition.

(Finnegan, 1989: 137)

This type of learning in groups is helpfully termed ‘interdependent learning’ by Lebler (2008: 4); Sean Lee (adult) described learning to play in this way, much as I had experienced. Sean recalled:

Me and Rupert have been playing together since I was 16/17, and he was, like, ‘round about the same age... That’s basically how me and Rupert work, ‘cause he’d learn rhythms off my playing, and I’d learn rhythms off his playing... that’s a lot how I learnt the drums as well, just, like, listening to rhythms on the guitar.

Jamie H. (18) learned to play in a similar way to that which Sean described, saying ‘I mean, I’ve got a brother, so I played with him quite a lot’ and picked up skills in this way.

While other interviewees talked about playing in bands, none discussed this in ways that described learning to play the drums in that context. Bill Bruford describes learning from one of his peers in order to fill the drum chair in a band at school:

As an impressionable young teenager, I gravitated toward some older boys at the school who were jazz-hungry... the drummer, Mike Swann, was leaving the school, so he taught me how to swing on the ride cymbal, said something about be-bop, and told me I was his replacement. My public debut came at 14. After a handful of lessons with Mike, I was sitting in the with the hotel band on a skiing holiday in Saint-Cergue, Switzerland. (Bruford, 2009: 30)

In choosing to learn from Mike Swann, Bruford ascribed to him the pedagogic authority (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) to teach him; he continued much of his active learning realization in the context of this and other bands. However, as I have implied, it would be misleading to suggest that Bruford, or any drummer, learns or learned in only one mode or environment.

Taking lessons

Taking lessons from a teacher ought not to be confused with formal learning, although being taught in this way is a crucial part of formal learning (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974: 8; Rennie & Mason, 2004: 10). As with Bruford's recollection of learning from a peer at school in a (probably) unstructured sort of way with no specific assessment goal in mind, so other drummers talked of being taught in perhaps semi-formal ways, evoking Folkestad's 'continuum' (2006: 135).

Mike Mannering (adult) recalled taking lessons at school from the age of 11, and then:

In my village, which is a tiny little village out there in Sonning in Oxfordshire, in between Henley and Reading, er, this guy moved into the village and his, his name was Rick Lee and he was the drummer in a band called Ten Years After in the late '60s and '70s, and he kind of took me under his wing as his first sort of drum student. He'd never done any teaching before, so I was his first one; I started going every Saturday for lessons with him, so that's what I did really.

Guy Richman (adult), who was roughly the same age as Mike, began taking drum kit lessons at a younger age:

I started when I was eight. It was a local comprehensive school, The Robert Clack Comprehensive that on a Saturday it would open its doors... as a free school, but all these pros would come down and teach loads of different instruments. You could turn up and enrol, and lo and behold, away you go... It was great! I was there for about five years. I studied with a guy called Eddie Freeborn, who's dead now. [After this] I learnt with Max, and I went to Bob [Armstrong]. In the interim I learnt with a drummer called Kenny Clare - I had a couple of lessons with him.

One of the key features of this teaching and learning environment for Guy appears to have been the prominence in the professional drumming world of his teachers. He remembers that Eddie Freeborn 'was one of the top, I mean he was working *every* night in the Grosvenor House and the like,' and that Kenny Clare 'was *the* man - anything at The Talk of London or the Palladium, he was on it; Judy Garland stuff, he's on it. He was shit-hot.' Guy clearly had great respect for the pedagogic authority

of his tutors (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). According teachers this level of respect is perhaps something that comes with experience and upon reflection. While Guy was probably aware at the time of taking lessons how prestigious his tutors were in the drumming world, it may only have been with hindsight and in passive learning realization that he realized the quality and context of the teaching that he received.

Nethagshan (13) described how his drum lessons involve a mixture of formal and informal learning practices, taking place in a school setting with a designated teacher, but without working towards qualifications or credits, and including playing along to recordings:

Mr. Jekey has this 'click' thing that keeps clicking and you keep the beat on it. And so it helps you get through it; and he does this sound thing: one-e-and-a, two-e-and-a... Yes, it helps *more* because if you just told me 'play the bass drum, then the hi-hat' and stuff, I wouldn't understand it... Once we're really good on a beat he gets, like, a record like Slipknot and he lets us play for it. He's actually telling me, and keeping me on the beat.

Rohan (13) had the same teacher as Nethagshan, and described his lessons in similar terms. Due to their experiences of both formal and informal approaches to learning, these teenagers could be construed as 'bi-musical' (McCarthy, 1997, cited in Green, 2002: 6). If, however, we take Folkestad's more holistic view with the continuum, it may be more accurate simply to describe them as 'musical,' since their lessons are neither purely formal nor informal. Jamie M. (17) explains how he also might be considered bi-musical; he:

had lessons from the school at the age of 11; I stopped having lessons when I was 14. Then I started teaching myself a few stuff, and then my drum teacher told me about Drum Tech and so I went for an audition, just for the Diploma, and I got in.

Ella (14), by contrast, may be more mono-musical, learning mostly in one way. She said that thus far, 'I've just had lessons' that take a more (although again not completely) formal approach to learning in which:

I have a book that we work through and if I want to do my grades I would do them, but I don't really want to, so he goes through the book and we play some pieces and if we have anything else I'll play it... It's generally just book stuff.

Ella also conceded that she might pick up some drumming tips from the hidden teacher of enculturation when she admitted that 'I just generally, when I'm listening [to songs on her iPod], I don't really listen to the words, I listen to the beat.'

Higher education

Drum Tech (a popular music college in London), where I conducted interviews for this study, provided an interesting case of combining formal and informal learning experiences for students there.

Q: Did you hear about the drummer who graduated college?

A: No, neither did I!

(www.drumjokes.com)

The joke of course implies that drummers are too stupid to obtain a university education. However, while the answer is probably true in many cases today, it is likely to be for the opposite reason to that which is implied. Aside from the fact that drummers are likely to be no more or less intelligent than any other group of musicians, drummers earn degrees in music and in popular music in their scores and even hundreds every year. The institution where I teach had in November 2010 a graduating class of 46 Bachelors of Music Performance – 12 of these were drummers.

The accounts of interviewees from Drum Tech show another way in which the formal/informal paradigm fails to account fully for the holistic-ness of their rich learning experiences. As some have already described in Chapter Four, they engage in informal learning practices with bands and in watching Youtube videos and enjoying audio recordings. The learning that they experience at Drum Tech is largely formal, as Matt (18) describes:

We play in all different classes, erm, sight reading, theory, aural, rhythm studies – quite a lot. And on the Diploma they had different ones as well. They had Latin percussion, which was really cool so we learnt a lot.

Luke (19) expands on this to explain that:

we've got term books, and it's just all the different modules from CS, all the techniques, concepts; er GM, Latin Percussion, it's all in the books and we'll start with the very basic stuff in term one, really, really easy to do. And we all get hand-outs of stuff to do, and sight reading – you get sheets that help us learn to read over the weeks and... as homework – come back and do it.

Chris (19) found the learning to be:

really, really anal, really analytical, it's like, really, really stupidly like magnified technique stuff, and, er, which is awesome, no it's really, really good but it gets pretty full-on, like, you know – 'Crap! I'm thinking about *everything*.' It's down to a point where you're like robots. You go over everything in such detail.

From such a directed and formal approach, the teaching and learning at Drum Tech drifts into blurry territory as often lessons are recorded by the teachers and uploaded on to the internet for students to watch again – Chris found this helpful:

You can pick handy bits up because a lot of the drum teachers from here have put loads of them on. So if you, say, didn't quite get something one lesson or something, you jump on Youtube and just type in, like I say, Phillippe, you know, my techniques teacher or Faruggia, and just type it in Youtube and then you've got his lesson again... you can watch it and listen, and sit there with a pad even and just go over it, and it's really good help.

Videos on Youtube are watch-able around the world. In view of the number of drummers who report watching Youtube videos, it seems highly likely that these Drum Tech lessons have been viewed by many drummers from home – (formal) tuition in the (informal) luxury of an armchair. I have certainly stumbled across many drum kit lessons as I have browsed the web in search of drummer-satiation (although a cursory search did not yield any lesson material from Drum Tech). Videos and learning are considered further, below.

Self-directed learning

Participants who had taken lessons talked about subsequent or concurrent self-directed study using books, presumably because they had been taught how to read the music. I have a large collection of drum books from which I teach myself (or to which I ascribe the pedagogic authority to teach me). Ronnie Fawcett (adult) recalled teaching herself from a book ‘called *First Step* or something;’ Callum (16) said that in addition to his lessons ‘I’m just going through a book now at the moment;’ and Senan (19) was ‘going through – ah, shit! Joe? It’s like *Advanced Syncopation for the Modern Drummer* or something – d’you know it? It’s a blue book’ (I did not know it). Bill Bruford, too, recalls working through ‘the jazz drummer’s bible of the day, Jim Chapin’s *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*’ (Bruford, 2009: 30).

I rejected for several years what according to the data are the commonest and most pervasive of learning practices among drummers, that is learning from listening to recordings and, increasingly, from watching film footage. I rejected these for two reasons; outwardly I pretended that this was a horribly inaccurate way to learn things, and that real music was written down (my first drum teacher taught me mostly from sheet music, and this is what I was repeatedly told in my clarinet lessons!), but inwardly I knew that I was incompetent and found it incredibly difficult to hear what I was listening for. I have since overcome both this bizarre prejudice and the deficiency in aural skills, but I still often write down what I learn by ear, so that I don’t need to remember it.

Two drummers reported having almost the opposite experience to mine, and rejected more formal tuition in favour of learning by ear. Nathan (14) recalled:

I was like in a, in a waiting line for ages to get drum lessons at school, then I had, I only had four then I quit. Didn’t like, didn’t like it really – I didn’t, I dunno, I just didn’t really like the lessons, but then, erm, I got a drum kit and taught myself really and just, I just played and I, you know, I just listened to lots of different types of music and just try and figure out their drum beats, and then just, you know, just mess about.

Sean Lee (adult) similarly found little inspiration from the drum lessons on offer at his school:

I went for a lesson, didn't, all I was getting from this dude was 'mummy-daddy, mummy-daddy' – pffff, I was pretty young, so what I did was, we had an attic in our house, our old house. I just stuck a drum kit up there, stuck my Walkman on and just started playing to tunes that I loved... *Appetite for Destruction*... Yeah, that's all I was playing along to. And, you know, it's pretty basic, but it does the trick, doesn't it? I fucking love Adler.

Sean went on to say that learning with friends and being self-taught:

gives you your individual style as well. If you're taught by someone from day one – never played drums before and then you're just taught by someone – you're basically going to take on that person's style. If you're taught by no-one, then you have to be bringing something new to it.

His point is not entirely invalid, inasmuch as learning parrot-fashion from any teacher is possibly an ineffective way to learn a musical instrument. However, he perhaps misses the point that although he had no teachers in his early career, he still had to learn from various people, and someone (i.e. himself) had to direct that learning. Sean described in some detail what he learned from recordings of one drummer in particular:

Bonham - he was a thumper, but also he was, I wouldn't call him quite 'intricate,' but there were some intricacies that are brilliant, yeah. That's why I love him. He's got it all – he's not too flashy, you know, and he's a fucking thumper and he's got little bits that make things kind of shine. That's, I mean, the thing with drummers, if you over-play, it sounds like you're over-playing.

By ascribing to John Bonham (and Steven Adler, above) the pedagogic authority that he would not give to a teacher, Sean was effectively just choosing to learn from other people and in another way; with a better experience of lessons at school, perhaps he could have learned in both ways. By way of partly contradicting Sean's argument, Senan (19), despite (or perhaps due to) taking lessons with several teachers, attributed his current playing style to his greatest drumming influence; Sean said that his style

was 'kind of John Otto-y, I guess,' because 'I base my entire drumming style on John Otto.'

Learning by playing along to recordings was ubiquitous among the interview participants, except for Ronnie Fawcett (adult) and Ella (14). Ronnie, though, said that she used recordings in her teaching for her students to play along to. Scratchy Fingers (adult) learned almost exclusively by ear, even without the aid of an actual drum kit.

Scratchy: Air drumming, yeah, air drumming – I used to be an air drummer, you know, 'cause that's what I, yeah, yeah, yes: air drumming - oh yes! Absolutely. That was my main, how I learnt, and I played along to, you know all different types of music you know, sort of you know er, reggae, soul, erm, some old, you know, old pop records, you know, erm, classical music, even.

Joe (15) I can plug my iPod in, so I just play along to my iPod... what's weird is I don't work it out bit by bit. If there's a bit that I can't play exactly how it is in the song, I just kind of play a bit differently, and then one day it'll just sort of come to me.

Jamie H. (18) I got a drum kit and taught myself... I was so bad at first, like I was terrible. And, um, I guess it was just kind of like not minding how it sounds, just keep going for it. I listen to a lot of music.

These drummers demonstrate most of Green's (2002) characteristics of informal learning – listening to music that they know and like, tackling whole pieces of music, and imitating and learning by ear.

A feel for it

Other participants described choosing to be self-taught, not as a reaction against tuition, but either because tuition was not available or because they felt no need for it. Ronnie Fawcett (adult), whose learning to play drums followed years of formal lessons and orchestral playing with other instruments, said that 'the fact that I was a musician before made a difference, [learning to play] piano, violin and 'cello.' When

she started playing drums and percussion in the band of the Royal Air Force at the age of 21, however, ‘you used your initiative – well, for me I did anyway. That’s the way I did it – some people can work things out, can’t they, better than others?’ Ronnie hinted here at a sort of natural affinity with drums, finding it relatively easy to learn to play. Cath Lovell (adult) recalled how she, too, found drums very easy to pick up. At school one day, aged 11:

I went into the big room and I literally just got on the kit and, and was playing. Just really simple, and I’d never played before. And she [the school music teacher] came in, erm, and said ‘oh my God I thought that was, whatever his name was – David, playing’ and he was the school drummer. And that kind of bolstered my confidence, ‘cause what that said to me was, you know, I can, I can do it without any lessons, I can just get there. I can do it for, from feel, just from knowing kind of what to do.

Jon Hiseman (adult) remembered a strikingly similar experience from the age of 12, after deciding to play drums in the band at his church youth group:

I’d played the violin, I’d played the piano, and none of it made much sense to me. Um, there was something about the drums that immediately made sense, um, in an absolutely intangible way. I hadn’t got a clue what I was doing really, but it made sense... I was 12... young kids have today, you know, I didn’t know anything about the concept of time, I didn’t know anything about anything, when I think about it, and there was no tuition at all, and if there was tuition I didn’t know anything about it, and I never had any.

Ian Paice (adult) also remembered from his youth that:

there was nobody there to teach me where I was growing up. There was one guy who used to drum with my father, that I, quite honestly within six months I was better than he was, even though I didn’t know anything.

An impression emerges from these remarks of drummers living in a way that Waterman (1992) might describe as being in accordance with the daimon – doing what is right for, and being true to, oneself. This sort of passive identity realization, followed by active identity realization as drummers, recalls Hart’s comment from the previous chapter, that ‘there is a need to drum. I believe that. No drummer really knows why, you’re just born with it... this need, it’s a birthright’ (Hart, 1990: 211).

Films

One of the most frequently cited means of learning was watching film footage of other drummers. Joe (15) said that he liked to:

watch a lot of live videos as well – I don't tend to copy what they do; I just tend to, like, see how the drums kit's set out, and see what they, or what's, say there's a part where I'm not quite sure what sort of thing they use –whether it's a crash or a splash, all that kind of thing, you know.

Joe said he did not learn from the videos about how to play the drums; rather, he learned about how drummers behave in performance, and what drummers do – learning about drumming, instead about how to drum. Ian Paice (adult), meanwhile, seems to have been bitten by the drum bug while watching films on television as a teenager at home on a Sundays. He recalls that:

in the afternoons they used to play old movies. They'd be real old, old movies, and quite frequently they'd be bio-pics of the big swing bands or they'd be, you know, those sorts of Hollywood things that had the Glenn Miller band or Benny Goodman, and there was a drummer.

The living room in Ian's parents' home became his drum school, as he explained that he learned a lot of from the films about how to play:

I sort of knew, I *understood*, just by looking at him, why one hand was doing what it needed to do, and one hand – I didn't have to be shown that, you know... And I had, because I used to watch these guys, and it might have been Krupa, it might have been Buddy Rich, it might have been Dave Tough, it might have been any one of them – the great guys who played with Ellington, and Basie, I learned from watching them, trying to copy... whatever was going on. And that's the way I started. And movies were a great way in, because it wasn't just sound – I could see how that hand [interviewee trailed off].

Ian is alone among this study's participants in citing films as his first and principal source of instruction in drumming. The only other adult participant to mention films playing an important part in his technical mastery was Guy Richman, who was shown films by his teacher, Bob Armstrong:

I went to Bob and he said, 'Well, this is what Cobham does and he plays like *this*,' and he showed me stuff on video, (and I'm 18 by this point), I'm like 'Fuck! Wow!' I'd never thought of doing that, it's so natural just to sit at a drum kit and do that rather than that [demonstrates open-handed over cross-handed technique].

For Guy, watching other drummers on film was part of his more formal learning as a student in lessons with a teacher, whereas for Ian it was informal and self-directed.

