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**Wonderbrass:
Creating a Community Through Music.**

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requirements of the
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Abstract:

Wonderbrass: Creating a Community Through Music.

Wonderbrass is a community big band that was created in 1992 through the amalgamation of two projects, Welsh Jazz Society's Jazz Workshop Band and The Taff Ely Streetband, which was formed to perform at community carnivals around South Wales. Wonderbrass has been through numerous personnel, leadership, committee-member, musical and artistic changes but continues to be strong until today. Drawing inspiration from such musical collectives as The Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (Chicago), The New York Composers' Orchestra, Willem Breuker Collective (Netherlands) and Loose Tubes (London), as well as groupings such as The Scratch Orchestra, The Skatalites and Sun Ra, the band has developed a large repertoire of compositions, arrangements and improvisational practice in its mission to prove that 'musical excellence is not the exclusive property of professionals', to quote from its aims and objectives. It has adapted to changing conditions in order to survive but retains a core philosophy that runs through its twenty year history, initially this was a philosophy shared by its instigators but latterly, in 2006, the band debated and worked out its own priorities and preferred way of operating, creating a mission statement and a set of musical, social and administrative priorities.

This submission will present three of my compositions and one of my arrangements as case studies to illustrate how the pieces themselves are free-standing musical structures, brought to life in performance via the performers' contributions, notably improvised solos. But the case studies also examine the compositions and arrangement as 'inclusive musical structures', facilitating participation in the music and, in some senses, the creative process. They are also examined from the participants' or band members' perspectives. This data is drawn from interviews, focus groups and responses to questionnaires. This material from interviews, focus group and questionnaires seeks to establish members' reasons for joining the band, their aspirations, both personal and musical, through participation in the band as well as investigating notions of personal and musical identity, cultural capital and relationships with musical instrument, musicality and creativity as expressed through participation in Wonderbrass.

Keywords: Wonderbrass, community music, inclusive musical structures, improvisation, identity, social and cultural capital.

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**WONDERBRASS:
CREATING A COMMUNITY THROUGH MUSIC**

ROBERT SMITH

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Chapter One: Community music and musical communities.

History

Wonderbrass was created through the amalgamation of two projects that I had a hand in initiating. Firstly in 1987, along with Jess Phillips I took over the tutor role of the (WJS) Welsh Jazz Society's Jazz Workshop, refocusing its energies upon the creation of a performing unit rather than a rehearsing one. This became the WJS Workshop Band, consciously named after Charles Mingus' work and recordings at the 'Jazz Workshop'. Secondly in 1992, again with Jess Phillips and this time also with Denise Lord, I was awarded funding to hold a series of ten weekly workshops resulting in the creation of The Taff Ely Streetband, which was to perform at community carnivals around the South Wales Valleys as part of the National Garden Festival's final fling in the depressed communities of the United Kingdom in Ebbw Vale.

These two bands continued to run alongside each other for a couple of years. WJS withdrew the funding for the Workshop Band and it struggled along on weekly contributions for a while, whereas the Taff-Ely Band decided at the end of the initial summer-long project, to apply for funding from the local authority to continue the project and this subsequent award gave it the resources to continue its development until it was creating enough of its own income through

performances to be self-sufficient. I use the inception of the Taff Ely band as the date of origin of Wonderbrass.

In 1994 the WJS Workshop Band had more or less withered on the vine and the Taff-Ely band was going from strength to strength under a strong committee. At this point it was decided to amalgamate the two bands under the new name of Wonderbrass, hold rehearsals in Pontypridd and forge ahead with the inclusive and performance-oriented philosophy. That the band members who were Cardiff residents could be persuaded to travel up to Pontypridd every Tuesday night is a tribute to the strength of the project there.

Wonderbrass has been through numerous personnel, leadership, committee-member, musical and artistic changes but continues to be strong today. It has adapted to changing conditions in order to survive but retains a core philosophy that runs through its 23 year history, initially a philosophy shared by its instigators but latterly, in 2006, the band sat down and worked out its own priorities and preferred way of operating, creating a mission statement and a set of musical, social and administrative priorities. (See Appendix 2)

Areas of focus

In this Ph.D. portfolio submission I want to present and examine two areas of activity that I have, as a musical director of Wonderbrass, instigated and pursued.

