

WHAT MUSICIANSHIP CAN TEACH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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This paper argues that the processes involved in making, listening to and creating music can teach us about the processes of research. These processes include form, rhythm, harmony, timbre, melody and polyphony. A second set of ideas addresses ways of doing (which, following Dewey, are inevitably ways of becoming) in interviews, observations and the communication of research. Ways of doing/becoming include improvisation, empathy, embodiment, three-pronged connection and collaborative research.

Introduction

It is in such tasks as submitting a written paper of a talk that the fluid nature of ideas becomes glaring. How to capture a talk on paper? This task is aided by various forms of representations, such as my 23 overhead transparencies, framing ideas for an aural presentation; or the original paper on which they were based. Yet these clearly served only as starting points, maps of sort. Neither captures the interactive nature of talks: the physical arrangement of the room and how it allows us to move (or not), hear and see; the vibrancy of the setting; the supportive energy of the audience on that Friday after-

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noon,¹ at that point both saturated and imbued with a sense of community; the tone and feel of the place, so essential to the generation and communication of ideas.

This task serves as a reminder about the complexity of translating anything, but particularly a fluid form into a fixed one. Musicians and researchers work within this fluid/fixed interplay: the power of talks, like that of ethnographic and phenomenological research, and musical composition and performance, reside in their dialectic nature. Thought and the activity of thinking are inspired by the quest for stability. The fixed product—a well-articulated phrase, a research paper, a musical piece—serves an essential role in the act of creation. However, thinking, like breathing, talking, lecturing, advising and writing this paper, is fluid, constantly moving. Our engagement as musicians with the fluidity of sound and music, I argue, can sensitize us to the fluidity of personal and cultural experience, the heart of qualitative research.²

The central issue in this paper is what musicianship and the processes involved in making, listening and creating music can teach us about the processes of research. It touches on the forms, rhythms, textures and timbres of 'lived experience'; the vibrant contextuality of ideas, no matter how set they seem to be; the relationships of communication to generation of ideas. Reflecting traditional bodies of knowledge and their disciplinary journeys, research courses are typically taught in colleges of education³ and departments of social sciences. Indeed, the body of knowledge in the social sciences and educational research has much to offer to research in music educa-

1 Among the many friendly faces, the triad of Wilfried Gruhn, Sarah Hennessy and Tia DeNora, watchful, from their different perspectives, that my pace is 'just right'.

2 This sensitization is not 'automatic': musicians are as much creatures of habits as the rest, and the transfer from one domain—music, to another—that of research, takes active, conscious cultivation.

3 Where my own courses have been taught.

tion. At the same time, I believe that we, as musicians, have significant contributions to research methodology. This paper reflects on some of these contributions.

The Viennese Philosopher of Music and conductor, Victor Zuckerkandl, has suggested that the majesty of vision in the epistemology of western thought stems from our traditional emphasis on the observation of material things within a field of vision. 'In seeing, touching, tasting, we reach through the sensation to an object, to a thing. Tone is the only sensation not that of a thing' (Zuckerkandl, 1956, p. 70). From a different perspective, profession and continent, Sorko Seyni, a healer and the teacher of the anthropologist Paul Stoller in Songhay, Africa, cautioned Stoller in the process of trying to teach him, with a great amount of struggle, how to perceive the obvious: 'Without sight or touch, one can learn a great deal. But you must learn how to hear, or you will not learn about our ways' (Stoller, 1984, p. 560; also in Stoller, 1989).

Following Seyni and Zuckerkandl, I suggest that learning to hear, reaching beyond objects and concrete states, cultivates sensitivities that are essential to the conduct of educational research. This is not self-evident. Ours is acknowledged as a 'visual culture', now a major ideological and curricular orientation in the theory and practice of art education. Similarly, in visual art education research, the emerging field of (visual) art-based inquiry is assuming a prominent place, whereas the role of aural and musical sensibilities in inquiry is uncharted. Both the personal and cultural dimensions of lived experience can be better understood by drawing on musical experiences, addressing important dimensions of qualitative inquiry that have not been explored. Involvement in music as creators, performers and listeners requires that we engage with the evanescent aspects of world, aspects essential for research in the human sciences.