Most of the drummers interviewed for the study discussed watching film footage of other drummers; Ella and Ronnie were alone in that they did not. Several teenagers brought to their second interviews large piles of DVDs! Left unchecked, I think Joe (15) would have had me watch the entire feature-length DVD, *HAARP*, of the band Muse live at Wembley Stadium! Similarly, Jamie M. (17) became wholly engrossed in his favourite DVD of drummer Jojo Mayer when showing it to me. The level of excitement and enjoyment typical of the participants when sharing and discussing favourite music on DVDs was exemplified by Luke when he talked about AC/DC's Live at Donnington:

I really dig the music – I think the music's fantastic. From a drumming, from a drummer's perspective, really, really simplistic, really easy to do [inaudible] when you're doing a gig at Donnington, but I don't know, he's really getting into it. He really is, hammering the shit into those drums! And crashes everywhere, it's brilliant! And they all look like they're having fun. The opening track, 'Thunderstruck,' it's just brilliant, man! It's not Phil Rudd drumming, cause I think, I'm not too sure when he left, but who's on drums? Chris [inaudible], and you watch it, I showed to my brother it, and it was like, it's all leather jackets and denim! That's all it is, leather jackets and denim. And the amount of people there, it's insane!

Luke's comments, as Joe's, show how video footage helps drummers understand what it is to *be drummers*, beyond how merely to play the instrument.

Who to be and how to play: who do you like?

Q: *How many drummers does it take to change a light bulb?*

A: *12 – one to change the bulb, and 11 to talk about how Buddy Rich would have done it!*

(www.drumjokes.com)

This is a classic from the archives of drummer jokes. Of course it pokes fun at drummers, but it also reveals a certain truth – drummers know their drummers. While drummers are not unique in that they are well versed in the names and achievements of their peers and exemplars, this trait reveals a good deal about the ways in which many drummers go about realization of identities and learning. The joke highlights two drummer-characteristics; the first is that drummers *do* talk endlessly about other drummers, especially when in the company of other drummers; the second is that drummers usually know enough that they *can* talk endlessly about other drummers. As drummer Neil Peart says, ‘it’s not hard for drummers to find things to talk about’ (Portnoy & Cohan, 2007: 45). Rodriguez (2004: 17) observes that ‘pop images and lifestyles motivate young people. They want to be like the performers whose styles they emulate.’ This applies as much to the admired performers’ playing style as much as, if not in the present cases a good deal more than, for instance, the ways in which famous performers dress and behave. Ginger Baker describes how he idolized elder drummer Phil Seaman, whom Baker used to watch in concert as an aspiring young performer. He writes:

The things Phil could say with his drums brought tears to my eyes. His drums spoke eloquently and they always told very moving tales. It just flowed out of him, everything tied together and I thought of Phil as the Drum God. (Baker, 2010: 41)

Baker’s praise and respect fit in well with the ways in which drummers talk about those who have inspired them. Cindy Blackman ‘sees herself as merely a product of the masters who came before her, and those who inspired them’ (Peart, 2010: 24).

While the point of the above joke is that drummers can be rather tiresome in their ramblings about their peers and idols, the mere fact that all 11 hypothetical drummers

in the joke have something to say about Buddy Rich means that, far from the stupid non-musicians as whom they are sometimes cast, drummers are often extremely well versed in the history and musicology of their art. They are like the record store salesmen in the film *High Fidelity*, about whom an observant customer comments, ‘you feel like unappreciated scholars’ (Frears, 2001). Drummers, and perhaps other enthusiasts of popular music, are immersed in a music that has:

a rich history that is tied to our social political, cultural, and economic history. What it lacks, in comparison to, say, Western European music, is the passage of sufficient time to determine which practices, structures, persons, and places have most influenced the genre. (Rodriguez, 2004: 17)

In the drumming world, there are a few idolized ‘masters’ emerging, in the way that Western European art music has reified certain composers from history. Unsurprisingly, *The Muppet Show*’s Animal is exemplary in his awareness of this; Kermit the frog interviews Animal in an episode of *The Muppet Show*:

Kermit – I imagine you have a lot of idols, er...

Animal – Ah yeah! Yeah!

Kermit – Buddy Rich...

Animal – O yeah, yeah!

Kermit – Gene Krupa...

Animal – Yeah, Krupa! Krupa!

(Henson, 2007a)

In another episode of *The Muppet Show*, Animal has the opportunity to play alongside his idol, Buddy Rich. Famously, he loses in this ‘drum battle’ on the show in 1978 (Henson, 2007b). Animal’s solution to losing is to throw a drum at Rich so that the winner ends up wearing it over his head. This duel was undoubtedly in homage to another famous drum battle – between Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa, released on record in 1952 (Krupa & Rich, 1952). Having begun his puppet life as something of a parody of/homage to drummers, Kate Tatum (adult) acknowledged that ‘Animal is a fantastic icon for drummers’ today!

Animal is far from alone in his awareness and appreciation of Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa. These two drummers were singled out by jazz impresario Norman Granz for their *Drum Battle* recording over half a century ago and are still held in very high regard by drummers. Stephen Perkins says that Gene Krupa ‘was my first influence’ (Perkins quoted in Barker, 2005a: 52), and Travis Barker writes ‘we all know that Buddy Rich was pretty much the best drummer that ever walked the planet, but I do think that Gene Krupa was more melodic on the drums than Buddy Rich’ (Barker, 2005a: 52). Krupa and Rich are the most commonly cited drumming influences among the drummers who were interviewed for this study. Guy Richman (adult) said that among his drumming influences there was ‘obviously Buddy Rich (speaks for itself);’ Ronnie Fawcett (adult) cited her only influences as being ‘big, older names like Gene Krupa, people like that.’

The famous *Drum Battle* of 58 years ago still stirs controversy among young players. Jamie M. (17) said he liked ‘Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa; I prefer Buddy Rich, to be honest. He’s a legend, he’s the man.’ Matt (18) talked of gaining ‘inspiration from the people I watch, like Buddy Rich.’ Luke (19) also had plenty to say on the Krupa/Rich debate, and fell on the other side of the fence than Jamie M., saying:

Buddy Rich is just like, triplet paradiddles and crossing over all over the kit. That’s cool, that’s very showy; but Gene Krupa, you listen to that think ‘yeah, I could really get into that... Yeah, yeah, yeah, it’s just like [makes Buddy Rich-type drum sounds] It’s boring, man. And then, just little things like grabbing the splash – it’s like, yeah, that’s really fucking cool! There’s no doubt, he is fantastic! But if I had to choose, if you talk – I think if you talk to any drummer with a decent history of musical knowledge and say ‘name a Buddy Rich track’ they’ll go ‘er;’ but name a Gene Krupa track, ‘Sing Sing Sing.’ Floor tom, it’s the floor tom – it’s remember-able.

Although there is clearly far more to learning the drums than deciding between Krupa and Rich, this drummer-dichotomy illustrates an important point about drummers’ enculturation. Deciding which drummers you like is but a short step from deciding which you would like to emulate – Guy Richman, Ronnie Fawcett (adults) and Matt (18) have already described Krupa and Rich as influences on their playing, thus highlighting one way in which realization of identity and learning are connected.

The Rich/Krupa dichotomy provides another example of drummers ascribing pedagogic authority (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) to those whom they deem worthy. Also, with the same two famous drummers being widely cited as influences on participants, Hogg's comments (2003: 462) come to mind, concerning the influence of a group over its members. It seems unlikely that these two figures should become reified in the minds of individual drummers above any number of other exemplary players, without drummers all learning from their peers that these are two drummers who should be revered and compared above all others; here is passive learning realization.

Apart from Ella (14), who was able to name no drumming influences, and Ronnie Fawcett (adult), who named just two, most interview participants listed and discussed numerous players whom they admired; the only other exception was Lisa, who said:

Do you now what? I like, I have not ever really been in to this whole kind of session player, following certain drummers – I like certain sorts of music and certain songs, and certain grooves, so, but I just like anything that's good really!

The other participants all talked about drummers whose playing they admire and know well. Some have already been cited. Other typical examples were:

Luke (19)	My main influence is John Henry Bonham.
Natalie (19)	I think I copy Travis Barker a lot.
Senan (19)	John Otto, Gadd, Weckl, Brad Wilk, Mason – I love Mason, Chad Smith.
Guy Richman (adult)	Harvey Mason, man, he's just there, he's <i>there</i> ; but that's the shit I grew up on – I grew up on all that.
Mike Mannering (adult)	I love watching videos of Tony Williams.

The younger teenagers, who had been playing for a shorter time, were less able than their peers to list drummers who were an influence on their playing. Ella (14), as mentioned, was unable to name any influences, while Rohan (13) and Nethagshan

(13) named bands to whom they enjoyed listening, rather than the drummers in those bands. Rohan did not know the name of the drummer in The Police, but did like ‘how he mixes reggae with rock.’ With other music that he enjoyed, he conceded that ‘I just like the music and how it sounds, really.’ Nethagshan admitted that ‘I like their [Slipknot’s] drummer, but I don’t know his name.’ His commentary was slightly more advanced than Rohan’s in that he was able to articulate something of what he liked in another’s playing; he said that he liked drumming ‘like, when it goes really fast, not just like “boom, boom” – really fast and do more variations and fills.’

Having drummers change the proverbial light bulb becomes an altogether more complicated process the longer and more intensely a drummer engages with his or her art. Music college student, Luke (19), had the following observations to make about his idol, John Bonham:

Ever since my Mum played me Led Zeppelin when I was eight, I was just like ‘this is wicked.’ I saw the video to ‘Whole Lotta Love’ and was just like ‘that’s what I want to do for the rest of my life.’ I just looked at Bonham, was just like – that is mental, just [makes drum sounds], whacking the shit into them and it’s like fucking wicked! Yeah, he is a force to be reckoned with. Just like everything he does is really, like, I mean you can watch somebody play the drums and they’ll hit a crash, and you watch Bonham hit a crash and it’s just like [makes explosion-type sound!] Yeah, you listen to, erm ‘The Ocean,’ ‘The Ocean,’ and it’s just literally a 4/4, and then he’s just flamming on the snare, stopping, and just, like, hitting the hi-hat. And if that was anyone else, they’d put like a massive fill in. It sounds like, I was listening to it and I really gave it a *proper* good listen to. And it sounds; everything he’s playing sounds completely out of time and wrong, but he’s playing exactly what John Paul was playing on the bass! He’s interlocked with it so well, it’s like ‘Fuck, man!’

Luke was similarly enthusiastic about Gene Krupa:

Gene Krupa, he’s phenomenal, man! Gene Krupa was the first proper superstar of drumming, and chewing gum and flailing around – phenomenal, man! Yeah, like ‘Sing Sing Sing’ – doom, doom, da-ga’ – aah! Don’t get me started! It’s brilliant! And he was on *The Mask* as well, so, yeah. It’s that he was really flamboyant, and always smiling, and chewing gum, and putting a drum solo into a song. I mean, what a legend! And you listen to some of this chops and he was just so cool! He was just really cool – fantastic player. I listen to his songs and it’s just like – it’s amazing! There’s just little bits that you hear, and it’s like, that’s really, really cool. O, no! He’s just – getting up on the drums, it’s like he was, they were massive

orchestras, and it's just like, it's the drummer standing up, whacking the shit into the floor tom! It's just that that's never happened before – I've never seen that in my entire life. That is wicked! I'll put 'Sing, Sing, Sing' on. He's wicked! Oh!

It seems from the above that Luke gained as much inspiration from John Bonham and Gene Krupa for how to play the drums as for how to *be* a drummer; this is again as much to do with learning realization as it is to do with identity realization. Ian Paice (adult) talked about being inspired in similar ways by Gene Krupa, recalling watching from the films he watched at home as a child:

He was the best looking guy in the band, and he was the man you watched, he was mesmeric, and I wanted to look like him. Not sound like, but look like him. It was Gene Krupa. And then I started to listen.

Wielding his iPod, Jamie M. (17) revealed a similar level of awareness of the nuances of drummers' playing:

I've got loads [of influences]. I've got Jojo, Keith Carlock, Steve Jordan, Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta – he's the *man*. Buddy Rich Memorial, yeah, it is good, yeah, it is sick! I've got Vinnie Colaiuta on here – He's just playing a 4/4 groove, but he's displacing the beat. He's dropping a 16th note each time; it's so clean, weird: I've played this before and it's difficult. I like, Jojo's my favourite though.

While showing me a DVD video of his favourite drummer, Jamie went on to say:

He talks so much sense and like, he's got amazing technique and flow. I've seen him do things that I've never seen anyone do... Because you've got Vinnie, Gadd and Weckl, and they're all on that level. And there's, like, Jojo, you know? Yeah, for me – I just think he's amazing. There's his new DVD that came out. Have you seen it? It was rated Number One, and it just blows you away. My favourite [brandishes Jojo Mayer DVD] – it's just the craziest DVD ever – technique. Scary how good he is [laughs]. This bit here, what he does with the snare – he puts his elbows out to muffle the sound, ah, that's sick! He does all this now with one pedal! He's just so unique – there's no-one else around like him. And the way he uses Moeller technique – I don't think anyone else uses it like him. And when I saw him at a clinic, he just talked so much sense. Yeah, it's really like Steve Jordan. Mad, his hands here – his left hand's got the Moeller – I love the way, his technique - it's just the best. Erm, a

shuffle – he does a Moeller whip in here. He does three in it [makes drumming sounds along to DVD] – this is just weird, he’s displacing the groove, he’s playing the bass and the hi-hat, and if you listen he’s doing something with the snare. It’s really jazzy, yeah! It’s mad – four in each hand here!

Jamie, in stereotypical drummer style, could probably prolong for hours the procedure of changing that light bulb, as he was thrilled to evangelize about his favourite drummer in the presence of me, his interlocutor-peer.

Matt (18) preferred the playing of Bernard Purdie, and provided a commentary whilst listening along to an Aretha Franklin song featuring Purdie’s drumming:

Bernard Purdie on drums. Here’s some of the stuff, I don’t think he plays the Purdie Shuffle with any of her stuff, but this is really nice – it really grooves. And it’s sort of, it’s amazing playing, if you listen to it, like technically, playing, like, pretty complicated stuff in places and his left hand is like dancing on the snare drum – the amount of ghost notes he does is crazy. And it just, it fits perfectly. And then you hear the back-beat on the end of the four and it just makes it. And it’s so *tasteful* the way he plays! You’ve got this little bell pattern on the ride; there’s a drum break in the middle that just – you know you get some drum breaks like when people just play all round the toms? Well, he just makes this amazing four-bar groove and just ends it so tastefully. His taste is so impeccable, it’s just amazing. He’s amazing but I bet it makes his job easier with a bass player like that! I transcribed it. It took me a while, but it’s nice, really hard. I’ve got a folder on him actually because I try and transcribe as many of the drummers’ songs that I like. I’ve got little folder on Bernard Purdie. What I’ve noticed is that after a back-beat and on those two snare drums he puts a ghost note in. He’s quite good at doing that – accenting the first double? So he does that quite a bit and some of the things he does... his left hand, if you watch him on videos and stuff, it just dances on the snare drum all the time; it’s just amazing. And he’s got this thing that explains the 16th-note, where he starts playing the 16th-notes, and he just lays it down like no-one else can.

Matt’s comments again show one way in which identity and learning realization are closely connected, as he clearly takes many things away from transcribing and repeatedly listening to his idol. As if to confirm the connection, Matt said that:

the reason I practise so much is because of inspiration from the people I watch, like Buddy Rich, Vinnie Colaiuta, Bernard Purdie, Steve Gadd. They’re amazing and I want to be *them*, so the reason I practise is to try and *be them*.

The data compel me to agree with Wenger, that '*learning transforms our identities*' (Wenger, 1998: 227).

Questionnaire data

Of 72 teenage drummers, 12 reported being entirely self-taught, exactly 1/6 the total, whereas, of the 28 adult respondents, ten said they were entirely self-taught. These results suggest a higher trend of purely self-teaching among teenagers than suggested by the interviews; although the interviews' results may be somewhat skewed in this regard by the sampling, since most of the teenage interviewees were sourced from educational establishments. Of the three interviewees sourced outside of schools, none reported having taken any lessons apart from the four lessons taken by Nathan before he decided to go it alone. Thirty-six teens (exactly half) said that they learned both from lessons and being self-taught, whereas 15 adults – a little more half – said the same.

Of the 24 teenage questionnaire respondents who said that they only learned from lessons, 21 said that they watch Youtube videos of drummers. Of the three adult drummers who said they had only taken lessons, two also said that they watch videos. I inferred from their responses that little or none of this Youtube-ing was done during lesson time; I did not ask the respondents and could of course be erroneous in this assumption, although my experience of drum kit lessons is that their main focus is rarely around Youtube. The question asked 'as a drummer, (how) do you use the internet?' It is therefore difficult to know exactly what the drummers watched on Youtube, but the implication is that they watched some things pertaining to drumming. Most respondents, indeed, were careful to write that they watched 'drumming videos' or 'drummers' or that they 'learn songs' on Youtube. One teenager wrote 'watch other drummers/get inspiration,' yet he claimed to be only taking/to have taken lessons. Overall, 95 of the 100 questionnaire respondents are likely to be or to have been involved in learning practices towards both formal and informal ends of Folkestad's (2006) 'continuum.' Although some of them may not have watched drummers on Youtube with the intention of learning *per se*, they did it as part of their building on being drummers, a part of the active realization of the

drummer meta-identity. Any learning may occur at first as unconscious accumulation (Rodriguez, 2004) or unconscious learning (Green, 2002), later perhaps to be noticed by the drummers, instances of passive learning realization. The data from the questionnaire support the findings from the interview data – that drummers often learn in multi-modal ways, thereby lending credence to the possible application of the Snowball Self in understanding how they learn.

Summary

The drummers in this study paint a picture of rich learning practices, ascribing pedagogic authority (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) where they see fit. Some learning involves teaching, while other learning does not. It is all part of enculturation, all part of learning realization. Opportunities to realize learning and identity – actively and passively – are greater than ever before. The increased availability and sophistication of the internet is an important feature in expanding the ways in and extent to which people are able to engage with different modes of learning – drummers can now receive tuition, watch concerts and listen to music all for virtually no cost; drummers of all ages are embracing this technology.