1. Musical direction of the band and artistic and social philosophy
2. Compositions and arrangements created for the band

In order to locate this work in an ontological and theoretical framework I will examine related practice (and writings about that practice), some of which inspired the project from the outset, some of which has developed, chronologically speaking, in parallel with the development of Wonderbrass. I will explain the origins of the idea of a large community of co-operating musicians that led to the formation of Wonderbrass, as well as looking at the prevailing social conditions that made the idea seem timely.

In terms of community music and community music projects, Wonderbrass is inclusive and open to anyone interested but for many participants this means entering the band with pre-existing musical skills and knowledge as well as ownership of an instrument. The band has some instruments itself and can offer small percussion for those without any instruments, and this collection of small percussion instruments is used in outreach work.

Other community musicians emphasize the complete openness of the offer to participate in their projects. This is done via affordable instruments that can be played very quickly, such as in percussion ensembles like samba groups, or in vocal ensembles whereby everyone with a voice is suitably equipped. (Higgins

2012). Others have done this by stripping acquired musical skills away and reverting to core 'musicality' and then building practice back up from there. (Stevens 1985, and see below p.19).

A healthy definition of community music emphasizes accessibility and participation but, as Higgins (2012: 4-5, 133-142) suggests, the definition should be wide enough to embrace projects that require no previous musical experience and knowledge *as well as* projects that build on existing skills¹. People who join samba bands with no previous experience are soon made aware of the repertoire of musical patterns being used, their own parts within structures and when what they are doing is 'correct' and when it is 'incorrect'. Most participants, in my experience want this certainty and challenge, and however this knowledge is constituted and communicated, it forms a body of *theory*. When using the method of stripping out acquired and culturally learned musical knowledge and going back to basic musical instincts in my own projects, I have encountered resistance and hostility to this approach. Thus I became interested in viewing community music as a spectrum of activities, of different offers to different kinds of participants as long as those offers are inclusive and participant-focused. The compositions presented here represent a body of practice; my own personal practice that combines the organized musical structures of composition with the offer to create within those structures. This practice extends to members of the band who have arranged and composed in a similar way

My thesis is that it is possible to design *inclusive musical structures* that facilitate creative participation in musical projects and create strong communities through

music. These *inclusive musical structures* can be a way of combining existing musical skills (ability to play an instrument, ability to read standard musical notation, knowledge of music theory) with creative exploration of the structures and the possibilities they can yield. In the case of the music I create this involves building upon traditional jazz practice as it relates to group and solo improvising around flexible musical materials, extending that practice into collaborations between musicians of different skill levels, from different musical traditions, focusing on players' individual playing traits.

Drummer Jess Phillips and I were amongst many musicians in the early 1980s looking around for new musical directions in the wake of the punk rock movement. Sharing an interest in the 'do-it-yourself' ethos of punk (Wall 2003:60-61), and the sonic exploration of freely improvised music, we met up, formed a band (The Heavy Quartet), found we had both, separately, investigated the history of jazz music, up to and including its avant-garde period. Elsewhere, groups like Rip, Rig and Panic were combining jazz, rock and a punk spirit of defiance to create challenging musical output for a brief period, and which Jess Phillips and myself found very inspiring. (Harris 2003: 3-10. For a discussion of older 'oppositional' rock music see Cutler 1985: 157-164)

If punk had engendered rebellion without a cause, anarchy and anti-authoritarianism, the Rock Against Racism movement that emerged in its wake was more focused upon specific targets such as the National Front and Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government. (Harris, 2003)

Song lyrics were the focus of such musical protest. The two-tone movement alone provided anti-authoritarian anthems such as 'Racist Friend' (1983) and 'Ghost Town' (1981), both by Specials AKA, and 'Mirror in the Bathroom' (The Beat, 1981). But other bands, such as The Pop Group and Rip, Rig and Panic, omitted or de-emphasized lyrical content. Music without voices or without lyrics carries no specific semantic content (other than perhaps a title) and so if it is to embody social or political meaning must do it in other ways.