It was direct experience rather than a scholarly encounter that first alerted me to the power of musical lenses. Trained as a performer, and having just finished a thesis in musicology, I was invited to work with Elliot Eisner on a research project in education involving classroom observations. With no background in education, and lacking conceptual organizers to generate descriptions and issues, I was baffled about what, of the barrage of classroom activities, to attend to. In that moment of desperation I turned to an area of expertise—music analysis. Suddenly, classroom life assumed meaning, transforming from a blurred chaos to a coherent form (introduction to the lesson, its development, closure), visibly orchestrated (teacher as a conductor, students organized in various ensembles, each with their distinct timbre), with its dynamics, texture and rhythm.

Scholarship propelled further reflection. The notion of qualitative research as an aesthetic experience presented itself a few weeks later, when I encountered Dewey's *Art as experience* (1934). Coinciding with my fieldwork, Dewey's writing about art and aesthetics as intensified experience alerted me to the intensification involved in fieldwork. My eyes, ears, all senses, much like the wolf in 'Red Riding Hood', were expanded. With heightened curiosity and perception came deepened meaning-making. It was later that I realized that part of the intensification was traced to what I here label as the 'three-pronged involvement': the knowledge that what I studied will be communicated to a wider audience, and the post-modern responsibility of searching within myself to explore my own situatedness and values. It was later that I would realize that the qualitative quest for empathy, and the improvisatory style of the research in the need to respond to the unexpectedness of real life, were major sources for that intensification.

If Dewey helped me note the aesthetic aspects of research, Elliot Eisner alerted me to the role of the senses in the research endeavor. In his conceptualization of connoisseurship and educational criticism, Eisner, drawing on the visual arts, expanded the modes of inquiry from the verbal and numerical to the senses. His notion of the 'enlightened eye' (Eisner, 1991) propelled me to explore the possibilities and implications of an enlightened ear, not just in the context of music rehearsals and concert halls, but also in research settings and beyond, in perceiving the world. In this paper I reflect on how the ear is deeply connected to a larger set of musical sensitivities— kinaesthetic, cognitive—reflecting on their power for educational research.

The third scholarly context for my thinking is the emergence and burgeoning in the past decade of arts-based inquiry. Recognizing the contributions of some of its prominent voices—Tom Barone, Rita Irwin, Graeme Sullivan—to the conceptualizations of art and art-making as research, my own work addressed music-informed, rather than music-based inquiry. I do not address the act of musicianship as research.⁴ Rather, I reflect on how musical sensitivities and processes can be brought to research—as an act of active transfer rather than automatic process—to enhance it.

In the spirit of a sonata-form, this paper revolves around two major tonal centers. The first tonal center addresses ways of conceptualizing in fieldwork, data analysis and writing. Specific dimensions include form, rhythm, harmony, timbre, melody and polyphony. The second tonal center addresses ways of doing (which, following Dewey, are inevitably ways of becoming) in interviews, observations and the communication of research. This second center includes the sub-themes of improvisation; empathy; embodiment; three-pronged connection; and collabo-

4 As Steve Dillon has shared with us, there is important work in this area.

rative research. If the form draws on a Sonata form, the style is clearly an Overture—a buffet of ideas to be developed and consumed later in future conferences.

I. Learning to hear: conceptualizations of research

Research methodology literature typically concentrates on the verbal and mathematical representations within educational research, focusing on contents, discourses, the visible, the 'countable'. In contrast, musical laws are dynamic, referring to, writes Zuckerkandl, 'states not objects, to relations between tensions, not to positions between, to tendencies, not to magnitudes' (1956, p. 364). Sound and music, like life itself, is always in flux. Sound does not have the stability that color does; it fades as soon as it is created. Musical qualities are represented by concepts that attend to the fluid quality of musical experience. As my first educational research encounter taught me, they capture well important aspects of the flow of social life, the processes of teaching and learning.

An analysis of a lesson, or a conference talk, addresses states and relationships captured by formal musical dimensions. Indeed, these formal qualities also play a major role in attending to lived experience of individuals, interacting with specific contents to create cognitive and expressive messages. These dimensions can highlight important areas of experience not attended to before.

The creation of order, as we are told in Genesis, is primary. Noise has all the characteristics of music except its order. This distinction underlies Dewey's distinction between the ordinary, 'anaesthetic' experience and 'an experience', with its pronounced, intensified form and aesthetic qualities (Dewey, 1934). The act of research organizes the 'noise' of everyday life into meaningful coherent experiences. This aesthetics of order is shared with all research and scholarship, both the social and na-

tural sciences. The dimensions that are used to analyze music can be illuminative in analyzing all social phenomena. Relating to perception and conceptualization of phenomena in fieldwork and data analysis, they are also key to communication (both written and verbal, where each of them has its own dynamics) of the research.