Hallam (1998: 282) asks ‘what are the aims of learning to play an instrument? She finds that ‘there are no agreed aims.’ Creech (2010: 305) notes, perhaps predictably, that ‘objectives pursued by those offering instrumental lessons within private music studios... are diverse.’ By looking at connections between learning and identity, and by taking a holistic view of what drummers learn and the ways in which they do it, one could argue that the overall aim of learning to play an instrument is simply to help the learner be an instrumentalist. That ought, in a way, to be enough; drummers want to be drummers, so in order to realize that identity they learn in whatever ways suit them and are available to them. Obviously, ‘being a drummer’ means myriad different things, but these can and should be discussed between students and teachers. If the question is ‘why am I teaching this person to play drums?’ the answer ought to be ‘to help that student be a drummer;’ If we ask ‘what does this drum student want?’ the answer must be ‘to be a drummer’ – precisely what type of drummer is negotiable by student, teacher and the world in the light of enculturation. Thus, conceiving of

‘identity as *learning trajectory*’ (Wenger, 1998: 227) makes sense in light of the data. Hegel ties together Durrant’s (2003) point about our innate potential to learn and Green’s point about how our learning is undeniably connected to identity: ‘at the outset, then, the nature of individuality in its original determinate form, its immediate essence, is not yet affirmed as active; and in this shape is called special capacity, talent, character, and so on’ (Hegel, 1807: 421). Here Hegel suggests that our potential for identity realization and our potential for learning are both present from the very start of life, and that their futures are inseparably connected.

With this in mind, Jorgensen advises that:

teachers need to come to their own versions of how they believe they should intervene in the identity construction of young and old alike, because whatever they do, they will be having an impact on the students in their charge. (Jorgensen, 2003a: 38)

It is indeed vital for teachers to maintain an awareness of the impact of their influence not only upon students’ learning but also upon their identities.

Because a teacher (in the traditional, formal-instruction sense of the word) is not always present when drummers learn, a very helpful way to talk about the collective, varied and disparate ways in which drummers learn is Wenger’s (1998: 7)

‘communities of practice.’ Communities of practice are a useful construct because, Wenger writes, they are:

an integral part of our daily lives. They are so informal and so pervasive that they rarely come into explicit focus, but for the same reasons they are also quite familiar... we also have a fairly good idea of who belongs to our communities of practice and why. (Wenger, 1998: 7)

This seems to be an applicable lens through which to view the learning practices of this study’s participants – sort of gathered around a (presumably) similar goal, but a little difficult to hold or to see. Communities of practice include teachers and anyone involved in the whole continuum of formal-to-informal learning practices, and social, enculturative experiences. Communities of practice are the context for (but do not necessarily include) all instances of active and passive learning realization. Below (p. 239), the drummers’ ‘web’ is discussed, which embraces these instances. Wenger’s construct also helps to refute Hallam’s notion of there being no agreed aims in

learning to play a musical instrument. Wenger's continued description of communities of practice captures neatly what has been related in the data. Certainly, there is a strong impression from the data that being part of the socio-musical group called drummers 'is both a kind of action and a form of belonging' (Wenger, 1998: 4). This description of identity- and learning-realization processes recalls the work of Hogg (2003), Stålhammar (2006) and Wenger (1998) discussed in Chapter Two, about the reciprocity apparent in groups' both comprising and creating individuals. Wenger continues:

For *individuals*, it means that learning is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities. For *communities*, it means that learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members. (Wenger, 1998:7)

While this is a useful construct, it does not quite fully describe how drummers are a group – this is considered further in the Conclusions. Nor does 'community of practice' fully describe how drummers learn.

As well as all the data provided by participants about their active learning realization, they provided much that could be interpreted as passive learning realization. An example would be Senan (19)'s observation that his drumming style was 'kind of John Otto-y, I guess.' The fact that Senan's playing may be similar to that of Otto comes a result of much active learning realization – studying and practising in that style of playing – but Senan's acknowledgement that this was the case reveals PLR. Sean Lee (adult)'s comment that 'that's a lot how I learnt the drums' is another example of PLR; Matt (18)'s observation that 'we learnt a lot' is another; Sean's comment that 'the thing with drummers, if you over-play, it sounds like you're over-playing' is also PLR. There is nothing revolutionary about the idea of passive learning realization – it does, however, seem to be a helpful way of looking for what drummers may be learning alongside what they intend to learn, or indeed completely independently of practices involving active learning realization. Examples of passive learning realization throughout the data are perhaps countless, and many look strikingly like passive identity realization – often the two may be the same, or at least conceptually indistinguishable, and this is good, illustrative as it is of some of how learning and identity are so intimately connected.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Gender and Drumming

Introduction

Sex and Gender

Lee (2010b: 250) writes that ‘it is becoming more the norm to refer to biological differences as sex, and to use the term “gender” to encompass the social and cultural constructions based on differences between the sexes.’ Her observation of this increasingly common practice follows Butler (1999: 9-10), who says that, unlike the genetically assigned, physical features of sex, gender is something that people learn in the context of society – ‘whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed.’ She goes on to clarify that ‘gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes’ (Butler, 1999: 9-10). Gracyk (2001: 201) clarifies that ‘gender is something that we do, not something that we *have* in advance of culture.’

Drummers’ identities are realized in a male-dominated and very masculine world. In 2006 Modern Drummer Publications published *The Drummer: 100 Years of Rhythmic Power and Invention*. Seventeen authors contributed to this book, and of those only one was female; she, Meredith Ochs, also wrote the shortest article in the book. The book’s layout, at least, was designed by another woman, Michele Heusel. The book contains 176 pages extolling the art and craft of drummers from the past century – people whom the (male) editor, Adam Budofsky, deems to be and to have been exemplars of their trade. Of the 529 drummers featured in those pages, only seven are female. Burt Korall’s (1990) book *Drummin’ Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz – The Swing Years* sets out – the title might appear to imply – to exclude women from its pages. However, it is possible that Korall felt no need to include women in his history for women have featured far less in the story of drumming. Sally Placksin pre-dated both of these texts with her (1982) *Jazzwomen 1900 To The Present: Their Words, Lives and Music*, as did Greta Kent with her (1983) *A View From the Bandstand*. In these books both authors include a good deal about female drummers. It is striking that it should require women to write books that pick up in any significant way on the contribution of women to the history of drumming. The fact that Placksin’s and

Kent's books deal with not drumming but jazz in general – and that there appears to be no direct ladies' equivalent to Korall's *Drummin' Men* – perhaps speaks of the relatively small contribution women have made to jazz and to drumming; for women have been, and remain, seriously under-represented in kit drumming.

Green (1993: 220) identifies the 'conundrum' of the fact that large numbers of girls take part and achieve to a high level in music in schools, and then statistically disappear to a great extent in the music profession. The number of school-age girls playing drums tapers to a tiny proportion of adult female drummers. It follows that Freddie, the ten-year-old (male) drummer in the film *School of Rock*, should challenge his (female) classmate thus: 'I'm just saying – name two great chick drummers.' The surprise, perhaps, is that the girl, Katie, is able to meet his challenge (Linklater, 2003). Green indicates that gender roles were not always thus, noting that 'in ancient civilization women amateur and professional musicians played all kinds of instruments including... percussion' (Green, 1997: 57). Green suggests that a reason for the persistent and stubborn gendering of musical instruments today could be the lingering values of the Roman Catholic patriarchy that have for much of the past 2000 years overwhelmed the Western Hemisphere, including behaviours and attitudes in music. Lee provides a helpful description of what this means:

The literal and historical meaning of 'patriarchy' is 'the rule of fathers.' Although there is no consensus on the contemporary definition of the term, many feminists have extended it beyond the realm of the family to include the rule of men over women. Patriarchy so defined encompasses all systems of male dominance... patriarchy is not seen as a universal state, but as a social construction. (Lee, 2010b: 301)

Butler contends that 'the hierarchical structure of heterosexuality in which men are understood to subordinate women is what produces gender,' she writes that 'the sexualization of inequality precedes gender, and gender is its effect' (Butler, 2004: 53). Bayton asserts that the enculturation of society's members into acceptance and maintenance of the imbalance begins early in life, finding that 'gender differences become apparent to children even before they reach their first birthday' (Bayton, 1998: 40). Similarly, Dibben (2002: 119) explains that: 'from an early age, children

categorize other people on the basis of social dimensions, of which gender is one of the first distinctions children make... such as the fact that the majority of drummers in pop groups are men.' So, we learn early on that kit drumming is masculine, because we see it so closely associated with males. When women drum they are engaging with a masculine pastime. This is why they stand out as unusual. When men drum, they are engaged in the same masculine task, but because we expect males to be masculine and women to be feminine, males' drumming seems perfectly normal.

Throughout this chapter, based on the thoughts of Butler (1999, 2004) and Gracyk (2001), I use 'male' and 'female' to refer to a biologically sexed human, and I take 'masculine' and 'feminine' to refer to the performance and/or acquisition of stereotypically male or female roles or activities. Behaving in sex-appropriate ways according to cultural norms is what I take to be gender. Typically, males are masculine and females are feminine. However, males do not have to be masculine and females do not have to be feminine. Kit drumming is an arena that calls into question assumptions surrounding masculinity and femininity. Butler explains the difficulties inherent in viewing gender as a straightforward dichotomy:

Gender is not exactly what one "is" nor is it precisely what one "has". Gender is the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes. To assume that gender always and exclusively means the matrix of the "masculine" and "feminine" is precisely to miss the critical point that the production of that coherent binary is contingent, that it comes at a cost, and that those permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance. (Butler, 2004: 42)

In light of Butler's observations, it may be helpful to consider gender as a continuum with masculine and feminine at either end, with much of gender as it is actually constructed and construed (Green, 2010) occurring in-between and overlapping. Lee (2010a: 4) finds that:

Gender analysis enables us to understand how 'man' and 'woman' are not categorically separated, independent entities, but rather are mutually constituted and interdependent. This argument is crucial in challenging essentialism, reflecting instead the complexity, contingency and often contradictory process of identity formulation. (Lee, 2010a: 4)

Baron-Cohen (2003: 97-98) further complicates the distinction between ‘man’ and ‘woman’ when he identifies five different ‘levels’ of sex that form various combinations in people. These levels are: 1) genetic sex, 2) gonadal sex, 3) genital sex, 4) brain type, and 5) sex-typical behaviour. What Baron-Cohen calls sex-typical behaviour is tantamount to what Butler and Lee think of as gender. Beyond genetic sex, the other four levels are open to manipulation by neurological, biological, psychological, and sociological forces. Baron-Cohen (2003: 1) finds that ‘the female brain is predominantly hard-wired for empathy. The male brain is predominantly hard-wired for understanding and building systems.’ While not explicitly discussing kit drummers, the theory implies that there may be a greater attraction for people of one brain-type or another to certain aspects of drumming than to others. When Baron-Cohen’s five ‘levels’ meet Butler’s broad conception of gender, the notions of masculine and feminine, male and female, and man and woman as simple oppositional dichotomies become untenable. Baron-Cohen is keen to emphasize that generalizations infrequently apply – as he says, ‘stereotyping... is pernicious (2003: 9). As Reich (1993: 125) astutely observes (of women European women musicians in the 19th century, but equally applicable to drummers today), ‘to view them as being one entity by virtue of their all being female is misleading. Baron-Cohen sagely summarizes, ‘individuals are just that: individuals’ (2003: 11).

Q: What do you call a drummer without a girlfriend?

A: Homeless!

(www.drumjokes.com)

This joke clearly makes fun of the supposed minimal money-making potential of drummers, implying, moreover, that they need girlfriends in order simply to have a roof over their heads, that they are ‘spongers’ and cannot provide for themselves. Another underlying assumption of this joke is that drummers are male. Or maybe lesbians, but probably male. We expect to see female singers – this is feminine behaviour because is it perfectly normal for women to do this. Wilmer (1977: 206) comments that ‘it is as singers that women have traditionally secured their place in the jazz hierarchy;’ as well as in jazz, this norm extends to all forms of music, as noted by

Green (1997). We also expect women to dress prettily/glamorously/sexily, and to wear make-up. When female singers do this they reinforce the cultural norm for themselves and for their audiences. When, instead, women sit behind a drum kit and play it, this is distinctly less feminine because it is not something that females, generally, do. If women drum in un-glamorous clothing and without make-up it is a more masculine performance, as would be expected of a male. If, on the other hand, a female drummer wears dazzling outfits, high heels and make-up when she performs (as highly successful drummer and percussionist Sheila E does) this presents more of a challenge to the gender norm because she reinforces her status as a female through an overtly feminine performance, and simultaneously disrupts this by presenting a masculine performance.

This discussion recalls the phenomenological notion of embodiment (Spurling, 1977; Thapan, 1997), about which Gunaratnam (2003: 7) writes:

Social discourses are enmeshed in lived experience and institutional and social power relations that have emotional, material and embodied consequences for individuals and for groups.

Gunaratnam's remarks are pertinent to issues of gender and drumming. As has been discussed above, drummers are in various contexts more or less aware of the embodied experience of drumming. Playing drums in the highly masculine world of drumming may make female drummers especially aware of inhabiting the role of drummer as an embodied female. It becomes apparent from data in this chapter that female drummers are aware of themselves as members of three distinct social groups: 1) drummers, 2) females, and 3) female drummers. The intersection of the meta-identities of 'drummer' and 'female/feminine' ('gendered female') brings about the realization of 'female drummer' as an identity; members of this social group are well aware of the 'embodied consequences' of social discourse as drummers for themselves as individuals. Conversely, while meta-identities as 'male' and as 'drummer' exist for male drummers, the confluence over these two identities rarely gives rise to the realization of an identity as 'male drummer' because 'male drummer' is, statistically and societally, virtually synonymous with 'drummer.' There are

perhaps very few embodied consequences for males involved in social discourse as drummers, as they conform individually and as a group to the gendered societal norm.

Punk rock, at least in its first incarnation in the late 1970s, took great joy in dismantling norms; Green (1997: 76) notes that ‘Punk rock... opened opportunities for women and girls to take part as instrumentalists, even playing instruments which are still today largely male preserves.’ Mill speaks out against the blandness of unoriginality, saying that ‘the mere example of nonconformity... is itself a service’ (1912: 83) and that ‘the despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement’ (1912: 86); perhaps simply by doing something a bit out of the ordinary, female drummers do the rest of society a favour, by keeping things moving. Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks sing on the Fleetwood Mac song, ‘you can go your own way’ (Fleetwood Mac, 1977), and in being different, female drummers could be seen to have set themselves up as outsiders to mainstream culture, and established their own social group that challenges traditional notions of masculine and feminine. In Becker’s (1973: 11) terminology, female drummers have established themselves as ‘deviant.’ Becker goes on to describe how:

members of organized deviant groups of course have one thing in common: their deviance. It gives them a sense of common fate, of being in the same boat. From a sense of common fate, from having to face the same problems... membership in such a group solidifies a deviant identity. (Becker, 1973: 38)

Being a female drummer, of course, does not necessarily mean that anyone identifies with being a member of an ‘organized deviant group’ as such – similar to what Coates (1997: 61) calls “‘othering’” – but the data show that male and female participants alike were aware of the gendered-ness of their art.

In writing this chapter about gender, I am reminded of Mahon’s (2004: 23) warning that researchers each bear in mind his or her perspective when writing. Bannister (2006: 1-2) notes that ‘masculinity is reproduced through epistemology... a hegemonic position, a way of seeing or describing the world.’ While it seems reasonable to assume that femininity is reproduced in the same way, it is worth noting again that I am a male drummer, thereby perpetrating a stereotype of maleness and

masculinity and reinforcing the hegemony. Garratt & Piper (2008: 11) suggest that my views as a male drummer will reflect my enculturated gender perspective, writing that ‘any discussion of woman will default to man.’ The fact that I have undertaken this study at all could be viewed as further reinforcing the gender norm – this was not my intention, but my perspective should not be ignored when considering my analysis of the data.

Sex education: learning gender

Dibben (2002: 118) suggests that ‘socialization (the acquisition of culturally appropriate values and beliefs) may have a greater influence than biology’ in determining whether mostly girls or boys play the drums, while Hallam et al (2008: 7) agree that ‘the cultural gender-stereo-typing of instruments inevitably has an impact on the preferences of boys and girls for playing particular instruments.’ Abeles & Porter identify the role played by parents in US schools in perpetuating the established gendering of music. Their 1979 study asked parents what instruments they would like their children to play, and ‘the parents sampled preferred clarinet, flute, and violin for their daughters, and drums, trombone, and trumpet for their sons’ (1979: 49). Dibben suggests that ‘learning of gender-appropriate behaviour is due partly to gender role models offered in the media’ to both children and parents (Dibben, 2002: 126). Douglas agrees, but warns against overstating the power of media to control people’s thoughts and choices:

While the media are hardly hypodermic needles injecting a passive and unsuspecting culture with powerful alien images and messages that we all say ‘yes’ to, they play a potent role in shaping our identities, our dreams, our hopes, our ambitions, and our fears.

(Douglas, 2010: 18)

Abeles & Porter also point to gendering as being part of the ‘characteristic literature of instruments’ (Abeles & Porter, 1978: 75). Haid (2006: 88) comments on his inspiration to take up the drums in typically masculine terms, recalling that ‘a dude who looked like a bodybuilder was attacking an enormous double bass drum kit with the power and speed of Muhammed Ali during a title bout.’ This is not to suggest that

women are never bodybuilders or boxers – or, for that matter, dudes – these roles/labels are, however, masculine – associated far more with men. In this way, gender roles are self-perpetuating. Since it is mostly males who play the drums, the media show mostly men playing the drums, therefore children see mostly men playing the drums and assume, correctly, that men do most of the drumming in our society. As Bayton (1998: 1) observes, ‘currently, women’s lives are accompanied by a *male* soundtrack.’ It seems that, as far as drumming is concerned, that soundtrack is not only male but also masculine.