Jacques Attali maintains that the political economy of musical production frequently prefigures social developments:

It heralds, for it is prophetic. It has always been in its essence a herald of times to come. (Attali 1985:4)

Later Attali tells us that at the moment of writing [first publication in French was in 1977] music was heralding 'the emergence of a formidable subversion, one leading to a radically new organisation never yet theorised, of which self-management is but a distant echo'. (Attali 1985:5)

So the lyrics of songs can be overtly political, but Attali proposes here that purely musical structures, as opposed to literary, semantic-bearing lyrical structures, can have political implications too. Furthermore, political structures can be

embedded in the very sonic materials and organisational structures of even purely instrumental music. Making music together, playing together in a groove, can be a force for social cohesion (especially if that making can include improvisation, creative input from its participants, in its *modus operandi*). Charles Keil and Steven Feld, in their joint collection of essays and interviews *Music Grooves* state that:

All musical sound structures are socially structured in two senses: they exist through social construction, and they acquire meaning through social interpretation. (Keil and Feld 1994:85)

Earlier on in the volume Keil, this time in discursive mode complains that, when studying musicology at university with Leonard B. Meyer, he himself 'couldn't get with the program of giving up musical participation for supposedly greater scholarly objectivity – more time for the footnotes.' (Keil and Feld 1994:12)

So, for Keil and Feld, participation in music has remained vital to their engagement with and study of it. The central thrust of their work, as it emerges in *Music Grooves*, can be broadly described as the study of music as shared through participation. In a table of contrasts (Keil and Feld, 1994: 55) they characterise composed music as 'embodying meaning' and improvised music as 'engendering meaning'. Furthermore, composed music is presentable by repeated performances and is more 'syntactical' in its construction. In contrast

improvised music is more likely to have only one single unique performance and be 'processual' in its structure.² Many proponents of improvised music frame it as 'real-time composition'. Others see it as an 'embodied' form of music-making, because the work that results from it is not located anywhere outside the performer, unlike 'classical' music where the work lies beyond the performer as something to be striven towards (Bailey 1992: 35).³ Blacking, in his examination of Percy Grainger's ethnomusicological thinking in '*A common-sense view of all music*' cites ethnomusicological writing in asserting that it is

'...the importance of the creative process of making music, whether it be the invention of a piece by a composer, or its re-invention by performers and listeners. Every performance, or mental rehearsal of a performance, can be a creative experience for all concerned, because performers and audience alike must re-create it. (1987: 19)

There is nothing here that inherently supports the notion of a performer's improvised or, in some other pre-planned way, creative contribution to the performance of a piece of music as giving added value to the act of participation in music-making, but the notion of a '*creative process of making music*' and '*re-invention by performers*' definitely allow for it under certain cultural conditions and performance practices. This creative contribution to a musical structure is often celebrated, in improvising circles, as 'instant composition' or 'real-time composition', but it is not really necessary to reframe improvisation as a form of

composition to acknowledge its value as a creative strategy. But the desire to narrow the gap between the two processes is understandable, especially now that the previously thought of as 'spontaneous' creations of, say, Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five are viewed by some as the work of 'an artist of Flaubertian purity' (Larkin 2001: 90), then giving improvised musical iterations the status of 'compositional' appears to some to be a promotion or elevation of status. This is, however, highly debatable.

A musical structure that can retain musical coherence whilst allowing for spontaneity within its fabric is a model of 'the good life' for Terry Eagleton in his little book *The Meaning of Life: a Very Short Introduction* (2007). As he homes in on his quest for the 'meaning', he writes:

Take, as an image of the good life, a jazz group. A jazz group which is improvising obviously differs from a symphony orchestra, since to a large extent each member is free to express herself as she likes. But she does so with a receptive sensitivity to the self-expressive performances of the other musicians. The complex harmony they fashion comes not from playing from a collective score, but from the free musical expression of each member acting as the basis for the free expression of the others. As each player grows musically more eloquent, the others draw inspiration from this and are spurred on to greater heights. There is no conflict here between freedom and 'the good of the whole', yet the image is the reverse

of totalitarian. Though each performer contributes to ‘the greater good of the whole’, she does not so by some grim-lipped self-sacrifice but simply by expressing herself. (Eagleton 2007:97-8)

Of course this is very idealistic, but on the other hand it is probably a fair representation of what most group-minded jazz players are searching for; a balance between freedom and coherence, or the best of collective energy tied to spontaneity. The fact that these balances are hard to achieve makes them, for many jazz practitioners, aspirations rather than firm commitments. The exact nature of the balance also depends on the size of the band, the number of players improvising or extemporising at any one time and the structure and musical materials chosen to kick off the performance in question.