Form relates to the organization of parts and whole, arrangement of repetition and variation, unity and variety. Form is fundamental to social life. A number of educational models point to the importance of form in teaching; setting up introductory anticipation, development and closure; the creation of suspense, a dramatic climax and resolution as the summing up of the lesson. To provide the unity needed for what Dewey (1934) calls 'an experience', we organize experiences to note beginnings and endings, identify recurrent themes, attend to their development and variations. Every lesson, just like every conference talk, has a form: beginning, middle and end, the relationship of new and old material, repetition and variations. There are 'loosely related' forms, like a Baroque suite—a series of short, related (by tonality, inner structure and orchestration) movements. There are the densely developed forms, like the classical sonata form, thematically interconnected, tightly organized, and well-balanced. Qualitative researchers, like composers and performers, need to attend to these permeable, dynamic 'lived experiences' of classrooms and people, aiming to capture the meaning of these forms for the participants, reflecting on their educational significance.

Closely connected to dynamic form is the concept of rhythm. If tempo is the pace, quick and slow and all the gradations in between, rhythm refers to relationships of tempi over time as well as to temporal patterns. As researchers, we note the rhythms and paces of lessons; how fast the ideas flow; how quickly does a teacher, or a conference presenter change a topic, focus and assignment; how this rhythm raises anticipation, or a sense of development. Rhythm shapes lessons, school years, conference talks. In the RIME Conference (2005), we noted how Sarah

Hennessy's use of form and rhythm—from setting up Wayne Bowman's foundational questions at the very beginning, to the timing of coffee breaks and the festive dinner on Friday night—created the sense of good form and shaped our experiences.

Dynamics. Like in rhythm, the perception of loud and soft exists in context. A particular tone quality sounds different when it follows softer, versus louder tones. Silence feels different just before the music starts, as compared to immediately following a climax, or as closure, like the black spot in the middle of light [in the Klimt image that I showed on the transparency], or as Nigel Osborne's talk exemplified so effectively. The same loudness can be perceived as loud or soft, depending on the context. Likewise, the dynamics and silences of social encounters are ever-present, creating a sense of anticipation, tension, confrontations, resolutions. The meaning of an intent eye contact, or a simple question of 'Why', is perceived differently in the Midwest of the United States than it is in my native Israel, as I learned early (but not early enough) in my career as a qualitative researcher.

Timbre is musical color. Timbre—tone of voice, inflection—is intimately related to meaning. Social science research attends to the color of voices in the classroom or in social encounters: the more extroverted (brass versus string instruments), the lower versus higher registers. Timbres are essential to the practice and study of the social sciences, attending to personal as well as gender and race differences.

Melody refers to the individual plot-line of the voice, its direction, ascending, descending or flat. In educational research, we note if the unit of thought is a long one or whether there are many shorter units; the inner form within each of these plot lines; the interrelationships of the shorter idea units to the whole lesson.

Polyphony refers to the interrelations of simultaneous lines and their development over time during the lesson. As Alfred Schutz has pointed out (1956), nothing is less natural than to hear two people spe-

aking at the same time. In contrast, the coexistence of multiple voices, polyphony, is central to both vocal and instrumental music, as it is to social life. Under the category of texture, the presentation of topics, in classroom discussion or question time after a conference talk, for example, can be homophonic or contrapunctal, with several voices echoing, confronting or ignoring each other. Indeed, real life consists of simultaneously multiple voices, sometimes silent, always present—thinking, interacting, experiencing, creating the texture of life.

Texture creates and enables Harmony. Musical styles, like educational settings, have codified expectations and conventions regarding harmonic progressions, tolerance for how much dissonance, where and when. The harmonic expectations of the Baroque era are different from the Romantic, just as the expectations of rural education may be different from urban settings. Some societies aspire towards harmonious, elegant textures. Others tolerate clashes and dissonances. As researchers, we attend to the dissonances and consonances of social life, often appreciating the interplay between dissonant moments and their resolutions or lack of, mindful of their social and educational ramifications.

Clearly, these dimensions are interconnected.⁵ Aural attention provides a backbone to perception, documentation and data analysis. It is equally present in the communication stage, following different conventions for aural presentations, versus written ones; for popular ethnographies versus more formal papers. The form, rhythm and texture of the report are part of its message, shaping expressivity and impact.