One consequence of the majority of drummers being male is that both male and female drummers inevitably have mostly male drumming influences. Placksin, writing about American female jazz musicians in the 1930s, observes that ‘most of the girls’ early inspiration... came from records’ (Placksin, 1982: 135) that would have been recorded by men, acknowledging that ‘there were few female drummers at that time to serve as models’ (Placksin, 1982: 136). She quotes female drummer Fagle Liebman:

‘When I saw Gene Krupa, something just happened to my insides. I was never the same after that. It was like an emotional trauma. In that era he was, I think, every male and female drummer’s idol, or was the cause of their awakening.’ (Liebman quoted in Placksin, 1982: 156-7)

Placksin writes that drummer Rose Gottesman was ‘influenced by... drummer Jo Jones’ and that ‘she also cites Cliff Leeman... and Gene Krupa as early inspirations’ (Placksin, 1982: 174). Dottie Dodgion, another female drummer, says that “‘Kenny Clarke was one of the first drummers to influence me”” (Dodgion quoted in Placksin, 1982: 236).

Female interview participants cited largely male drummers as influences:

Gifty (19)

Chad Smith – he’s really good, and the drummer who does the stuff for Pink – he’s really good, yeah, he’s got very good ideas – he’s been playing with Pink for years;

Ronnie Fawcett (adult)

the big older names like Gene Krupa and people like that;

Cath Lovell (adult)

Dave Grohl, John Bonham and Keith Moon;

Gemma Hill (adult)

Thomas Lang, Craig Blundell and Mark Mondesir.

Gemma also remembered that ‘my first big influence was Evelyn Glennie.’ Glennie, although a drummer, is known more for being a percussionist; Gemma said she was especially drawn to Glennie though because of ‘the fact that she was female. Really, yeah, I just found that amazing when I was younger.’ So masculine did the drumming world appear to Gemma, that she should find the existence of a female role model to be ‘amazing.’

In the face of huge societal changes in the West in recent decades regarding the relative status of men and women, and in today’s cultural climate throughout the UK and much of Europe, we might expect to see a decline in the gendered-ness of instruments such as the drums. However, Hallam et al (2008: 8) still find that ‘instruments such as drums... have tended to be played more by boys.’ Green finds the same bias to exist with adults, commenting that ‘the popular music instruments from which women have been most noticeably absent are the drums, electric bass and electric guitar’ (Green, 1997: 76). In 1992, Delzell & Leppla reported encouragingly from the USA that ‘the magnitude of gender associations appears to have lessened since the 1978 Abeles & Porter study; however, such associations are still noticeably present’ (Delzell & Leppla, 1992: 95). Abeles, in a recent study also conducted in the USA, concludes that ‘boys and girls are still mostly choosing to play the same kinds of instruments that children did in the 1970s and 1990s’ (Abeles, 2009: 135). Abeles’ study indicates that girls tend to be drawn more towards traditionally feminine instruments such as the flute and violin. Senan (19) said that in his experience:

When you find a female musician, they do tend to be classical, or towards that side of things. You don’t see a lot of girls in bands. So I just think it could be they don’t tend to lean towards instruments as much, thinking about it, it’s more classical, yeah, it’s more violin, clarinet, piano. A lot of girls do piano, actually. This is just hypothetical, but maybe it’s pressure from parents to lean towards classical.

Sinsabaugh (2005) also suggests that parental pressure to play certain instruments plays an important role in what children choose, and Bayton (1998: 50) finds that ‘supportive parents, especially musical ones, are an important factor in offsetting many of the material and cultural constraints on young women and thus enabling them to develop careers in rock,’ playing instruments such as the drum kit. Hallam et al (2008: 14) find in UK schools that, while ‘kit drumming was dominated by boys overall,’ older teenage girls seem to be more attracted to drums; they observe ‘a gradual increase in the proportion of girls at KS4³.’ Fornas et al (1995: 112) also find that ‘it seems probable that the girls involved in rock music begin to play and form groups at a somewhat older age, in their later teens.’ This, at least, is encouraging.

It is perhaps reassuring that, although small in number, female drummers have not been without their influence over today’s practitioners. Kate Tatum (adult) admired the musicality of The Velvet Underground’s ‘Mo Tucker, who just, just played what was necessary for the music.’ Although not citing any current influences on her drumming, Lisa Tring (adult) began to play drums partly because:

I used to really like the Carpenters. My parents did, and so I was brought up listening to the Carpenters, so I had this kind of secret obsession when I was 15 years old.

[GDS – Did you want to be Karen Carpenter?]

Yeah, I did, yeah.

Guy Richman (adult) also recalled being very impressed by Karen Carpenter from a young age. He remembered:

The Carpenters had a show on television called *The Carpenters Show*, funnily enough, and I saw Karen Carpenter do a drum solo and that blew me away, because everything I’d seen was a man behind the drum kit and now I’m seeing a *woman* behind a drum kit, and she’s amazing... Great technique, she’s fucking great, man! O yeah, bless her. God rest her soul. She had everything. She had it all there. She was all over the place! She was *great!*

³ KS4 refers to Key Stage 4, the stage of the compulsory education system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland catering to children over the age of 14.

Guy acknowledged his surprise at the drummer being female, as well as being impressed at Carpenter's drumming. His first reaction appeared to be his surprise at the disruption of the gender norm, followed by immediate acceptance that of course it did not matter what sex a person is – he was watching a great drummer, that's all. Both male and female drummers, then, seem happy to cite influences of both sexes, although male dominance of the art form remains clear as drummers of both sexes cite mostly male influences on the drums. It seems that drummers just like to watch and learn from drummers, regardless of their sex – it is just that the majority have been and continue to be male.

This fact has produced some interesting – and alarming – data, such as the account of Natalie (19), who recalled her disappointment at being allocated a female drum teacher by staff at her local drum shop, because, she remembered, 'I thought she'd be crap, 'cause girls can't play drums, can they?' Did Natalie come to this belief because she had not seen women playing drums and assumed, therefore, that people of the female sex therefore could not play the instrument? Did negative media representation of female drummers lead her to this conclusion? Had encounters with female drummers all been horrendously disappointing to date? The former seems the more likely to be the case, since women drummers have, I would argue, generally been fairly well presented in contemporary media; it is rather, that they are treated rarely. Fortunately for Natalie, it transpired that her assumption was quite erroneous; her teacher was an able drummer and teacher.

Gender ought not to be an issue

Society ought not to be preventing anyone from playing particular musical instruments on account of their sex, for of course girls are as capable as boys of playing the drums – it would be absurd to suggest otherwise, as participants agree. Luke (19) said:

I think it is perceived as a very male-orientated thing to do. But women should definitely get into it, man. Well, why not?! Exactly! Everybody should have the opportunity to do it. More girls *should* get into drumming, you know? You shouldn't feel threatened because it's seen as

a male thing to do. If you want to do it, do it, at the end of the day, man, and there's loads and loads of girls that I've seen drumming, and they're fantastic!

Chris (19) found:

There's some *awesome* girl drummers, so it's not a gendered thing, no. But there's less. There's something like nine professional female drummers in this country. So it's nothing, compared with how many male, so, my girlfriend – she drums; so, she's a drummer and a singer; like, er, she's awesome! So you can both do it, I think.

These two drummers realized that they were part of the male majority, but did not consider drumming to be inherently gendered. Rohan (13), like them, saw no reason for the sex-based inequity in the drumming world, believing that 'anyone can play them – it's just for fun, and if you're still passionate' there is no reason why anyone – male or female – should not drum. Nethagshan (13) agreed that 'any person in the world can play, if they wanted to; it's not, like, only for boys and stuff.'

Abeles & Porter (1979: 49) state that 'music ought to provide the kind of freedom that... all adults and children are seeking, regardless of their sex.' They find that this is not the case, instead describing 'fixed and constricting sex roles' that are 'maintained at great cost to the individual needs of members of both sexes, including musicians' (1979: 46). In their study of the previous year, these authors describe 'gender associations... having a major effect on the music vocational choices of individuals' (1978: 74). If gendering of music is affecting the lives of musicians or potential musicians deleteriously, then it has to be a bad thing. Society, however, appears to have conspired to prevent women from drumming as much as men through a perpetuation of the gender status quo. As Matt (18) said of female drummers, 'their feel's great and they play really, really well; there's no reason it shouldn't be 50-50. Female players play just as well, if not better, than some male drummers. It should be 50-50, but it's not.' Despite this feeling among drummers – that of course women should be playing drums at least as much as men – the gender bias in drumming persists.

Being a female drummer

Green (1997: 55) comments upon ‘how rare it is to see a girl playing the drums.’ An illuminating anecdote illustrates her point perfectly; she recalls overhearing an audience member at a high school concert:

‘There was this young girl on stage, and this enormous drum kit. I couldn’t believe she was going to play it: but she walked across the stage and sat down behind it, and she did play it – and she played it well too!’ (quoted in Green, 1997: 55)

I have heard similar remarks from audiences at concerts, that neither Green nor I would have heard in reference to a boy or man playing the drums, pretty much regardless of his stature. Gemma Hill (adult), although she was herself a drummer, found that:

I think, like, even with myself, if I see – I do have, like, an interest in it [seeing female drummers], obviously – ‘cause of what I do, but even if I didn’t, I think I definitely would pay a bit more attention to a girl playing something like bass or drums, ‘cause it just, it does, whatever you think you should or shouldn’t feel, it does sort of strike as being a bit unusual.

As Green (1997: 80) observes, ‘we do not have to listen to a man playing the drums; we can listen to the music played on the drums;’ the implication being that when we hear women playing the drums, we hear *women, playing the drums* – even when the ‘we’ is also a woman. Bayton (1998: 1950 says that ‘the status “woman” seems to obscure that of “musician”’; certainly this appears to be very much the case with kit drummers. The pervading, and usually correct, assumption in our culture is that it is men who do the drumming, and that women, therefore, do not. Lisa Tring (adult) confirmed this in her interview, saying ‘I’ve always been described as a female drummer; people never assume I’m a drummer, ‘cause I’m a girl.’

Female drummers experience the conflicting masculine-yet-feminine roles that they fulfil as embodied social actors; they are not just drummers – for reasons of biology they play the drums inhabiting female bodies. It is the embodiment of the ‘female’ identity that is often emphasized over ‘drummer’ by those with whom female drummers interact. As Thapan explains:

The body is also seen as being constitutive of self, i.e., the body is related to a person's self of self-identity. It is through the lived body in everyday life that a person's sense of identity is constituted. (Thapan, 1997: 1-2)

Lisa Tring (adult) went to comment that 'people are surprised that a girl plays the drums; it's just that they assume, being a girl and a musician, that you would play certain other instruments like you're the singer, first.' Gemma Hill (adult) recalled encountering some unsuspecting guitarists during her time studying at music college:

I remember, like, looking at, erm, the auditions board, and there were some guitarists, who were sort of like Diploma guitarists, and I was like 'o, do you know when that, when that audition is?' And they went, 'no – no, no, no, it's not for vocalists.' And I was just like 'argh! Argh! Why do you assume I'm a vocalist just 'cause I've got, you know, long hair that's, like, shiny?!' Whatever.

Kate Tatum (adult) recalled an experience from her late teens, of 'when I did ask to join this guy's group once and they went "no, you're a girl", but that's, I was about 18 then.' Since then (for the last 20 years), Kate's sex had apparently not been such an issue. The narrator of *The Outsiders* says about a member of a rival gang, "'He ain't a soc", I said, he's just a guy'" (Hinton, 1967: 104). Such open-mindedness would be welcome in the world of music; one could paraphrase the young man thus: 'she ain't a girl, she's just a drummer.'

Sean Lee (adult) simply said – on the issue of gender and drumming – that 'I've never really thought of it in that context,' recalling Bannister's (2006: 11) comment, above, that masculinity can be seen as a point of view, a way of seeing the world. Perhaps masculinity – or just being male – can also be construed as a way of *not* seeing the (gendered) world. It is likely that Sean had not considered gender in relation to the drums because he has not needed to; in playing that instrument, he conformed to a gendered norm for the male sex. Prior to this study, Sean did not realize an identity as a male drummer – he was 'just' a drummer, so being male was normal and did not feature as a part of his drummer meta-identity.

As a result of the male reign in the drumming world, female drummers are sometimes discussed in thoroughly sexist terms. Jamie M. (17) commented that 'I would have

thought that girls were more into fashion and stuff like that, you know,' whereas his co-student Chris (18), despite his contradictory comments (above) remarked that fewer females play the drums because often 'girls... just sort of play it, think, "this is a bit of hard work, I'm sweating, my make-up's running and I'm going to stop doing this".' Male musicians seem historically to have thought of their female counterparts as inferior, individually and institutionally, recalling Butler's (2004: 53) observation (above) about 'the hierarchical structure of heterosexuality.' Kent recalls male musicians usurping women on more than one occasion. She remembers:

During the 1914 War the men from the orchestra of that fine and important Music Hall, The Coliseum, London, were called to serve and their places were responsibly filled by lady musicians... When the men returned from the war, however, the ladies had to give up this employment. (Kent, 1983: 19)

Although it would perhaps have been rather rude not to give the men back their jobs in the theatre's band upon their return from serving their country in war, it also seems quite arrogant that, after up to four years away from home, these men walked straight back in to their previous employment. This small example of the exercise of male power over subordinated females is all the more poignant in light of Kent's other recollection about the advent of jazz music in Great Britain:

Naturally the ladies had to follow suit with this new style of music, but with a less noisy and raucous style of Jazz, for the stage and dance halls. The ancient Lyceum Theatre in London was soon converted into a vast ballroom with an all-feminine band... they were in great demand... this continued until they were gradually supplanted by the male Jazz bands. (Kent, 1983: 38)

How great the demand truly was for the all-female jazz band we cannot be sure, although their replacement by a male orchestra seems not to have been objected to all that strongly. Or maybe there were objections, and these were silenced by the male, masculine power structure in music.

Kent writes of a heyday in Britain for all-female bands – 'before the turn of the [20th] century and for quite some time afterwards "ladies' orchestras" were a regular fixture at holiday resorts, teashops, pavilions and concert halls' (Kent, 1983: 5). While

mixed-sex bands existed as well, the involvement of women in music would elicit comments such as were made in an article from *Down Beat* in February 1938, called “Why Women Musicians are Inferior”. “Outside of a few sepia females,” the article read, “the woman musician never was born capable of sending anyone further than the nearest exit” (cited in Placksin, 1982: 88). Such blatant misogyny in the music press would be intolerable today – in print at least – while at that time, ‘despite the prevalence of all-woman bands... the individual “woman as musician” remained a subordinate and practically nonexistent consideration’ (Placksin, 1982: 87). I was disappointed recently to notice in the 2010 edition of the Trinity Guildhall *Introducing Drum Kit* tutor book for novice drummers that their list of drummers recommended for listening-to by learners contained not one female. The world of drumming appears to be so masculine, and masculinity so narrowly interpreted therein, that we fail to notice or to draw any attention to exemplary female performers in our midst.

Placksin’s (1982) work is based on the music scene in the United States, although attitudes seemed to translate fairly seamlessly across the Atlantic Ocean. The main place for female musicians in the 1930s, especially for female drummers, was in bands comprised entirely of women. While this may seem like an equivalent role to men playing in entirely or almost entirely male ensembles, the ladies’ groups were viewed very differently; Placksin (1982: 87) sees women of this time confined to an ‘all-female musical “ghetto”.’ Realization of a contextual identity as a ghetto-ized musician on account of one’s gender is surely a grave social injustice. Tring suggests, perhaps with a hint of irony, that the drum chair at the back of the band, furthest from an audience, is in fact the place where we should most expect to see female musicians, since ‘it is a reflection of the position in society... paralleling music’s treatment of women to the way that society treats women, the drummers’ unspoken, inconspicuous and hidden importance reflects that of a woman’s place (traditionally) in society’ (Tring, 2002: 6).

A masculine performance

Due to societal norms and the representation of drummers in all sorts of media, female drummers are effectively forced to realize identities as members of a group of fellow female drummers. Conversely, male drummers are able simply to be drummers, without feeling pigeonholed by sex or gender. Placksin mentions the all-female jazz band ‘the Ingenues, which, said one writer in *down beat* (April 1937, p. 22), had a “Gene Krupa in girls’ clothes” (Placksin, 1982: 86). She goes on to say that ‘the message that one had to “play like a man” to really “make it”... was all-pervasive’ in the ‘30s. (Placksin, 1982: 89). Turning this idea on its head, drummer Caroline Corr comments that:

I would never say I drum like a girl because I don’t even know what that means, to drum like a girl. I think I just drum in whatever way is personal to me and whatever way, you know, is natural to me, and... same for a guy. (Corr in Murray, 2004)

I recall it being suggested among (male) musicians at the peak of the success of Corr’s band that Corr did not drum in a manly enough way. This is such a nonsensical thing to say that it may be best countered by a remark my guitarist friend Jon would make at concerts, of especially hard-hitting drummers – ‘he/she’s got a touch like a lesbian blacksmith!’ I think Jon meant this as a compliment as well as a joke; amusing though it may be, it highlights how much drumming is couched in thoroughly male, sexist terms, sometimes slipping unhindered into misogyny – this kind of talk is often, bizarrely, *still the norm*. Such language and attitudes may be understandably off-putting for female drummers, for as Bayton contends, ‘many young women have no desire whatsoever to play in a band because, in terms of gender ideology, rock bands and rock instruments are masculine’ (Bayton, 1998: 40).