Wonderbrass is not an overtly *political* band, but its existence and *modi operandi* have social ramifications both as a successful and visible community music project and as a vehicle for its members’ personal growth.

Improvisation within Wonderbrass

Musical improvisation has frequently been viewed as liberating for the performer and listener (Nachmanovitch 1990, Prevost 1995, Day 1998). It is

sometimes viewed as an authentic, unmediated form of musical expression and the idea of learning to improvise has attracted many of Wonderbrass' members to the band in a search for spontaneous musical expression.

There are many forms of musical improvisation that range across most forms and expressions of music; improvisation in such music can range from utterly solo improvisation, one player soloing alone with reference to no other player; 'soloing' whilst other players hold down a repetitive or pre-arranged structure as a kind of 'platform' or reference grid for the single improviser; or group improvisation where there are several players improvising at the same time with the whole imaginable spectrum of degrees of reference to each other in performance. Examples of the above would be, firstly the solo free improvising of solo saxophonists Lol Coxhill, Steve Lacy or Evan Parker, secondly the traditional small band jazz prevalent across the world now and typified by one horn (solo wind instrument) and rhythm section (drums, bass, piano or guitar)⁴, and finally traditional New Orleans or Dixieland jazz (clarinet, trumpet and trombone plus a rhythm section).⁵

Jam sessions, frequently the model for post-be-bop workshops, 'cutting sessions' and even gigs or concerts, have often been portrayed as testing and proving grounds for competitive improvisers trying to establish their technical and physical superiority over rivals. There is a portrayal of one such session in Clint Eastwood's film *Bird* (1988) where a young Charlie Parker is forced from the

bandstand by having a cymbal thrown at him by the band's drummer. Because of the formalisation of such sessions as places where unknown players 'prove themselves' up against experienced rhythm sections, they might also be viewed as examples where the least *listening* happens on a jazz bandstand. (Monson, 1996: 83-4) George Lewis in his book on the history of the association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) posits an alternative view of the cutting session:

While the jam session was indeed a competitively based system of authority and virtuosity, Ellison's protocapitalist, social Darwinist framing of the jam session system seems undercut by accounts that speak of communal generosity rather than shaming.

Lewis 2008: 21

Lewis goes on to show how from such a socially ambiguous musical culture as the late nineteen fifties Chicago jazz scene there emerged an African-American co-operative of musicians working together in Chicago that advanced a sense of pride in African-American heritage as well as a resistance to the economically and socially constraining hegemony of the USA in the nineteen sixties.

The life and work of composer and bandleader Sun Ra serves as another, but different, model of jazz co-operation. Having a big band operating as a collective

in times when big bands themselves were economically unviable and thus rare, Ra's take on black arts and politics is a radical departure that resulted in some blistering collective musical expressions (Szwed 1998).

Asserting a cultural and political identity through musical expression extends beyond blackness and African heritage however. Whilst maybe lacking the cutting edge provided by resisting oppression in a racist society, almost an *apartheid* society until the nineteen sixties, white people in Europe have appropriated, or adopted, improvised and collective creative musical forms to assert, variously, national identities within jazz and left-wing political ideas, as well as exploring the therapeutic powers of the processes of making music together.

British free jazz drummer and composer John Stevens put together and published in 1985 a 'workshop manual' of concepts, exercises and pieces aimed at facilitating creative participation in group music-making. The title of the collection is indicative; *Search and Reflect*. Initially running music sessions with prisoners and people with mental illnesses, Stevens expanded his concept and ambition to create an inclusive methodology for group music-making which embraced everyone and both celebrated and liberated the innate musicality in all its participants. He is fairly clear in his introduction to the collection that music has therapeutic and other social benefits:

Another important part of the process of learning about music is learning how to participate in a group. One function of the workshop pieces is to encourage confidence and independence in the participants, showing that everyone can have a creative role in the music that the group is making.