5 Rather than the linear form in which they are presented here, a function of the structures and limitations of the scholarly journal format rather than the nature of these thoughts.

II. Doing and becoming— a nested participation

If the first 'tonal area' addressed that interaction between lived experience and conceptualization, the second 'tonal area' ventures into ways of being, doing and becoming. Clearly, the how— gesture, style, state of mind—shapes the what. I present here five themes, each highlighting a different aspect, but all deeply interrelated: (1) Improvisation; (2) Empathy; (3) Embodiment; (4) Three-pronged connection; and (5) Collaborative research.

Improvisation

Western classical music is typically associated with discipline and predictability, and, especially in the past 200 years, tends to look down on what is perceived as lack of discipline in other types of music (Nettl, 1998). In contrast to its marginalization in western classical music, improvisation is central to many musical genres and cultures, where performers are expected to respond appropriately to unforeseen challenges and opportunities (cf. Blum, 1998). Here it is useful to clarify: improvisation, rather than being an unpredictable act as it is sometime regarded, involves a responsiveness (and I should add, a thoughtful, disciplined, highly skilled response) to an unpredictable reality.⁶ It is grounded within a paradigm of fluidity, rather than a paradigm of a fully scripted reality. Accordingly, its members are prepared to respond to the unknown.

Just as improvisation has not been acknowledged in the western classical tradition, improvisation is not part of traditional research methodology. Academic research, like western 'serious' music, demands so-

6 Sandy Stauffer, offering a counterpunctal response, suggests that great improvisers don't respond to an unpredictable reality, but that they have some idea of what the reality is like to be.

phisticated skills, technical and theoretical knowledge. Patrick Suppes and Lee Cronbach's useful and widely accepted definition of research as 'disciplined inquiry' highlights the importance of systematicity and explicitly articulated criteria. It is this emphasis on discipline that distinguishes research from myths and 'folk theories'. Discipline and systematicity, however, are not antithetical to improvisation. Rather, within a changed, fluid paradigm, they take a different form.

I argue here that improvisation is equally vital to qualitative research. Indeed, even though improvisation is absent from methodology textbooks and courses, it is implicit in the heightened attention to the process of inquiry of the past 40 years, recognized as an integral part of the conduct of research, in the natural sciences, (for example, in the discovery of DNA—Watson, 1968), and particularly in the social sciences (it is often in ethnographic works that the inevitability of improvisation is elaborated, cf. Gottlieb and Graham, 1994, among others).

Because qualitative research focuses on naturalistic settings and embraces emerging issues, improvisation plays a central role in it. All research requires some measure of improvisation in responding to unexpected situations, part of the natural unfolding of life. Improvisation treats the unexpected as learning opportunities to redirect our attention. The importance of improvisation in interviews and observations is acknowledged by the terms 'open-ended' and 'semi-structured'. Responsiveness to unfolding stories to identify novel issues requires flexibility. The phenomena we study interact with our preconceived ideas, inviting us to modify our views, address new issues, and branch into new intellectual (and often emotional) territories.

As I have found in my own work, improvising in response to emerging issues proved immensely fruitful. Improvisation included generating new questions in the spirit of open-ended interviews. On the level of design, research settings expanded to include participants' homes and teachers' private artistic contexts, providing

frames of references that I could not have known otherwise (Bresler, 1997). The same quality of improvised responsiveness is apparent in data analysis, when new categories emerge in response to what is happening (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1984). Improvisation is never capricious.⁷ Both music and research involve the seeming oxymoron of hard work and sophisticated skills and spontaneous, responsive frame of mind—a disciplined improvisation. The interplay between tradition and innovation, script and exploration, is intensified by the expectation of originality (reminding us of George Steiner's (1989) caution that originality is antithetical to novelty), within adherence to rigorous traditions.

Empathy

Empathy, essential to all the arts, is achieved differently in each. Because music is not mimetic, empathy or resonance are not based on a 'story' (as in literature and drama) but on a connection to a mood, an emotional quality without an image or a plot.

Listening and performing involves empathic connection to the music within an aesthetic distance.