Hallam et al (2008: 14) rightly ask: ‘at a time when gender equality is accepted as appropriate and desirable in most Western cultures... why do there continue to be such marked gender preferences for some musical instruments and so few for others?’ They propose an interesting reason why more boys than girls might be playing the drums, aside from the cultural inheritance of gender prejudice: ‘the technical difficulty of the instrument and level of persistence required to play it may also play a

part, as evidence indicates that boys tend to do less practice than girls' (Hallam et al, 2008: 14- 15). While it requires a good deal of consistent effort and application to become an excellent drummer, it is without doubt one of the easiest instruments from which to coax a pleasing sound. Hallam et al (2008: 14) also suggest that 'boys may prefer instruments that are struck or require high levels of physical exertion' such as the drums; this seems like a reasonable supposition, and is affirmed by the words of progressive rock drummer, Neil Peart: 'I couldn't stop playing hard physically, because I love physical exertion in so many other areas of my life' (Peart quoted in Budofsky, 2006: 87). Perhaps this energetic restlessness is a common trait in drummers; although if it is there would seem to be no need to locate that as a male characteristic. Monson (1996: 66) suggests that people make certain assumptions about drummers due to what she identifies as the 'cultural coding of the drum set as a masculine instrument requiring both physical strength and endurance.' It is something very familiar to fans of *The Muppet Show*.

In *The Muppet Show* the house band's drummer, Animal, is always chained to something – be it his drum kit, the arm of a chair or the bass player of The Electric Mayhem – to keep him from running wild. Even during a tense and critical moment in *The Muppet Movie*, Animal's excitement must be reined in: Floyd, the bassist, asks of their *de facto* leader, 'Kermit, can I take Animal for a walk? He needs some exercise' (Henson, 1977). Animal is, however, allowed and encouraged to let his immense energy out on the drums; although in several episodes of the television series Animal is removed from his drum kit mid-onslaught by other Muppets wielding big nets, such as when he drums and sings for his band's rendition of The Animals' 'Wild Thing' (Henson, 2007b). It is as though Animal's fellow Muppets are trying to save him from himself – he is indeed a 'wild thing' – he bobs up and down behind his drums and makes all kinds of noises and frantic movements that have no bearing on the music he makes.

The Who's drummer Keith Moon exhibited similarly energetic characteristics to Animal, although (only slightly) less exaggerated. Moon's biographer describes a 'restless nature that had begun manifesting itself in constant fidgeting and agitation... these were classic indicators of hyperactivity, a problem that had been with Keith throughout childhood and was now threatening his adolescence' (Fletcher, 1998:15). I

am notorious among friends, family and colleagues for endless fidgeting and an inability to sit still, whether behind a drum kit or virtually anywhere else – I recall receiving many a rebuke from teaching staff at my high school. Whether the need for physical exertion suggested by Hallam et al, Peart, Fletcher, and Henson is due to some inherent *male* need for high-energy is questioned by Themen (in Murrar, 2004); she believes that an energetic and highly physical performance is something a drummer of either gender can accomplish; she explains that ‘I believe it’s technique, not physique. I think you’ve gotta be pretty physically fit to do it, but I wouldn’t sort of separate anything out in terms of gender in those terms.’ A lady bearing testimony to Themen’s technique-over-physique argument ‘was the drummer, Dora Horsfield, known as Little Dora being rather tiny... considering her diminutive stature, it was extraordinary that she had conquered these particular instruments’ (Kent, 1983: 17). Kent describes Horsfield as a hugely popular female drummer working in Britain in the early part of the twentieth century. Kent’s surprise over Horsfield’s drumming concerns her physical proportions, not her sex.

Guy Richman (adult) implied that men are physically better suited than women to drumming, for the reasons refuted by Themen:

It’s physical. It’s basic physics, isn’t it? It’s all about power. It’s all about *driving* the band and with that you need power. You put a 9-volt battery on a car and it’s not going to start, is it? Got to put a proper 12-volt car battery on, then it’s going to start.

Chris (19) concurred with Guy, finding drumming to be ‘such a physical thing... it’s down to physique, a little bit with some girls. Guys have got wider shoulders, and, it’s a bit more of a boisterous sort of thing, just to smack some drums.’ While there may be a modicum of truth in the notion that boys are more boisterous and inclined to vigorous physical activity than girls, this is clearly an inadequate explanation of the difference in representation in the drumming world. Such an argument ignores, for instance, such significant factors as the decidedly subtle and non-boisterous nature of most jazz and much theatre drumming – still decidedly male-dominated turf. Attitudes such as these can be seen as further evidence of a deeply embedded ‘musical patriarchy’ (Green, 1997: 57) in which ‘unwieldiness, high volume or technological complexity tend to characterize those very instruments from which

women were originally and have been most vehemently discouraged or banned' (Green, 1997: 58). Conflation of maleness with drumming and physical predisposition for the art also highlight again the problems that Baron-Cohen (2003), Butler (2004) and Lee (2010a) identify with pervasive and enculturated narrow understandings of sex and gender.

Recent research monitored the heart-rate of (male) punk drummer Clem Burke in performance, and found that:

if you looked at the heart rates of a Premiership footballer and Clem over 90 minutes, you wouldn't know which was which... footballers can normally expect to play 40 to 50 games a year. But in one 12-month period, Clem played 90-minute sets at 100 concerts. (Smith, in Swain, 2008)

Cath Lovell (adult) also commented on the physical strain of being a drummer, noting that 'it's *very* stressful on the bones and physically it, the, the stresses that it puts on your body is, is more extreme than any other musical instrument... I think it, a lot of it *is* physical.' Drummers (certainly rock drummers), then, may indeed need to maintain a certain level of physical fitness; however, Halstead agrees with Themen that 'this whole idea that you need to built like Arnold Schwarzenegger in order to play the drums is blatantly ridiculous, but it is a kind of stereotype and a myth' (Halstead speaking in Murray, 2004). Kate Tatum (adult) recalled an altercation with a (male) guitarist with whom she worked, concerning the size of her drum sticks. This particular gentleman persistently told her:

that in order to play loud and heavy music you have to have big sticks. They do so to the point where they say 'Kate, can get some bigger sticks?' 'No' [laughs] 'it doesn't work like that, honestly.' I've got these little thin things I can, I can whack the fuck out me drums, easily, but it's fuck all to do with drumsticks! And that's really annoying.

Issues of size, loudness and masculinity tend to be widespread throughout the world of popular music where most drummers learn and ply their trade. Bennett cites Walser, who identifies the aggressively masculine nature of heavy metal music:

According to Walser, heavy metal music acts to 'reproduce and inflect patriarchal assumptions and ideologies' which underpin late modern western society (1993: 111)... Misogynistic themes, according to Walser, are often present in heavy metal lyrics and the promotional videos of many heavy metal groups. (Bennett, 2000: 44)

While Kate Tatum was comfortable playing rock music, Bayton suggests that it may be more difficult for others since 'women who play rock are considered to be putting their femininity at risk' (Bayton, 1998: 41). This notion of risk, however, relies on the mis-construal of gender as the bifurcation of 'masculine and 'feminine.' Gemma Hill (adult) was keen to lose or to disguise certain aspects of her femininity as a drummer.

I don't know – I just sort of thought maybe I was playing a little bit feebly, and I wanted to make sure that I wasn't. I don't know, maybe. But I just um, yeah, I just didn't want there to be any sort of, er, thing about me playing like a girl [laughs], basically!

In order to rectify the perceived problem in her playing, Gemma took lessons with a teacher who said he could help her:

Well, I went to him because I was just, erm, yeah, I just wanted to make sure that I wasn't playing like a girl, as is, the kind of thing is. And um, yeah, he's just sort of the first teacher who gave me ideas that I could use to sort of, er, sound more beefy, really, as a female player... and he, yeah, he's the first teacher who said about not just, like, 'o, hit it harder,' 'cause it's, it's not about that. And, um, he's just kind of given me, like, things to think about with the way I hold my stick, and where I hold the stick, and the movement of my wrist, and the way that I'm sitting, and stuff like that. And, er, yeah, it's just really helped! It's, like, improved my playing, loads!

For Gemma, feeling that her sound was not masculine enough appears closely connected to feelings of inferiority as a drummer – drumming is, after all, masculine, according to gendered societal norms. For Gemma, being a drummer required her to give a more masculine performance, highlighting the gendered, embodied experience of being a female drummer (Thapan, 1997).

Green (1997: 81) observes that 'contemporary women popular performing musicians... have a great deal to overcome before the platform on which they perform is level with that of their male colleagues' – it is the whole world of popular music,

not just drumming, that consciously or unconsciously works to exclude the feminine and the female. Bayton (1998: 189) calls the world of rock music a 'male enclave,' and Hannah Sue (adult) said 'a lot of bands are "boys' gangs.'" Green remarks upon 'the centrality of male bonding involved in the act of setting up a band' (1997: 77). Fornas et al (1995: 113) find bands frequently 'testing out a common masculine identity' – regardless of the sex of the band members. Green goes on to say that alongside the gendered-ness of music, 'the economy around the scene is mainly male, from music and record shops to recording studios.' Hannah acknowledges this situation, observing that 'toilets in rehearsal studios never have a tampon bin,' because, as she points out, 'rehearsal studios are nearly always run by men.' It seems likely that the male proprietors of rehearsal spaces do not deliberately choose to ignore the monthly plight of women; their omission, though, is no less frustrating or excusable for its probably being accidental. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that Gemma confessed: 'I've got a real bee in my bonnet about the gender thing.'

Biology

Recalling Baron-Cohen's (2003) notion of male brain and female brain, Jon Hiseman (adult) confidently explained:

My life experience has shown me that men and women are different, that they're inherently different... that there's an inherent difference which you shouldn't really try to fuck about with. Which means that if there are not very many drummers – female drummers – coming up, you can be pretty sure it's to do with the basic fundamental animal differences between men and women, which I think we have to cherish. And that, that if women fulfilled themselves as women and if men fulfilled themselves as men, I've got no problem with that. Now, that doesn't mean to say that a) a woman can't be Prime Minister, that b) she can't be as good or better than a man... but I still think we have to cherish the essential differences.

Jon Hiseman's comments also recall again Butler's (2004) and Lee's (2010a) observations about the complexities of distinguishing between genders.

Perhaps the most blatant and unavoidable of differences between men and women is that women are the only sex capable of having babies. While women are almost

unanimously celebrated for this wonderful ability, bearing and raising children can apparently throw quite a spanner into the works of a career in music. Bayton (1998: 33) finds that 'women typically have to choose between motherhood and a career,' observing that being a woman can be 'particularly problematical in the world of rock' (or indeed any music) and that 'here the long and unsociable hours and the incessant touring militate against an easy combination of career and personal life,' especially because when raising families 'women have less free time than men because of their domestic role... it is apparent why large numbers of women are not in rock bands' (Bayton, 1998: 33-34). Drummer Rose Gottesman describes how her music career was terminated when she had a family:

I had two kids. I didn't think about anything else... Well, I felt that eventually, when my children got older, I might work. I knew I couldn't travel. I knew music would have to come second, but I didn't actually expect to quit. One of my little girls needed me at home, and I just stayed home. (Gottesman quoted in Placksin, 1982: 174)

Gottesman stopped playing music almost completely. Greta Kent, too, all but gave up her career as a professional pianist upon marrying and having children in the 1910s. As she explains, 'I didn't play very much after we married in 1918. He wasn't very keen about me playing and of course I soon had my own three little girls, so I stopped for quite a while' (Kent, 1983: 34). What surprises me most about Kent's story is not so much that she cut down in order to give time to her children, but that her husband objected to her playing the piano; if I ever presumed to tell my wife I disapprove of her pursuing her career she would first laugh at me and then, if she thought I was serious, show me the door! Bayton suggests that this is not such an old fashioned phenomenon, though, finding even recently that 'a young woman may acquire a new boyfriend who, whilst admiring her musicianship, may still encourage her to leave' her band or to abandon a music career (Bayton, 1998: 36). Drumming is not the only full-time career likely to present challenges to the responsibilities of motherhood, nor is drumming the only pastime to which partners may take objection; however, it is in music that the study has focused, so I can make no claims regarding other occupations.

Cath Lovell (adult) had no children, but had considered the impact of rearing children on her own and other careers; she commented that ‘my clock’s ticking.’ Her best guess as to why there are so few professional female drummers was:

It’s, family commitments is number one, and in fact that goes across the board with most jobs, most careers, so, I think with, with anything you can start something seriously, and then suddenly you start thinking about having children and, and then you can’t, certain things have to give – there’s something about making the commitment to family life that – women just stop, stop hobbies.

Gemma Hill (adult) also was aware of the potential pressures of combining motherhood with her career:

See, that’s something that sort of concerns me a bit, like, my boyfriend’s lovely and he’s very supportive of me sort of doing what I do, and he’s kind of in that, he’s in the music industry as well, so he is very supportive of it. But I do think, like especially I’ve been reading lately about Mo Tucker who played in Velvet Underground and stuff, and how she had to leave the band to have a baby and she didn’t really come back to it and I think, yeah there is this kind of weird thing with female musicians where you sort of have to do what you want to do and then put off having children ‘cause there’s that whole thing of, like; I’ve had to think about what I’d like to do, cause at some point I would really like to have children, so I’ve to sort of think about doing all this kind of crazy touring stuff now, and then later on, you know, what else I’m going to do – still in drumming, but maybe I’ll to do more teaching, or – I’ve thought about music therapy and stuff like that as well... you never know when your next big thing is going to come.

Bayton (1998: 5) observes that ‘the very “maleness” of the music industry affects women musicians’ opportunities and the general shape of their careers. The lack of women in positions of power within the music industry impedes their progress and curtails their numbers.’ Cath Lovell (adult) felt that ‘the music business is still kind of the last sort of pretty male-dominated business there is.’ She recounted talking only a few years ago with fellow band member Hannah Sue (adult) to a famous UK music producer about making a record together. One of the first things he asked the ladies was whether any of them was planning on having children any time soon. Hannah was incensed. In these supposedly enlightened times, the attitude of this (male)

producer came as something of a shock; he was overtly unwilling to work with a band whose members might jeopardize their career (and waste his time) by being so irksome as to become pregnant. Hannah has since left the band and now has a beautiful daughter. She also plays in a different band. This record producer's arguably misogynistic attitude, demonstrating as it perhaps does selfish propagation of powerful 'hegemonic... masculinity in popular culture' (Bannister, 2006: 155), reached the headlines again recently in the UK, through the words of highly successful business entrepreneur, Sir Alan Sugar. Recent legislation had made it illegal to ask prospective employees whether or not they mean to have children in the near future; Sugar voiced his view that:

everything has gone too far. We have maternity laws where people are entitled to too much... if someone comes into an inter-view and you think to yourself 'there is a possibility that this woman might have a child and therefore take time off' it is a bit of a psychological negative thought... if they are applying for a position which is very important, then I should imagine that some employers might think 'this is a bit risky.' (Sugar, quoted in Andrews, 2008)

Sugar's brutally unfair dismissal of women touches upon an issue facing many women and again highlights the importance for women of a sexed and gendered embodiment of a drummer identity. Sean Lee (adults)'s comments (above) suggest how very different the embodied experience of being a drummer is for male drummers – Sean is presumably not the only male drummer not to have had issues of gender in drumming occur to him prior to being questioned about them directly.

Sexuality and femininity

Lisa Tring (adult) was the only participant who admitted to being homosexual. She said 'I'm a lesbian,' and commented that:

a lot of the female drummers I come across are either gay, or quite sort of tomboy-ish. I mean, obviously there are girls out there who aren't at all, but a lot, a lot of the drummers I come across, they tend to be quite, sort of masculine.

I did not question Lisa as to what she meant by her peers' 'masculinity,' beyond the implication of their being 'tomboyish,' but she commented on one of the unavoidably masculine gestures required of any drummer:

'Cause it's not a very, if you're going to use the word feminine, it's not a very feminine thing to do, is it? To sit – if you were to be feminine in the sense of the word, you wouldn't sit with your legs around a snare drum with a skirt on, for instance.

Lisa was referring here to the playing position of the kit drummer – one sits with one's legs either side of the snare drum, so that the feet can play, respectively, hi-hat and bass drum. Kate Tatum (adult) also remarked that:

there's kind of a, there's kind of a sexualization as well. For a woman to sit, sit there like that [demonstrates], it's very different for a woman to sit there than for a man, you know? It's gaping, it's gaping wide open. It's that whole like sexual, sexualize, like sexual connotations about it as well. But erm, it, it looks like really strange for a female to be, be sat, sat there like that. Someone should invent, like, side-saddle for drums, I think!

Kate's joke highlights one way in which kit drumming has developed for men, highlighting what Green (1997: 65) notes as 'the contradiction that has for so long existed between femininity and instrumental performance' – nowhere is this contradiction more apparent, perhaps, than at the drum kit.

Perhaps it is due to the display of masculinity required and expected of drummers that Gemma Hill (adult) reported 'so many times I've had people like "o, you're a girl drummer, you must be a lesbian." It's like "urgh, what?!" But, like, I don't know.' Lisa Tring (adult) explained why, for her, the masculinity of drumming may be more closely connected with her sexuality than is the case for Gemma; Lisa said:

I'm a tomboy, I always was a tomboy, I suppose. Maybe that's the difference, or maybe that's what's different about it for me, or that's how, that's why I don't see it as a difference; because I view myself as a little bit more masculine – I'm not saying that I am masculine – but I'm not like a girly girl, so I suppose that has something to do with it... It's not necessarily doing boys' things – well, I suppose they are boys' things – that's kind of how society is, but I'm always attracted in everything I do, not necessarily music or drumming, I'm

always, I've always appreciated practical things – doing things physically rather than thinking or writing, or I'd rather do DIY or play football, or play the drums!