Stevens 1985:2

Further to this notion of a liberating participation in an open compositional or improvisational strategy, musician and philosopher Brian Eno wrote on the embodiment of political or organisational structures in musical forms via his participation in the Scratch Orchestra's performances of Cornelius Cardew's composition 'The Great Learning, Paragraph Seven':

I should point out that implicit in the score is the idea that it may be performed by *any* group of people (whether or not trained to sing)...the composer, instead of ignoring or subduing the variety generated in the performance, has constructed the piece so that this variety is really the substance of the music.

Eno 1996:335-339

Whilst examining the notion of the resistance to genre and the commodification of music, using improvisation as a creative strategy, the writings of two British improvisers and writers, Derek Bailey and Edwin Prevost, are widely influential.

For Bailey improvisation is a way of exploring the possibilities of one's instrument, including non-standard playing techniques, as well as a way of resisting *genre*. This may inspire many improvisers to push through conventional approaches to conventional instruments in order to find one's own sound or personal voice. Bailey's body of theory, as expounded in both his book and a 1992 Channel Four 4-part documentary series, is useful in articulating the primacy of improvised procedure as a form of musical expression, but also is limited by its focus on individual exploration and the quest for a unique and individual musical voice (Bailey 1993).

On one level Prevost would seem to back Eagleton's idealistic notion of the 'good life' as being at the heart of collective improvisation:

[T]hey all speak of a particular human aspiration: to live in cooperative productive harmony with fellow human beings. Readers will note that I suggest that we can rehearse – and experiment with – this ethic through the medium of making music together. (Prevost 2004:3)

But later in the same book, *Minute Particulars*, Prevost seems disillusioned with the current state of improvised music, maintaining that:

Improvised music as a setting of a communitarian art form is receding. It is not retreating from this position. It is being pushed. But in my view communitarianism is a necessary intellectual and emotional environmental condition for the creation, maintenance and evolution of a civil society, and likewise for improvised music. The formulation of theory and the development through practice in music is, I think, through the joint analytical propositions of dialogue and heurism...

(Prevost 2004:10-11).

Prevost's faith in creative music-making is broadly echoed in a recent article published in volume 3 number 2 of the *International Journal of Community Music*. In an article titled *Developing social capital; a role for music education and community music in fostering civic engagement and intercultural communication*

Patrick M. Jones posits that

... performing music and participating in musical events as an amateur and for recreation can provide exactly the kind of opportunities and ways in which weak ties [connections with people outside our immediate family, friends and colleagues] and bridging social capital [connecting us to people unlike ourselves] are developed. Music serves as a perfect mediating space for people of different groups and musicking not only develops a sense of shared identity and intercultural understanding, but also can teach skills for democratic action such as leading and following, debate, compromise and so forth.

Teaching improvisation and iteration is frequently a hybrid methodology of jazz theory, scales and chords and so forth, and free playing to eliminate music-theory barriers to musical iteration. The reconciliation of these two procedures in various degrees of one or the other is one solution to the thorny issue of teaching improvisation. I have used this area between theory and free iteration to create a set of exercises for facilitating improvisation. But of equal importance to this input from myself is the interaction between members of the band, the mutual encouragement and the critical listening to each other's improvising, including my own. With Wonderbrass we have created the *conditions* for learning improvisation and these conditions are vital for people to do the risky experimental work of improvising through which they can refine their style. In *The Philosophy of Improvisation* Gary Peters describes Heidegger's philosophical practice, which Peters regards as improvisatory, as 'the performative dimension of his ontological project...' which 'presents us not just with a text but with a method of progressing that constitutes a teaching'. (Peters 2009:150) The process of 'progressing' for Wonderbrass has been enriched through projects and collaborations with higher profile players such as Claude Deppa and Jason Yarde.