It is the quest for empathic understanding, *verstehen*, that distinguishes the aims and processes of human sciences from other forms of research (cf. von Wright, 1971; van Manen, 1990; Bresler & Stake, 1992;

7 A counterpoint from Wayne Bowman (April 19, 2005, email communication), prompting me to reconsider:

You say that improvisation is never capricious. I take your point and think I understand your intent. But, of course, improvisation can be and often is capricious! That's one of its joys—the release from the strictly obligatory, the routine, the formulaic, the predictable. Maybe what I'm suggesting here is that improvisation may be, and sometimes ought to be, capricious: but when and to what degree are matter that are always relative to the norms of a given musical practice and situated in the actions of those who are engaging in it (the practice, that is) at the time. Caprice isn't an absolute, then, but a very relative and contextual thing. And though it is unpredictable, sometimes even whimsical, that doesn't necessarily mean it's frivolous or that it's not earnestly 'serious'.

Kvale, 1996). However, in an academic culture that has traditionally highlighted objectivity and distance, empathy does not always come easily. Moreover, academia increasingly becomes as rushed as the outside life, whereas empathy requires a different rhythm, responsive to the participants, respectful of the nature of building relationship.

Even within qualitative research, Eisner's notion of Connoisseurship, for example, is primarily a detached expert's discernment. In contrast, empathy involves putting oneself in another's place. Unlike the connoisseur's detachment, empathy opens to a dialogue between the researcher and the studied (Gadamer, 1988). In that dialogue, the researcher/performer is touched and expanded, not just in terms of factual knowledge, but also in his resonance to the world. The challenge of qualitative research (as in music performance) is trying to understand the other empathically, while maintaining the distance of scholarship or aesthetics.

An engaged, (rather than background) quality of listening, common in music, is crucial in qualitative, open-ended observations as it is in interviews. In the American culture, the question, 'how are you?' is typically meant as 'hi', not expecting a genuine answer. In a busy, rushed culture, we are not used to being listened to. Interviewing requires a redefinition of listening, intensely, attentively and empathetically. The 'near enemy' of empathic observations and listening is readymade judgment, speedy and practical, quick to evaluate before it has absorbed what is. Empathic observations and listening in interview, similar to the engaged way that we listen to music, are open, present, attending to nuanced qualities, interpretive, suspending evaluation to a later stage.

Disciplined empathy involves the interdependency of affect and cognition. The contents of interviews, like musical contents, are inseparable from moods, requiring analysis and critical thinking. Musical contents, like the interview contents of the 'human sciences', are never simplistic in their expression. The complexities of lived experience that we

hope to capture in interviewing require a getting away from the simplistic and dichotomous, drawing on a cognitive/affective frame of mind.

Embodiment

Music is produced by physical movement—the voice or an instrument which functions as the extension of the body, where the performer unites with the instrument to produce sound. Performance heightens an embodied state. Cusick (in Stubley, 1998, p. 95) describes performance as a form of thinking through one's body, arguing that there is a fundamentally different manner of being in performance than in other forms of musical activity in that the music is experienced, not as something given to the body, but as something done through and with the body.

Sound penetrates us, engaging us on a bodily level in fundamentally different ways than the visual, for example.

Until recently, aesthetic discourse, including that of the aesthetic of music, contained few references to the body. Richard Shusterman (2004) points out that when Alexander Baumgarten founded the field of aesthetics as a theoretical but also practical discipline aimed at beauty, he excluded somatic study from this enterprise, probably because of religious and rationalist influences. The body has entered scholarship mostly through phenomenology, in the writing of French philosophers (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sartre, 1966; Foucault, 1977; Bourdieu, 1990), infiltrating aesthetics and the various disciplines of arts education (Bowman, 1998, 2004; Bresler, 2003, 2004; Peters, 2004; Shusterman, 2000, 2004).

Equally critical, yet uncharted, is the notion of embodiment in qualitative research. The body is central in the conduct of observations and interviews. Yet, there has been little reflection from a methodological perspective on the body. Tom Csordas (1993),(1993a) pioneer in dis-

Discussing the body in anthropological fieldwork, introduced the notion of somatic modes of attention, a notion which I see as equally applicable to music. Somatic modes of attention are culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others. Csordas observes that even though our bodies are always present, we do not always attend to and with them. Somatic modes of attention are present with the acquisition of any technique of the body, for example, in the rehearsal of bodily movements by athletes, but recede into the horizon once the technique is mastered (Mauss, in Csordas, 1993). Clearly, performing music involves a similarly elaborated somatic mode of attention.