For Lisa, then, some of the attraction of being a drummer was the masculinity with which drumming is associated. It is noteworthy that Gemma felt the need to adopt a more masculine playing style in order to feel at home with drumming; whereas for Lisa it seemed that drumming, with all its baggage of masculinity, fitted with her own feelings of being more masculine than some women. The gendering of drumming has led, then, to 'gay drummer' being an eminently realizable identity for lesbian drummers; if drumming was widely considered to be more feminine, perhaps it would be a more difficult arena in which for some lesbians to realize drummer identities.

While drumming has a certain appeal to some more 'masculine' women, that appeal may be lacking for the more 'feminine' among men; Gemma Hill (adult) noted 'I don't think I have known a gay [male] drummer, but maybe you would keep that back a bit 'cause of the whole thing of, like, with girls.' Lisa Tring (adult) also wondered, 'do you get many gay guys playing the drums?' Guy Richman (adult) thought that it's 'funny, you don't see many gay drummers – there's one for your book! Not many gay drummers – because they're very effeminate so they don't believe in hitting hard, and da-da-da.' It is tragic to think that the culture of drumming might be presenting and representing a narrow masculinity that ostracizes huge proportions of the male and female population. Perhaps, then, the realization of a gay male drummer identity is rather more socially difficult than the realization of an identity as a gay female drummer, due to the gendering of drumming as such a masculine pursuit.

A different drummer?

Coates (1997: 52) writes that 'gender... is performative,' recalling Butler (1999, 2004), Gracyk (2001), and Lee (2010a). Although Coates does not refer specifically to musical performance, her comment evokes an interesting way of viewing women's distinctive – perhaps 'feminine' – contribution to drumming. In contrast to the attitude of Gemma Hill (adult) who in trying to sound like her male peers, effectively sought

to avoid some recognition as part of a 'deviant' group (Becker, 1973) or what Coates (1997) calls 'othering,' Guy Richman (adult) commented on:

Sheila Escavado – she's marvellous. See her doing [drum fast fill sounds] around the toms standing up, playing double bass drums in *very* high stiletto heels. Check *that* out! As a man, go and put very high stilettos on and try that. You can't do it [laughs] *She* did it, on a Prince gig, and I'm like that – 'wow, okay! Haha!'

Guy went on to suggest that women may offer a different – and equally valid – kind of drumming than men do:

I think it's a good thing that women are getting into drumming. It's not a man's world – at all, because, again, it's all down to that conversation piece. Women have got things to say as well as men have... it's a different slant and I think they've got a lot to offer, totally.

It is precisely this different take on drumming that several female drummers seem keen to explore and perhaps to exploit. Lisa Tring (adult) observed that 'they don't play male and female tennis players against one another, because of their physical differences,' so it follows that male and female drummers need not be judged against the same criteria in the same ways.

Drummer Laura Fares says that “there are lots of female drummers, but it's hard to find someone who's solid like a male drummer would be” (Fares quoted in Hill, 2009). However, Tring (2002: 17) contends that this could be a good thing, writing 'I view the future for female drummers as fresh, with a new type of terrain... drumming need not be about and associated with a display of masculinity.' Adams suggests what this display of masculinity on the drums may look like when she says that “men... go past enjoying it. They take it to the next level of virtuosity. Maybe women don't see it like a competition. Personally I don't feel the need to wank all over my drum kit!” (Adams quoted in Walker, 2000). Kate Tatum (adult) expressed a similar view, saying:

My mate Mark, who's like, technically absolutely incredible... there's a difference between me and him, that is, that definitely when I watch him play it's technique, you know, just

technique city. And when I do, there's stuff, there's technique there, but it's not kind of, you know, it's not integral to have to play the most complicated thing in the world.

These comments recall Baron-Cohen's (2003) notion of people possessing either the male (systemizing) or female (empathizing) brain. Matt (18) suggested that the drive for virtuosity might not be an inherently or specifically male trait, finding, rather, that:

some people are competitive... I think it's not that – that isn't the point of it. Some people do, but I don't think it's a competition. You're not there to, I don't want to be able to play the most notes. I don't think many drummers do, that are actually interested in music. You want to be a *musician*, you want to make good music.

Lisa Tring (adult) commented that 'there are so many drummers, there are so many *male* drummers who are like that. I suppose I came across one female drummer who was close to being that sort of virtuoso – erm, Terry Lynne Carrington.' Perhaps Matt aspired to a more 'feminine' way of playing the drums, although he did not suggest this. Carrington – despite being identified by Lisa Tring as one of the less feminine-sounding female drummers – feels that “‘we must keep the balance of our womanhood, and not take on too many of our male counterparts' traits’” (Carrington, quoted in Jones, 2002). These women advocate the active realization of distinct identities not only as drummers, but as *female* drummers, preferring to emphasize rather than to subsume or obscure identities realized as members of this group.

What might a more female-or-feminine drumming style sound like? Kate Tatum (adult) was of the opinion that 'there's a lot of female drummers who can find more expression with alternative bands' than with the regular drumming fare. Beyond a slightly vague sense of women having something different to offer than the traditional masculine paradigm, the data do not indicate quite what it may be that makes a female or more feminine drummer distinguishable from a male or more masculine player.

Laura Fares says, as nebulously as her peers, that 'we have that different thing and at auditions that's a plus I think' (Fares quoted in Hill, 2009). The nature of that 'thing' (if indeed it is but a single characteristic) remains elusive. While Lisa said 'I've definitely got a groove,' the same could be said of any decent drummer of either sex. Gemma said of her own playing that 'I think I'm just quite straight really... I think

maybe I'm quite dynamic,' which is surely not a defining characteristic of either gender.

Maybe female or feminine drumming has yet to find its feet. Perhaps there are too few women playing drums for a set of features to emerge that could be compared with the male drumming to which the world has become used. It may be simply that, as Fares, says that 'if anything I think it's a good thing to be the minority because we are the niche market... some people would rather have a very good female drummer than a very good male drummer because there's plenty of them' (Fares, quoted in Hill, 2009). Lisa Tring (adult) admitted that 'I've always been asked to do certain things – TV jobs – because I'm a female drummer. It's good – it's good in that sense.' Gemma Hill (adult) also found her sex to be to her professional advantage, saying:

I think there just are more opportunities to play bigger gigs as, sort of, girl band, or things like that at the moment... I think if I was a guy I think I probably wouldn't have had the good gigs that I've had. Because I think, you know, I'm in a minority, basically, so, um, yeah, I think it's got definitely advantages, being a female drummer.

Perhaps a change is around the corner, for Fares observes that 'I'm seeing more and more girls and really good female drummers out there that weren't there ten years ago (Fares, quoted in Hill, 2009). However, it seems, perhaps disappointingly, that women are hired to play drums because they are *not* men, rather than because they *are* women; as Fares says, 'just having a woman doing the role of a man, usually that's a plus in itself.'

Douglas (2010: 9) suggests that women's roles today are often symptomatic of an atmosphere of 'enlightened sexism' pervading Western societies, in which she suggests that it has become acceptable again for women to be exploited and objectified. An example of this phenomenon occurred in March 2010 at my place of work, when a request was received from the (male) producer of a recently very successful (male) pop artist. It was time to take this young man's act on the road; he sought 'a hot girl drummer – who can also play.' The producer's priority here hardly needs highlighting. Douglas suggests that there is an un-acknowledged irony in much of the representation of women today. Her suggestion is that 'enlightened sexism...

insists that women have made plenty of progress because of feminism – indeed, full equality has been achieved – so now it’s okay, even amusing, to resurrect sexist stereotypes of girls and women’ (Douglas, 2010: 9). Being attractive is more important than – or at the very least, as important as – these images tell us, being a good musician: if you’re a girl, that is. All of this sadly reinforces what Wilmer (1977: 206) recognizes as ‘the creative woman’s experience of being denied recognition because she is regarded as sex-object’ – the ultimate in reductive, gendered embodiment. If the women drumming on our television screens and in Youtube videos are all ‘hot,’ what kind of message does this send to girls who may be considering a career in drumming, but who may not be blessed with the stereotypically attractive features required of them by the producers of number one-selling artists?

Gemma Hill (adult) played with a band called Robots in Disguise, an all-female ensemble. Of course, this opportunity would not have come her way had she not been female, and she works regularly with the band. However, this is not a route that all female drummers would wish to pursue. From a mainstream commercial perspective, Cath Lovell (adult) saw the girl band format as non-viable. She asked ‘well, how many girl bands can *you* think of? Answering her own question she said, ‘yeah, can’t be done.’ It is a sad and surprising reflection on society that the perceived place of all-female bands is perhaps little different than the ‘ghetto’ recalled by Kent (1983) in the 1930s. Kate Tatum (adult) also had no interest in being in an all-girl band; for her it was perhaps gender neutrality for which she strove, rather than a distinct female and feminine paradigm. She said:

No, I don’t actually think I could be in an all girl band to be honest. Erm [laughs], erm, maybe it’s kind of a bit, that’s a bit of my own complicity, I don’t know, about erm, about women in music. I don’t, you know.’

For the present, Gemma thought, ‘it’s just, there’s something within us that’s it’s weird for a girl to be playing what’s sort of like a masculine instrument – it’s still just a bit weird, and people pay more attention to that.’ In the words of Laura Fares, ‘it’s cool to have a female drummer. It’s cool and it’s different’ (Fares, quoted in Hill, 2009). It has been different for about 2000 years. At least now it’s cool as well.

Serving as a novelty item in a band, however, hardly seems to address the issue of female drummers' under- and mis-representation in music.

Questionnaire data

The male-to-female ratio of drummers resulting from the questionnaire reflects the flinchingly low incidence of female drummers in Budofsky (2006). Despite a concerted effort to find as many females as possible to partake in the research, 91 of the 100 respondents were male. Of the 28 adult drummers who responded to questionnaires, none was female. (My vigorously purposive sampling technique involved chasing dozens of women around the arena housing the 2008 and 2009 London International Music Shows – all of the adult females present were attending with male music relatives or spouses, and none admitted to being drummers.) At the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, of the 27 participants only two were female. It is significant that all of the females who completed questionnaires were teenagers, recalling Green's (1993: 220) 'conundrum' over the low numbers of adult and professional female instrumentalists. These questionnaire data support the interview data, inasmuch as it was difficult to find female drummers, and harder still to find adult female drummers. Indeed, it is the very rarity of female drummers that underlines their existence as a group within the broader group of drummers.

Questionnaire participants were asked to rate how important gender was to them as drummers. Fifty-five rated gender as 'not at all' important, with a further eight finding it 'a bit' important and 20 more finding it 'quite' important. Gender seemed to be no more or less important to males than to females, with the girl drummers split evenly between finding gender to be 'not at all,' 'quite' and 'extremely' important. These data are probably only of passing interest, though, as the question has no real depth; questionnaire participants were not asked how or why they consider gender to be as important to them as they do, or even what they understood the word 'gender' to mean, and it is possible that respondents interpreted both the question and the word differently from one another. It is also worth noting again that the majority of respondents were teenagers, whose interviewed peers engaged in less sophisticated ways with this issue than their adult co-participants. This is worth reiterating, lest too

much weight be placed on teenagers' responses to this item on the questionnaire. With 19 of the 28 adult questionnaire respondents saying that to them gender was 'not at all' important, they perhaps reflect the opinion expressed (above) by Sean Lee (adult), that he had 'never really thought of it in that context' – as male drummers, gender is not an issue for them as it can be for female drummers.

Some data from other questions suggest deeper agreement with interviewees' opinions. As noted in Chapter Four, six of the nine (teenage) female respondents said that they felt 'proud,' 'different,' 'interesting' or 'on the fringes/edge of society' being drummers. They did not attribute these feelings in any way to the gendering of themselves or their instruments, so I can only suggest that there may be a connection here – equally, there may not be. When asked how they felt about being a drummer, one girl responded that she felt unusual because she was a girl – as noted in Chapter Three – again highlighting the unavoidably embodied experience of being a *female* drummer.

Summary

Kit drumming is an art form dripping in a culture and history of narrowly defined masculinity. Hart's (1990: 211) 'brotherhood of the drum' (Hart, 1990: 211) inadvertently excludes half of the people in world who might play the drums; female drummers can be said to exist and to realize identities as very much 'a part, and yet apart' (Bruford, 2009), as a third social group – not just drummers or females, but as female drummers. It is preposterous that the world of drumming is such a gendered place to be and to observe. Societal and cultural pressures make living eudaimonistically (Waterman, 1992) a complicated gendered proposition for female drummers, in ways that it is not for male drummers. The data strongly suggest that there is a need to expand the ways in which we think of what is male and female, and masculine and feminine, along the lines indicated by Baron-Cohen (2003), Butler, (2004) and Lee (2010a) in order to provide a more suitable framework for discussing the identities and practices of female drummers, and to prevent the alienation of female and gay male drummers that may occur as a result of the entrenched masculinization of drumming and the music business. It is apparent that we do not

currently have the vocabulary to deal accurately or equitably with drumming in a way that addresses and encompasses all that men and women may offer without ‘othering’ them (Coates, 1997). Butler underlines the point that:

A restrictive discourse on gender that insists on the binary of man and woman as the exclusive way to understand the gender field performs a regulatory operation of power that naturalizes the hegemonic instance and forecloses the thinkability of its disruption. (Butler, 2004: 43)

For female drummers, their identity realization as drummers begins as AIR, pursuing a desire to become drummers. The fact that they also exist in a separate category of ‘*female* drummers’ comes upon them as a passive identity realization, brought about by enculturation in the presence of a restrictive and narrow construal and construction of gender that are pervasive in our culture. Female drummers currently make choices actively to realize identities as drummers in the context of a gendered world; some try to normalize their drumming selves by being as masculine as possible, while others aim for a sort of gender-neutrality in their drumming. Drummers always perform gender at the same time as performing musically on the drums, and these performances cannot easily be defined in gendered terms, for they are too complex – Gemma’s playing ‘beefily’ in an all-girl band, or Terry Lynne Carrington’s ‘masculine’ virtuosity while advocating that women try to eschew much of the masculinity of drumming: these are highly confusing gendered performances.

For male drummers, the very idea of there being a gendered aspect to their work can come as a surprise, as passive identity realization and passive learning realization. Because male drummers are perpetuating a gender norm by being drummers, they do not actively realize identities as gendered performers – this difficult task is left to the women. Another interesting difference between male and female drummers is that none of the girls or women spoke of the sex appeal of drumming, which is alluded to by Baker (2010) and was mentioned by Scratchy Fingers (adult) in Chapter Four. Inside the meta-identity of ‘drummer,’ drummers in some contexts will realize identities as gendered exponents of the instrument. This occurs a great deal more for women than for men. Kit drumming, it seems, takes place very much in a world of what Douglas (2010) has ironically and succinctly called ‘enlightened sexism.’

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions

Research Question

The research question was ‘How are drummers “drummers” and how do they learn to play?’ It was divided into these sub-questions:

- 1) How big a part in the life of a drummer is the identity of ‘drummer’?
- 2) In what situations, in what ways, and to what extent do drummers feel included or excluded as drummers?
- 3) How do drummers think that others perceive them?
- 4) How does a drummer see his or her place in the historical and cultural musical landscape?
- 5) How do drummers learn their art and craft?
- 6) How, if at all, do drummers engage with the internet?
- 7) What roles might issues of gender or ethnicity play in contributing to the identities of drummers?

Each of these questions has been addressed. Many more data came to light than I had expected, and the data are far richer than I had imagined. The only sub-question for which I expected to uncover more data was no. 6; participants had precious little to say about their engagement with the internet, apart from almost unanimously watching videos of other drummers on Youtube.

I have by no means definitively answered the research question, nor had I hoped to do that. However, the literature and the data have yielded much information and insight

that help towards building an understanding of how drummers are drummers and how they learn to play their instruments. One of the most useful things to grow out of the literature is the model of the Snowball Self.

The Snowball Self

The snowball self works as a kind of mid-level identity realization model. This is to say that it does not address the minutiae of how identities work for individuals in specific contexts. Herein lies one of its possible principal strengths, inasmuch as it does not impose categories or contexts upon what identities people may have – rather, it presents a framework in which it may be helpful to construct and construe these experiences, events, practices and beliefs. The concepts of meta-identity and principal meta-identity are effective ways of exploring what others have called core identity (Hargreaves et al, 2002) or main identity axis (Narvaez et al, 2009). The model does not describe everything that a person is or can be, and it avoids any stage-based approach to describing the realization of identity (Marcia, 1966, 1980) focusing instead on the notion of identity as a narrative or process (Beaumont, 2009; DeNora, 2000; Giddens, 1991; Hall, 1996; Wenger, 1998).

The model does not capture every way in which people learn. I hope it is, however, a helpful companion to the formal-non-formal-informal continuum (Folkestad, 2006), transmission (Jorgensen, 1997), enculturation (Campbell, 1998; Green, 2002; Merriam, 1964; Rice, 2001) and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). One of the strengths of the construct of learning realization is that it focuses on the learner, and how he or she perceives him- or herself to learn and to have learned.

The model aims to provide an effective and holistic framework for considering the research question of how drummers are ‘drummers’ and how they learn to play. The data support the work of Green (2002) and Wenger (1998), which identifies and explores some of the ways in which identity and learning are connected; the Snowball Self highlights some of the ways in which these interrelated notions are mutually co-constructed and co-construed. Overall, the Snowball Self model works to frame a lot

of the details and complexities implied by a broad, holistic view of enculturation that incorporates so much of how drummers are, and how they become who they are.