The creation of the conditions for experiment, risk-taking and learning are probably as important as any other more direct input from the leader in the

process of learning to improvise or improving one's improvising skills and repertoire. In Wonderbrass we try and create and reinforce these conditions by group exercises whereby, for example, one player will improvise a short melody within a certain mode (selected because it is a useful improvising tool in a piece we are working on), and the rest of the band will try and play it back to them instantly. It is explained to the participants that strong, clear melodies are easier to hear and play back to the improviser, and it is the improviser's duty in this exercise to assist others by being clear and not to try to trip up the rest of the band. However, as the exercise progresses, the improvised phrases can and will become more adventurous and more testing to play back. Another example of this reinforcement, and drawing new members into a listening and improvising culture is to have sections create backing lines behind a soloist. This is particularly effective in acoustic and street work where there may not necessarily be a harmony instrument present and textures behind soloists are apt to be sparse. Likewise the improvisation in Wonderbrass tends to blend with and complement these backing riffs. Whilst we try iteration and exploration as a way of freeing up the player to create, the improvisations we end up with are context sensitive, a contribution to a collective way of playing together that aspires to the conditions outlined in the Eagleton quote above. (See p. 13 above)

In this study I am trying to find out exactly what personal benefits people gain through participating in Wonderbrass. I will also be asking whether the fact that this participation is *creative*, through improvisation and contribution to

composition and arrangements, adds value to the experience of participation in the band, and therefore music in general.

Composition for Wonderbrass

The second strand in this submission is an illustrated account of the creation of compositions that facilitate the development of the band and enable it to create professional standards of performance with mixed resources and abilities. This can be divided into two main themes. First of these is the creation of specific pieces aimed at developing a certain area of playing, and in the knowledge of the existing strengths and characteristics of the band.

A great example of this practice is Duke Ellington and his creation or fostering of the 'Ellington Effect' although to some extent all the great big band leaders such as Gil Evans or Sun Ra have built on the characteristics of their main players. Of Ellington's 'discovery' of his effect Gunther Schuller says:

It is a mark of his talent and vision as a leader that in these early days of his band, while he was learning to use the materials he had in his hand, he let his musicians lead the way in forming the band's style. It is evident both from the recordings and also from the statements of contemporary musicians that Ellington was very dependent upon his players at this

stage, and that *they* knew it. It is to Duke's credit that he fostered a fierce pride and communal attitude in his band so that it took precedence over the individual contributions and feelings of his members. Through the collaborations of his musicians, Ellington would learn to use the remarkable aggregation of sounds the band contained in a more purely compositional manner. (Schuller 1968:327-8)

In Ken Rattenbury's in-depth study of Ellington's style and scores he concludes that 'Ellington's keen grasp of each player's abilities enabled him to match the sound of the individual musician with that of the whole orchestra' (Rattenbury 1990: 278) but elsewhere Constant Lambert concluded, as early as 1934, that 'Ellington's best works are written in what may be called "ten-inch record form" (the 78 rpm. disc), and he is perhaps the only composer to raise this insignificant disc to the dignity of a definite *genre*.' (Lambert, 1966: 188) So it is not just the palate of colours that Ellington commanded but also the dimensions of the canvas. We can conclude that it is important for a composer to know the situations he or she is writing for.

Secondly there is the creation of musical structures which allow various extents of musical autonomy within a robust structure, a controlled and limited version of collective improvisation which is the bedrock of many musical forms from the Caribbean and its sphere of influence and in the distinctive forms of brass band music made by, for example, the Dirty Dozen and other New Orleans

Streetbands. Ned Sublette has argued that two distinctive African musical cultures have influenced African-American music and the flavour of the influence reflects the areas from which slaves were taken. Thus the more Islamicised Sahel and West African influences are more audible in the blues and blues-derived soloistic jazz of the USA. The music of the Caribbean reflects more of the influence of central and south western Africa with its polyrhythmic structures that facilitate collective improvisation, i.e. structures that allow more than one improviser to operate simultaneously in various rhythmic or pitch bands. He characterises this 'African Hunter' style of musical culture as being, 'polyphonic', having 'flexible polyrhythm', a 'collective group style' and as typically being performed by an 'ordinary community member' (Sublette 2005: 56). This music works as well in the street as in club or concert performances and my interest in New Orleans music has led me to investigate such structures as compositional models. [New Orleans has also been cited by Sublette as the unofficial 'capital' of the Caribbean but is also, situated as it is in the United States of America, straddling the two forms in a highly fertile and productive situation (Sublette 2005, 2008).]