I have experienced thinking with the body as central to learning and teaching, but its power in the various processes of qualitative research is particularly striking. If the researcher is the main instrument in the process of inquiry, the body is present in various roles—perceiving, interpreting and communicating. Body/mind alertness and openness to what is happening are crucial. Moreover, our posture as observers sends messages impacting our interactions with participants. The distanced, clearly non-empathic 'professorial from the podium' posture is not conducive to connected relationship and learning from participants. The body/mind presence is crucial in creating an interview 'space', where interviewees are invited to reflect, generate ideas and share. The specific manifestations that this space takes interact with local customs. For example, the closer physical proximity and intense eye contact of Mediterranean culture (as compared to that of the USA), shapes the content and messages of interviews (Bresler, 2002). At the stages of making sense (which are always cyclical: we make sense, to lose it again, to make further sense, luckily for us researchers, a luxuriously infinite process) it is interesting to note the bodily stances of the 'chaotic' versus 'focused' stages. In that first experience of educational research at Stanford, I felt, under the barrage of the new classroom experiences, passive and overwhel-

med, responding to it as I would respond to noise. Equipped with the musical conceptual organizers, my body/mind, in the process of 'tuning into' and attending, became focused and directed. A third stage involved the aural communication of that story in my RIME talk, processed and rehearsed. That public, aural communication, resembled a performance, owned, bodily as well as intellectually. For this narrated story, as well as the rest of my talk, following a written paper would have been a hindrance. The talk drew on a 'by heart' mode, allowing me to focus on the dynamic communication and opening myself to the energy of the audience. These three stages—the noise stage; the learning/making sense stage; and the communicating stage—each had its distinct bodily/mind characteristics, corresponding to my musical experiences as a performer.

Three-pronged stance of research and performance

Both music performance and qualitative research involve three-pronged connection. Musical performance focuses on the music to be played, drawing on the inner resources of the performer, and addressed to the audience. Each involves different gestures: 'taking in'; 'delving'; 'reaching out'. Qualitative research is similarly tridirectional: (i) reaching towards the phenomena under study to understand it accurately and fully; (ii) reaching into oneself, to unravel subjectivities and values as shaping perception and interpretation; and (iii) reaching to the audience. The final product is judged not only by its correctness, but also by its depth and the resonance it creates in others. Accuracy has a specific focus. Going inside requires introspectiveness. Public communication, traversing personal and spatial boundaries, has an expanded focus. The awareness of future and present audience shapes and directs performers and researchers. These three distinct qualities co-exist, building on and supporting each other.

The awareness of the audience in research is present at various stages, way before the actual communication. The process of research

ch, like musical performances, involves the discovery and shaping of meaning for oneself as well as for others. Already in the early stages of fieldwork, the observations attend to what is observed, but shaped by the prospect of its communication to others. Ethnographers are propelled by intellectual-emotional curiosity, intensified with the commitment to an outside audience. Losing that sense of audience is akin to losing their *raison d'être* as ethnographers, or 'going native'. It is the act of communication that gives both performance and research meaning. The awareness of a potential audience is essential to both music performance and research. It heightens perception and focus, rendering what could be a lonely act into a social one, part of community making.

Performance is a heightened experience. Dolores Grondal (in Stubbley, 1995) describes performance as a 'way of being'. In the process of discovering and shaping the music, the performer lives in and through it. Quoting Ricoeur, the self is both actor and observer. The aesthetics of communication in music and in research involves a complex state of embodied cognition and affect. It also juxtaposes empathy with distance. As classical performers know, losing the aesthetic distance during performance—being 'swept with' our feelings can be disastrous. In research, breaking this balance towards a self-expression mode can take the form of advocacy.

More often in communicating research, the balance between emotion and cognition loses the emotive aspect, conveying detachment from content and audience.

Making meaning with others—ensemble research

In collaborative research, a three-pronged stance is expanded to a four-pronged one, directed at fellow researchers. There is increasing recognition in the social sciences of the collective natu-

re of knowing and social theories of development,⁸ but little about the role that researchers' interactions with other researchers play in the coconstruction of knowledge. The metaphor of ensemble research highlights important transactions in this collaborative process. Chamber groups, unlike orchestras and choirs on the one hand, and soloists on the other, consist of several voices, each with its own timbre and melodic line, yet all interacting closely, empathetically, building on and responding to each other's themes to create a performance.⁹ Driven by a common goal, the musicians seem to work together like 'the different organs in a living body, with each individual action taken tuned to and affecting the actions of all others' (Stubley, 1998, p. 95). This tuning, writes Stubley, seems to unfold through the music making and appears to be driven by a movement of mind that enables the musicians to reach through their bodily actions and experience the outer edge of the sounds being shaped and articulated, not as actions already taken, but as possibilities that might be.