Meta-identities, the principal meta-identity and contextual identities work to describe drummers' passive and active realization of their multiple identities in a socio-cultural framework. The perpetual movement of the snowball suggests how various identities become more or less important to a person in a given context. Contextual identities are most obviously displayed in drummers' accounts of which styles of music they feel more or less comfortable playing. Meta-identities and the snowball are effective means to discuss drummers' identity trajectories and identities through life (Wenger, 1998; DeNora, 2000; Giddens, 1991; Hall, 1996; and Narvaez et al 2009).

The experiences in the (recalled) formative years of adults and those of the teenage participants did not vary greatly, broadly speaking, apart from the increased availability of formal tuition today. (The main difference between data collected from the two groups of participants is that adults, by and large, had far more to say, especially on the more difficult and sophisticated subjects such as ethnicity, cultural heritage, and gender.)

A collective noun

The snowball self does not speak very much of, and does not conceptualize well the ways in which drummers or other people might have a sense of identity or identities as groups. The *Snowball Self*, as the name implies, is not capable of framing the identity of a group; it explains ways in which individuals realize their selves as individuals in various contexts. Contextual identities may of course include identities as members of groups such as bands or the wider drumming community, although the data in this study do not describe group identity *per se*; it is, however, apparent throughout the study that drummers' identities are realized – regardless of any other context – in full awareness of membership of the broader community/tribe/brotherhood of drummers. The nature of drummers' often isolated work (from other drummers) means that although some may behave similarly and feel similar things,

they cannot be said to have *an* identity as a group; any drummer, though, may of course have an identity as a member of a group.

The research question implies that I address drummers not only as a collection of individuals, but as a socio-musical group. Budofsky (2006: 8) finds that: ‘there is a drumming community... the brotherhood of drummers is... simply a reality.’ Hart (1990: 211) also mentioned (above) the ‘brotherhood of the drum.’ This notion of a fraternity, while implying closeness and mutual understanding, conspicuously ostracizes women, so this term is not entirely satisfactory. Hart was also cited above, saying that drummers ‘are rhythmically related, and in drumming that’s the same as blood’ (Hart, 1990: 213). This is familial-sounding, without the sexist bias; how, then, to define that group, that family?

Describing drummers collectively as a ‘tribe,’ as discussed in Chapter Two (Bennett, 2000; Hetherington, 1998; Maffesoli, 1996), is helpful up to a point, although not entirely appropriate, as this term tends not to account sufficiently for the learning, collaboration, enculturation and common awareness of history exhibited by most members of this socio-musical group. Another construct that describes much about drummers as a group is Wenger’s (1998: 228) ‘communities of practice,’ as discussed in Chapter Six. He writes about how groups of people ‘function as communities of practice, actively pursuing an enterprise, negotiating their forms of participation, and developing their histories’ (Wenger, 1998: 228). Communities of practice encapsulate much of how drummers exist as a socio-musical group, and also strongly aid theorization of learning; however, Wenger’s construct may not work all that well for looking at drummers.

I propose another word for conceptualizing drummers as a socio-musical group – one that is at present without the theoretical baggage of Wenger’s work, and that may also be easier to apply. ‘Web’ evokes ways in which drummers operate in a network of activity, interactivity, independence and interdependence. It allows conceptually for passive identity realization and passive learning realization in a way that is less well accommodated by a community of *practice*. A ‘web’ includes not only the drummers but also the experiences that comprise realization of identity and learning. Drummers are individual entities, also connected and interconnected at various levels and in

numerous ways through time and space. It is very important to many drummers in this study to have a sense of connectivity with their past, and to have aspirations for their futures based on their knowledge of peers and exemplars. The web operates, therefore, in four dimensions, allowing for the interconnectivity of drummers from different times and places. (My 'web' is not to be confused with the worldwide web, although it seems that this phrase is increasingly being replaced by 'internet.')

It is apparent that outside of the context of the multi-dimensional web of drummers, drummers could not be drummers. By being drummers, by realizing identities as drummers – through PAIR – we ally ourselves to that group: 'we drum, therefore we are.' Any drummer would also have to concede that 'we drummers are all drummers, therefore I am a drummer.'

Implications of the study

Significance

People have always known about kit drummers, but hopefully by focussing on them (us) in these pages some insights will prove valuable to sociologists, musicians, ethnomusicologists and educators. To borrow from Wenger, I hope that my work has 'both the eye-opening character of novelty and the forgotten familiarity of obviousness – but perhaps that is the mark of our most useful insights' (Wenger 1998: 7).

I will re-state the aims from the Introduction to this study:

Overall, this study aims to reach a deeper understanding of the identities, practices and learning of kit drummers, by conducting research with teenage and adult drummers. My interest is to find out as much as possible about what it means, to my sample of drummers, to be a drummer, and about how they learn and/or learned to be drummers. Enfolded within this over-arching aim are the following foci:

- Drummers, as other musicians, occupy a particular musical niche in an ensemble – this study aims to discover how drummers see their positions in bands.

- Adolescence has been identified as an important time for music learning and for the construction and construal of identity; this study investigates the significance of adolescence in terms of drummers' identity trajectories.
- Drummers are sometimes mocked in popular culture and in musical circles; this study looks at what drummers think others think of them.
- As drummers and popular music feature increasingly in formal music education environments around the world, there is an imperative for educators to have a better understanding of how drummers learn. This study explores learning practices, experiences, concepts and constructs of which educators should be aware.
- In my model of the Snowball Self, I present a new framework for considering the interconnectedness of learning and identity. Data are considered in light of this model with the aim of gaining a fresh perspective on the integration of drummers' identities, practices and learning.
- The study investigates and discusses issues of gender and ethnicity as they relate to drummers. These are complex topics, and important to grapple with in order to understand drummers and their identities.

I feel that the study meets these aims, although a larger sample would of course have provided more and probably richer data. The study is important in that it shines a light on drummers and provides valuable insights into who and how they are, and about who and how they become.

This thesis is a significant part of a serious and growing interest in kit drummers. The television documentary *I'm in a Rock 'n' Roll Band: The Drummer* (BBC, 2010) and books by Ingrid Monson (1996) and Bill Bruford (2009) – along with a slew of drummers' autobiographies in recent months – are helping to raise the profile and appreciation of drummers among the general public and the musical community. This thesis is only the first of its size to focus on drummers from an academic standpoint,

but it is an important start. The increased acceptance of and emphasis on studying drum kit to a high level at conservatoires and popular music schools provides legitimized and approved continuity of study for aspiring professional kit drummers. This study will hopefully form a small but interesting part of the research that informs the ongoing desire in academia to understand and to engage with teaching and learning in all of their richness. Educators and administrators reading this study should feel more confident about dealing with drummers, and will hopefully seek to fund and facilitate further valuable research of this kind – into more depth and breadth about drummers and other musicians.

I return to Mickey Hart's remark, cited in Chapter One, that 'the real knowing is in the playing. Drums give up their true secrets only to players, not to Ph.D.s' (Hart, 1990: 22). If drummers have given up their secrets in these pages under investigation by one of their own, there may be, in some small way, a sense of a circle being squared; I believe, as Hart implies, that a drummer was required to bring drummers to the greater attention of the academic community, and I am proud to be that drummer. If this study should lead to me being awarded a Doctoral Degree, I will be sure to inform Mr. Hart, and trust that this study will begin to help to fill the gap on the shelves in the library at UC Berkeley as he desired.

Further research

This study leaves some questions unanswered, some partially answered and others yet unasked; it is doubtless flawed. It is not intended, however, as a definitive or comprehensive work. The methodology, while yielding rich data, necessarily led to the study of a tiny proportion of the world's population of kit drummers. I would like to conduct similar studies with more drummers, to build a bigger picture and continually to build a newer picture, since social, cultural and educational landscapes are never static.

It would be worthwhile to focus on drummers in particular styles or settings – such as rock drummers, jazz drummers, or those working in musical theatre – to understand more about drummers in specific stylistic contexts. The present study includes some

drummers who play mostly or exclusively in one style (such as Sean Lee or Scratchy Fingers), and drummers such as Guy Richman and Mike Mannering who work in a range of musical styles. It could also be very enlightening and helpful to learn from them more about how these more versatile players feel and behave in one stylistic context or another. A further interesting study would be to investigate how these drummers manage the apparently complex task of playing in so many styles and ensembles.

Another avenue for further study, as suggested in the 'Research Focus' section above, would be to investigate the effects of issues of class on the lives and identities of drummers. Considerations of class were omitted from the present study due to restrictions of space and time. However, it would be thoroughly productive and worthwhile to investigate drummers in light of such an important and complex socio-political concern; questions of class and education seem always to be present. Following this study, it would seem appropriate (to me at least) to explore identities and learning of other musicians who seem now conspicuously under-researched. Musicians engaged in popular music would be interesting research participants for similar studies, as they often work with drummers. Such studies could, therefore, add considerably to insights tapped in this research, and might also be used to test the model of the Snowball Self beyond this small group of kit drummers. The Snowball Self may be a useful way to explore the identities, practices and learning of people in all manner of domains, beyond the field of music.

Regarding the initial question 'I drum, therefore I am'?, it seems that to reduce the identities, practices and learning of any drummer to this would amount to a gross over-simplification of his or her experiences. Each individual drummer's case could be a study or a story in itself. Indeed, an attractive paradigm for framing future studies of musicians or groups of musicians is the growing discipline of narrative enquiry. I am keen to investigate the possibility of presenting studies such as this one in novel or film format. A series of documentary films could be a fascinating direction in which to take this area of work, in line with the narrative enquiry paradigm that is fast gaining credence in the social sciences and in the field of music education research.

A final thought

I began this study thinking that perhaps ‘I drum, therefore I am,’ as suggested to me by my friend Chris and by an advertisement for a t-shirt. While this altered Cartesian notion appears insufficient to describe the complexities in any drummer’s snowball self, I would not have undertaken this study were I not a kit drummer. So, while it would be erroneous to interpret the phrase to mean ‘I am only truly me when I am playing a drum kit,’ it is now more apparent than ever to me that being a drummer affects so much else about who I am and what I do. It is because I am drummer that I was able to meet my wife, do my current job, and write this thesis. My principal meta-identity is ‘drummer’, affecting all that I am and do. In this sense, I concur: I drum, therefore I am.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How big a part in the life of a drummer is the role of ‘drummer’?

- How long have you been playing drums?
- And why did you start playing?
- Why that instrument in particular?
- Why play an instrument at all?
- How much time would you say you spend each week playing drums? (Not just practice – but jamming, rehearsing, performing?)
- Do you like playing drums?

How important to you is being a drummer?

- Do you think of yourself as a drummer?
- Are you anything as well as a drummer?
- Was that always the case?
- Was it a conscious decision to be a drummer, or were you testing the water, and one day turned around to discover that you’ve become a drummer?

How do drummers learn their craft?

- How have you learned to play?
- Have you always had lessons?
- Did you teach yourself at all?
- Who taught you?
- Do you teach yourself things at home, from CDs or books? How do they teach you here? *

In what situations and to what extent do drummers feel included or excluded as drummers?

- Tell me about your role as a drummer in a band? (Your own band? Others' bands?)
- Socially?
- Musically?
- How do you think other band members see your role/your contribution?
- Do you like playing drum solos?

How do drummers think that others perceive them?

- Do you like to play in front of an audience?
- What's it like here at Drum Tech, as a drummer among drummers? *
- How do you fit in (or not) as a drummer at school? *
- How do you fit in (or not) as a drummer in the world outside of music?

How, if at all, do drummers engage with the internet?

- Could you tell me about how you use the internet?
- Do you have a Myspace page? (Music page? With a band? Alone?)
- Do you have any of your music on line?
- Do you go on Youtube to watch bands or drummers or drum lessons at all?

How do drummers see their place in musical history?

- Do you have any drumming idols?
- Any other musical idols?
- Do you know much about other drummers?
- Do you want to know? How do you/would you find out?
- What kind of a contribution do you feel that you make to the world of music?

Do you have a signature style? (Would you want people to be able to recognise you or your drumming?)`

Are drummers' identities affected by issues of gender or ethnicity

Gender

- Does drumming strike you as a particularly gendered thing?
- How so?
- Why do you think it's that way?
- Do you think of it as principally a boys' thing?
- What are your feelings about girls/boys playing the drums?
- (Girls) Do you feel different because you're a girl playing drums?
- Tell me about that

Ethnicity

- Does playing the drums have for you any sort of ethnic connotations?
- Do you feel different because you are/are not black/white/Asian?
- For instance, some drummers have said that it makes them feel connected to an African tradition, while others feel plugged into British or American rock lineage; do you feel anything like that?

* = question asked only to teenagers

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Age *Gender* *Ethnicity*

How long have you been playing drums?

Which of these three applies to you?

Taking/taken lessons self-taught both

How important to you is being a drummer?

Extremely very quite a bit not at all

How important to you as a drummer is your gender?

Extremely very quite a bit not at all

How important to you as a drummer is your ethnicity?

Extremely very quite a bit not at all

Do you consider that you have a signature drumming style?

If 'no', would you like one?

In roughly one sentence:

As a drummer, (how) do you use the internet?

Tell me about how, as a drummer, you fit into a band:

Tell me about how, as a drummer, you fit into society:

How do you feel about being a drummer?

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Which of these three applies to you? (Learning to play drums) :

Taking/taken lessons	Self-taught	Both	
	Taking/taken lessons	Self-taught	Both
Total questionnaires	100		
Total adults	28		
Total teens	72		
Total males	91		
Total females	9		
Teen males	21	10	32
Female teens	3	2	4
Female adults			
Male adults	3	10	15

How important to you is being a drummer?

		Extremely	Very	Quite	A bit	Not at all
Total questionnaires	100					
Total adults	28					
Total teens	72					
Total males	91					
Total females	9					
Adult males	28	18	9		1	
Adult females						
Teen males	63	35	22	4	2	
Teen females	9	4	5			

How important to you as a drummer is your gender?

		Extremely	Very	Quite	A bit	Not at all
Total questionnaires	100	7	8	20	8	55
Total Adults	28	2	2	4	1	19
Total teens	72	5	6	16	7	38
Total males	91	4	8	17	8	54
Total females	9	3		3		3
Adult males	28	2	2	4	1	19
Adult females						
Teen males	63	2	6	13	7	35
Teen females	9	3		3		3

How important to you as a drummer is your ethnicity?

		Extremely	Very	Quite	A bit	Not at all
Total questionnaires	100					
Total adults	28					
Total teens	72					
Total males	91					
Total females	9					
Adult males		1	2	1	2	22
Adult females						
Teen males		4	1	6	7	45
Teen females						9
Asian						1
Black/ African						2
Indian						
White/caucasian						70
Filipino British						1
Unknown pro males						8
Unknown teen males						16
Mixed						2

Do you consider that you have a signature drumming style?

If 'no', would you like one?

		Do have	Do not have	Would like
Total questionnaires	100			
Total adults	28			
Total teens	72			
Total males	91			
Total females	9			
Male adults		16	12	7
Female adults				
Male teens		16	44	28
Female teens		2	7	5
	Would not like	Unsure	Blank	
Adult males	5			
Adult females				
Teen males	12	2	3	
Teen females		2		

As a drummer, (how) do you use the internet?

		Drummer websites	Youtube/ videos/Audio	Buy/stream music audio	No use
Total questionnaires	100				
Total adults	28				
Total teens	72				
Total males	91				
Total females	9				
Male adults		8	13	6	4
Female adults					
Male teens		6	53	9	7
Female teens		1	6	1	1

		Sales/ promotion/ social networking	Sheet music purchase	Purchasing equipment	Receive tuition	Work opportunities
Male adults	6	1	3	3	1	
Female adults	0	0	0	0	0	
Male teens	7	8	4	6		
Female teens		1				

	Teaching ideas	Email
Male adults	1	2
Female adults		
Male teens		
Female teens		

Tell me about how, as a drummer, you fit into a band

		Keep time/ keep rhythm	Provide groove	I like it	I don't Play in one
Total questionnaires	100				
Total adults	28				
Total teens	72				
Total males	91				
Total females	9				
Male adults		5	4		3
Female adults					
Male teens		18	4	1	9
Female teens		2			2

	People don't realize	Well	Foundation of music/band	Percussionist	Leader/ driver
Male adults	1	2	2		6
Female adults					
Male teens	1	4	5	1	2
Female teens		1			1

	Subservient/ subordinate/ follower	Equal part	Versatile	Creative contribution	Unsure
Male adults	3	2		3	
Female adults					
Male teens	6	5	2	11	1
Female teens	1				
	Glue	In the middle	On the top	With nice people	Idiot who hits things
Male adults			1	1	1
Female adults	0	0	0	0	0
Male teens	3	1			
Female teens	1				
	For fun	Socially well	Awkwardly due to gender	It's tough	
Male adults	1	2			
Female adults					
Male teens					
Female teens			1	1	

Tell me about how, as a drummer, you fit into society

		Not sure	Proud	Guitarist	Well
Total questionnaires	100				
Total adults	28				
Total teens	72				
Total males	91				
Total females	9				
Teen males		13	6	1	7
Female teens			2		
Female adults					
Male adults		4	1		4

	It helps	Different/ interesting/ cool	Annoying	Entertain- ment	On the fringes/ secretly
Teen males	2	6	1	3	6
Female teens		2		1	2
Female adults					
Male adults		1		2	4

	Okay/ all right/ same as everyone	Gives me confidence/ identity	Teacher	Disruptive	Difficult
Teen males	8	3	1	1	2
Female teens	2				
Female adults					
Male adults	2	1	1		

	Socially beneficial	I feel respected	Drummer jokes/ lower strata	Student	Bring people together
Teen males	1	3	1	1	
Female teens					
Female adults					
Male adults	2		2		

	Drummers are friendly	Creatively	As a Leader	Empathic/ humanitarian
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Teen males

Female teens

Female
adults

Male adults

1

3

1

3

How do you feel about being a drummer?