Chamber music provided the metaphor for an 'interpretive zone' (Bresler et al., 1996; Wasser & Bresler, 1996; Bresler, 2002), the intellectual realm in which researchers work collaboratively. Coining this term, we draw on scholarly uses of the term including Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1986), Bakhtin's character zones (1986), Pratt's linguistic contact zones (1992), and Giroux's border zones (1992). The concept of zone assumes more than one party—at least two if not more—negotiating, and interacting from different perspectives. Thus, the term 'zone', more than the term 'interpretation', moves us away from the traditional image of the researcher as a soloist working independently to that of a socially embedded researcher grounded in social interactions. As in

8 This includes theoretical and practical work on the nature of groups and interpretation in diverse fields, in the fields of anthropology, the sociology of science and clinical psychology (cf. Bresler et al., 1996; Wasser & Bresler, 1996).

9 Participants, too, are part of ensemble research. I elaborate on this notion in Bresler (forthcoming).

chamber ensemble, the notion of zone implies dynamic processes—exchange, transaction, transformation and intensity. In the interpretive zone researchers bring together their distinct voices—various areas of knowledge, experience and beliefs, to forge new meanings through the process of the joint inquiry in which they are engaged. Harmonies range from neutral (scaffolding), through conflict (struggles), to amicable (negotiations). These same qualities characterize research groups. It is the unexpected meeting between different ideas and perspectives that breaks new intellectual ground.

Coda

Whereas music focuses on the time-based and the fleeting human experience, science, including the social sciences, has traditionally sought to overcome this. As researchers and scholars, attending to fluid phenomena, we strive to capture it in numbers or words, aspiring towards clarity and distinctness. Yet, a post-modern consciousness acknowledges the complexity and the fluidity of process. It is the dialectical tension between the quest for the permanent versus the inevitably evanescent that propels and energizes much of contemporary scholarship. The power of community in accelerating and intensifying the fluidity of ideas makes attending conferences such as RIME the powerful experience they are.

Going back to Zuckerkandl's quotation in the beginning, music's lack of reference to specific objects makes it particularly well-suited to express processes in their fluidity. Sensitivity to music can teach us about attending to states, not only to objects. The fluidity of sound and music, without having to attend to objects, sensitizes us to the ephemeral quality, to the ebb and flow of lived and researched experience. As David Burrows (1990) expressed it so well, we see the world as a noun and hear it as a verb.

It is in the coda that the inherently interactive form of a talk, as compared with a written paper, is manifested mostly glaringly. A talk allows for a space for audience members to pick up a thread of a thought, creating, (alas, for too short a time), the possibility of a jam session. Hybrid forms can acknowledge, even briefly, the fluidity of ideas within a social context, the continuation of discourse after the talk is 'finished'. In the actual RIME talk, Janet Mills's question on whether non-musicians can study musical settings alerted us to the strengths and weaknesses of outsiders and insiders. From my own experience, insiders, like the fish not able to note the water, can miss the obvious in taking it for granted. Outsiders are in danger of not knowing what they don't know. Here is where collaboration becomes necessary and generative. This is particularly true when we look for dissonances and places of discrepancy as sources to understand, from our respective positions, the complexity of what we study. It means less security, where our own self-image as Knowers may be shaken, sometimes even shattered. There is nothing like qualitative research, I found, to humble one's ego. Humility is a useful (if not always pleasant), tool to cultivate for the conduct of human research.

Another question addressed my use of the word 'luxury' in the context of the scholarly profession. The question made me aware that while I have always felt that music was vital and necessary, I regard educational research as a luxury. It is in that spirit that I keep searching, during and after each of my research studies, what I have learned that may actually be useful and generative.

There were more threads, hopefully to be continued: a conversation with Wayne Bowman pointing at the relationship of improvisation and trust; Tia DeNora's references to studies of rhythm in architecture; an airport chat with Jody Kerchner, Peggy Bennett and Betty Anne Younker, reflecting on the dynamics, rhythms and resonance of talks; an email exchange with Sandy Stauffer, offering an 'ideal reader's' response on the

last 'sprint' of the written text. It is indeed a luxurious profession that enables us to thrive and develop as a community of learners.

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