		I love it	Good/ positive/ fun	I like it	Happy
Total questionnaires	100				
Total adults	28				
Total teens	72				
Total males	91				
Total females	9				
Teen males		5	23	4	3
Female teens		2	3	2	1
Female adults					
Male adults		10	4	1	1

	Proud	Unusual (being a girl)	Excellent/ brilliant/ fantastic	Great	Don't know
Teen males	5	1	4	8	1
Female teens	1	1	1	1	1
Female adults					
Male adults	1		3	3	

	Great for self-knowledge	It's a gift	I got a career from it	Inadequate	Negative
Teen males					1
Female teens					
Female adults					
Male adults	1	1	1	1	1

	Fortunate/grateful	Fulfilled	Makes me who I am	Poor!
Teen males	1	3	1	1
Female teens				
Female adults				
Male adults	1	1	2	

APPENDIX D: FURTHER INFORMATION ON INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

As with Table 1 on page 46, the participants are listed in alphabetical order of their given names. This is because the teenagers are not referred to with surnames, and because several of the surnames are invented. This appendix has been included to provide a small amount of additional information about each of the participants who was interviewed for the study, as well as Bill Bruford and Hannah Sue. It also serves to elucidate how the process of snowball sampling in this research.

Bill Bruford (adult)

Bill Bruford did not take part in the study as an interview participant. His autobiography, however, was heavily referenced throughout my thesis, and his book was used in much the same way as interview data from participant drummers. Bruford has been one of the leading virtuoso performers on the drum kit in the last 40 years, and has been a profound influence on my drumming and on this document. Despite not taking part in the study, Bill Bruford has been a generous supporter of my work since I was an undergraduate student. I sent him transcriptions that I had undertaken of some of his recorded solos in 1999 and he telephoned me to discuss the work and my ambitions as a musician. Prior to his retirement in January of 2009 he was also willing to be interviewed as part of this research. Indirectly, I think Bruford's kindness enabled me in part to approach other professional drummers with more confidence than I am naturally inclined to feel.

Callum (teenager)

Callum was interviewed twice on the same day in August of 2009 at his home in north London. At 16 years of age, he was in the process of completing a programme of study in popular music at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance. Callum's favourite band were the Beatles, although he was inspired by the broad range of influences being introduced to him at college. I met Callum through his mother, the secretary at a school where I used to teach.

Cath Lovell (adult)

Cath was interviewed in the summer of 2009 in a pub in central London. She liked rock and folk/rock music, among other styles. I met Cath through Hannah Sue, another research participant (listed below). Hannah had invited me to see her band play on a few occasions, and on one those introduced me to Cath. My band (the Eruptörs) and Hannah's and Cath's band played a concert together in the late spring of 2007, while the notion of my undertaking a PhD was still brewing.

Chris (teenager)

Chris was interviewed in May of 2008. At this time he was a 19-year-old drum kit student at Drum Tech in London. Chris's main drumming hero appeared to be Travis Barker of punk/pop band blink 182, although we were unable to schedule a second interview to discuss his influences and preferences at greater length. I was put in touch with Chris by staff at Drum Tech, whom I contacted in search of research participants.

Clive Porto (Adult)

Clive was interviewed in the summer of 2009 at his home in east London. His musical home was the British classic rock of the 1960s and 1970s, and he also had a love of jazz and Latin styles. I had met Clive through the Dean of the Doctoral School at the Institute of Education, University of London; the Dean and I spoke during the IoE's 2008 Poster Conference, and he recommended that I contact Clive as part of my research.

Ella (teenager)

Ella was 14 years old at the time of the interview, which took place at her home in Hampstead. Ella expressed no particular musical preferences, her engagement with drumming coming entirely from the printed page and one-to-one drum kit lessons at her school. Ella and I had met through her elder sister, whom I was teaching to drive; on hearing me talk about my research, the sister put me in touch with her parents and sister.

Gemma (adult)

Gemma was interviewed in the breakfast room of a hotel in Swindon one summer morning in 2009. Gemma's musical tastes seem broad, but rooted in straight-ahead pop/rock. Gemma writes for the drummers' website Mikedolbear.com. She and I met at the filming of a television commercial for Sony Walkman in London in the autumn of 2008. We did not exchange contact details, but I was prompted to interview her when, in my interview with Natalie (another research participant, listed above/below) mentioned that Gemma had been her teacher prior to attending the college where I was working.

Gifty (teenager)

Gifty was 19 at the time of the interview. Her preferred styles of music are rock, funk/rock and pop/rock. Gifty was a former student of mine at St. Mary's School in Hendon, northwest London; she had finished school and was preparing to go to university to study engineering. Our interview took place in a café close to the school where we had met.

Guy Richman (adult)

Guy was interviewed twice, in August and September of 2008, in the drum room at the theatre where he worked. He was playing full-time as the drummer for the West End production of the musical *Wicked*. His career has seen him play with big-name pop acts such as Kim Wilde, Boy Zone and Westlife. He is versatile session musician and a proud drummer whose musical influences are wide-ranging. We were put in touch through a friend of mine who worked in the theatre where *Wicked* was playing.

Hannah Sue (adult)

Hannah kindly agreed to be interviewed as a pilot for me to test my recording equipment and interview technique. She is a bass guitarist, and at the time of the interview in the spring of 2008 we had known one another for around seven years. Hannah and I have played in bands together from time to time, following her audition for a band in which I was drumming in 2001, and we have also become good friends. She was able to put me in touch with Cath Lovell, with whom she had been playing in a band for some time shortly prior the time of our interview.

Ian Paice (adult)

Ian was interviewed at his home in Berkshire in the summer of 2009. He is the drummer with classic rock/heavy metal band, Deep Purple, and has played with them for over 40 years. He also played with Whitesnake and the Gary Moore band, among others. I met Ian through the daughter of one of his Deep Purple bandmates, with whom I play in a band; Gillian very kindly helped me to contact Ian.

Jamie H. (Teenager)

Jamie was interviewed in the summer of 2009 in a café in Muswell Hill. He was 18 years of age, and his preferred styles of music were indie and alternative rock/pop. His favourite bands were Boc Party, Biffy Clyro and Deathcab for Cutie. Jamie and I met through a friend of his whom I was teaching to drive. This friend was also the sister of Joe, whose family live locally to me.

Jamie M. (teenager)

Jamie was interviewed twice, in May and July of 2008. At this time he was a 17-year-old drum kit student at Drum Tech in London. Jamie's favourite drummers were Jojo Mayer and Buddy Rich. He was very interested in drummers' techniques and in their original contributions to the art. He had relatively little to say. I was put in touch with Jamie by staff at Drum Tech, whom I contacted in search of research participants.

Joe (teenager)

Joe was interviewed twice in the summer of 2009, once at a café and once in his home, both in Muswell Hill. At 15 years of age he was a keen guitarist and composer as well as a drummer. His favourite style of music was indie rock, especially the bands Muse and Biffy Clyro. Joe and I met through his family – I had taught both of his elder sisters to drive, and had thus become known also to his parents. The family lived around the corner from my home.

Jon Hiseman (adult)

Jon was interviewed in the autumn of 2009 at his recording studio in Surrey. A professional drummer since the 1960s, Jon has played mostly blues, rock, jazz, progressive rock and fusion. Bands with whom he worked include Colosseum, Colosseum II, Tempest, The United Jazz and rock Ensemble, and Barbara

Thompson's Paraphernalia. I met Jon by introducing myself to him after a concert in which he was performing with Barbara Thompson's Paraphernalia at Ronnie Scott's, London in the spring of 2009.

Kate Tatum (adult)

Kate was interviewed one summer morning in 2009 at her home in Manchester. Kate's native drumming styles were rock and punk, although she was branching out in to rock 'n' roll at around the time we spoke. I heard Kate speaking on a BBC Radio Four *Woman's Hour* segment about female drummers in 2008, and tracked her through a social networking website.

Lisa Tring (adult)

Lisa was interviewed at her home in north London in the summer of 2009. Her musical tastes include anything with a great groove, and she plays mostly sessions and with function bands around the UK. Lisa and I were, and remain, colleagues at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London, where we both teach students to play drums.

Luke (teenager)

Luke was interviewed twice, in May and July of 2008. At this time he was a 19-year-old drum kit student at Drum Tech in London. Luke was a big fan of classic rock and heavy metal. He proudly sported a John Bonham tattoo on his right forearm, and wore the jeans-and-leather-jacket attire of classic rock. He really liked drummers for their showmanship, originality and spectacle. I was put in touch with Luke by staff at Drum Tech, whom I contacted in search of research participants.

Matt (teenager)

Matt was interviewed twice, in May and July of 2008. At this time he was an 18-year-old drum kit student at Drum Tech in London. Matt's favourite drummers were Bernard Purdie and others who play funky, soulful grooves. He seemed to like music generally, and to appreciate the way that a drummer contributes to a song. He liked drumming that was tasteful and "nice." I was put in touch with Matt by staff at Drum Tech, whom I contacted in search of research participants.

Mike Mannering

Mike was interviewed in the summer of 2009 in a café on the south bank of the River Thames in London. He is a busy professional drummer on the London jazz scene, and also plays sessions with bands in a variety of styles. I met Mike by introducing myself to him during the interval of a jazz gig that we playing at the Vortex jazz club in Dalston in late 2008.

Natalie (Teenager)

Natalie was interviewed twice in the summer of 2009. She was 19 years old at the time, and a student at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London – it was here that the interviews were conducted. Natalie was enrolled on a programme at the ICMP of which I was in charge – this is how we met. Her favourite drummer was Travis Barker, and her rock her preferred style of music.

Nathan (teenager)

Nathan was interviewed just once, in the summer of 2009 at a café in Muswell Hill; conflicting schedules prevented us from meeting a second time. He was 14 years old when interviewed, and a fan of indie rock music also with wider tastes. Nathan was a good friend of Joe; I contacted him after Joe recommended that Nathan might be interested in being interviewed as a drummer for the study.

Nethagshan (teenager)

Nethagshan was interviewed in July of 2008. At this time he was a 13-year-old high school student in London. His preferences were Queen and some contemporary pop/rock bands. We were unable to schedule a second interview to discuss his influences and preferences at greater length. I was put in touch with Nethagshan by the Head of Music at his school; the Head and I were put in touch by another member of staff in the music department, whom I had taught to drive.

Rohan (teenager)

Rohan was interviewed in July of 2008. At this time he was a 13-year-old high school student in London. His preference was for classic rock bands. We were unable to schedule a second interview to discuss his influences and preferences at greater length. I was put in touch with Rohan by the Head of Music at his school; the Head

and I were put in touch by another member of staff in the music department, whom I had taught to drive.

Ronnie Fawcett (adult)

Ronnie was interviewed in August of 2008 at her home in a village in East Sussex. At the time she had just retired from a lengthy career as a drummer and teacher. She knew little of the work of many famous drummers, and played mainly in military, wind band and orchestral contexts. Ronnie had been my first drum teacher 20 years earlier, and we had lost touch with one another. I tracked her after a difficult search, and she was more than happy to meet again and partake in the study.

Sam (teenager)

Sam was 20 years old at the time of the interview. His inclusion in the study as a 'teenager' despite his age is explained in the Sample sub-section of the Methodology section in Chapter One of this thesis. Sam's musical home is mostly in gospel styles. We met when I began teaching a class of drummers at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London in the spring of 2009; Sam was a member of that class.

Scratchy Fingers (adult)

Scratchy was interviewed at his home in south London in the summer of 2009. His principal playing style and main musical love is reggae. I met Scratchy when completing the first round of questionnaires at the London International Music Show in June 2008; he agreed then to be interviewed for the study and gave me his contact details.

Sean Lee (adult)

Sean was interviewed in July of 2008 in a pub in London. At the time he was the full-time drummer for a famous pop/rock band whose name he did not wish to divulge, for personal reasons. Sean had played in mostly one band for his entire career. His influences were principally classic and contemporary rock drummers. Sean and I met through playing at different times in the same band; mutual colleagues ensured that we got to know one another.

Senan (teenager)

Senan was interviewed twice, in June and July of 2008. At this time he was 19-years old and working full-time in an office job. Music, however, was his passion, and he had hugely eclectic tastes. As well as being a keen drummer, performing and recording with his indie rock band, he wrote and recorded hip-hop songs using his computer. His preference was for funk drummers and for drumming that featured in music that he liked. I knew Senan as a pupil whom I was teaching to drive.

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

Drummers

(Rock drummers are generally listed with a particular band, since in that genre they became famous for playing with that band)

Adler, Stephen	Rock drummer, played with Guns n' Roses.
Baker, Ginger	Jazz and rock drummer, played with Cream.
Barker, Travis	Rock drummer, played with Blink 182.
Blackman, Cindy	Drummer, famous for playing with Lenny Kravitz.
Blackwell, John	Session drummer.
Blade, Brian	Jazz drummer.
Blakey, Art	Jazz drummer.
Bonham, John	Rock drummer. Played with Led Zeppelin.
Bonham's symbol	Graphic representation of Bonham, from artwork to Led Zeppelin's fourth album.
Bruford, Bill	Progressive rock and jazz drummer with Yes, Genesis, King Crimson, Earthworks.
Burke, Clem	Punk drummer, plays with Blondie
Carey, Danny	Rock drummer, plays with Tool
Carlock, Keith	Jazz drummer
Carpenter, Karen	Pop drummer, played with The Carpenters
Chamberlin, Jimmy	Rock/fusion drummer, played the Smashing Pumpkins
Chambers, Dennis	Fusion/session drummer
Cobham, Billy	Jazz, fusion drummer
Colaiuta, Vinnie	Session drummer – Sting, Frank Zappa, etc.
Collins, Phil	Pop/progressive rock drummer, played with Genesis
Copeland, Stewart	Rock drummer, played with The Police
Davis, Guy	Rock drummer, plays in Reuben
Escovedo, Sheila	Session drummer, singer (a.k.a. Sheila E.)
Gadd, Steve	Session drummer
Gaynor, Mel	Rock/session drummer
Grohl, Dave	Rock drummer. Played with Nirvana and Queens of

	The Stone Age.
Hart, Mickey	Psychedelic rock drummer, played with the Grateful Dead; author.
Igoe, Tommy	Session drummer/educator
Jones, Elvin	Jazz drummer
Jones, 'Papa' Jo	Jazz drummer
Jordan Steve	Session drummer
Judd, Harry	Rock drummer, plays with McFly
Krupa, Gene	Jazz drummer, famously involved in a 'Drum Battle' With Buddy Rich.
Krom, Sebastiaan de	Session drummer
Mason, Harvey	Funk drummer
Mason, Nick	Rock drummer. Plays with Pink Floyd.
Mayer, Jojo	Jazz, drum 'n' bass drummer, clinician
Mitchell, Mitch	Jazz and Rock drummer, played with Jimi Hendrix
Modeliste, Zigaboo 'Ziggy'	Funk drummer, played with The Meters
Moon, Keith	Rock drummer, played with The Who
Morello, Joe	Jazz drummer and clinician, played with Dave Brubeck
Oliveira, Bosco de	UK-based Brazilian percussionist
Otto, John	Funk/rock drummer
Paice, Ian	Rock drummer, played with Deep Purple
Palmer, Earl	Session drummer
Porcaro, Jeff	Session drummer
Purdie, Bernard	Session drummer
Questlove	Hip-hop/R 'n' B drummer
Rich, Buddy	Jazz drummer
Roach, Max	Jazz drummer
Rudd, Phil	Rock drummer, played with AC/DC.
Smith, Chad	Rock/funk drummer
Sorum, Matt	Rock drummer, played with Guns n' Roses
Starks, John 'Jabo'	Funk drummer, played with James Brown
Stubblefield, Clyde	Funk drummer, played with James Brown
Weckl, Dave	Fusion drummer
Wilk, Brad	Rock drummer

Other terms

Alternative rock	Quirky popular music style, highly varied.
<i>Appetite for Destruction</i>	Guns n' Roses' first album.
Back-beat	Strong pulse on beats 2 and 4 in 4/4, played on snare drum – typical of many popular music styles
Bhangra	Style of music mixing Punjabi and various local musical influences
Chops	Technically difficult flourishes and tricks in performance, beyond the basic requirements of one's role in an ensemble. If a drummer wishes to show off, he or she will 'go home and work on [her] chops'
Clinic	Master class by a renowned drummer
CS	Name of class given at Drum Tech
Djembe	Medium-size wooden drum of West Africa origin
Double kick	Double bass drum pedal, operated by both feet
Double Stroke Roll	One of the basic rudiments of drumming, an exercise
Flam/flamming	One of the basic rudiments of drumming, an exercise
GM	Name of class given at Drum Tech
Indie	Style of (usually) guitar-orientated popular music, exemplified by the likes of The Smiths and Stone Roses
Living Colour	Rock band, all-black membership
Moeller	Drumming technique developed by man of same name
Moeller Whip	Part of aforementioned Moeller technique
Mummy-daddy	Teaching technique used by some drum-teachers to explain the double stroke roll (see above)
Open-handed	A way of playing the drums where the drummer does not cross one hand over the other (as is common)
Pad	Practice pad – rubber pad used as quiet drum-substitute
Paradiddle	One of the basic rudiments of drumming, an exercise
Prog.	Abbreviated term for 'Progressive Rock', a style of popular music popularized in the 1960s and 1970s by bands such as Yes, Genesis and King Crimson.
Ruff	One of the basic rudiments of drumming, an exercise
Single Stroke Roll	One of the basic rudiments of drumming, an exercise

Stax	Memphis-based record label, selling music by mostly black artists. Owned and run by white people.
Tamla Motown	Detroit-based record label, later based in Los Angeles, selling music by black artists.
V-Drums	Electronic drum kit manufactured by Roland Corporation.