I am asking, in this study, if my contribution of pieces of music that function as *inclusive musical structures* add value to the members' experience of participating in Wonderbrass. Does the presence of original musical material and bespoke arrangements give any sense of collective ownership of the band's output? Is the experience of playing and performing with the band enhanced by

the fact that the repertoire of the band is based on, or celebrates, players' diversity of skill levels and personal approaches to playing music?

Communitarian Aesthetics

As a white man making music in forms that are, historically and presently, dominated by black artists, I am inspired by black cultural theorists such as George Lewis and bell hooks. For instance hooks writes that:

We need to call attention to those black artists who successfully attract diverse audiences without pandering to a white supremacist consumer market while simultaneously creating a value system where acquisition of wealth and fame are not the only measures of success. (hooks 1990:39)

Later in the same volume she talks about the construction, or rediscovery of an 'aesthetic of blackness' whereby participation and communal creation (cultural labour) are valued over artistic 'commodities' (cultural capital), or, in other words, that values being culturally productive over being inert and waiting for cultural products to be brought to us. For her an 'aesthetic of blackness' would be

...that created in a collective context, should be an integrated aspect of everyday life, enhancing the survival and development of community, these ideas form the basis of African-American aesthetics. Cultural production and artistic expressiveness were also ways for displaced African people to maintain connections with the past...This historical aesthetic legacy has proved so powerful that consumer capitalism has not been able to completely destroy artistic production in underclass black communities. (hooks 1990:105)

hooks' and others' calls to action are primarily addressed to a black readership but not only the black underclass feel the need to engage with an aesthetic of action, of the moment, of autonomous creativity through collective activity. Like food, the healthiest artistic option might not be the most convenient, pre-prepared and most expensive available.

Conclusion:

The material presented in this portfolio is not just a body of work that happened in the past and that stopped at some point, but a living body of collective musical endeavour. As such it has been vital to locate my ideas not just in a theoretical context but also in a framework of practice that runs through and links the activities of leading and musically directing a band, writing music for it and fostering improvisation and creative contributions from constituent members within its musical structures. All this activity is imbued with a spirit of inclusive

self-determination that consciously challenges a notion of art as a consumable commodity.

Whilst the work I am presenting, relating to forming, running, leading, teaching and composing for Wonderbrass has taken inspiration from others' work in related areas, I feel the notion of *inclusive musical structures*, and *the added value of making a creative contribution* whilst participating in music-making are ideas framed in a new way, and worthy of testing. I will also consider whether Wonderbrass, framed as a musical project, may occupy a niche between professional and amateur music-making that aims for professional standards of excellence by means of inclusion, the celebration of diversity of skills and approaches, and presents the enthusiastic playing out of these aspirations in performances.

Chapter 2: **Research Methodology**

There are two strands of activity that I am presenting as part of this submission for Ph.D. by Portfolio. These areas can be broadly described thus:

1. Musical direction and philosophy
2. Compositions

The two categories, of musical leadership and musical composition, do not neatly map onto two distinct research methods. A more complex set of correspondences between methodologies and my focal areas of activity will emerge giving, I hope, an impression of a continuity in my activities and showing a link between the philosophy of leading the band as musical director (but also trying to work with a philosophy of inclusiveness, openness, communication among the band's members as well as with audience, and continuous striving for improvement) and creating compositions and arrangements for the band that seek to enact this philosophy.

A composer writing for human performers, in order to convey his ideas to an audience, must first elicit the best and most communicative possible performance from those playing his scores. When writing for an orchestra, or other standard ensembles, certain production standards can reasonably be

assumed and the whole classical conservatoire training system is in place to try and ensure this. When writing for non-professional and non-standard ensembles, the composer must work harder to persuade his first audience, his players, that his ideas are worthy of the investment of time and effort. Working with performers in these latter contexts, creating inviting and inclusive musical structures, and offering players the opportunity to be creative within the composed musical structures is a strategy I have developed over the years and am seeking to illustrate via the case studies in chapter three.

Musical Analysis

I will be making certain assertions about the musical materials I have composed, selected and arranged for the band as well as some material generated through exercises in improvisation used in rehearsals and workshops. Whilst the compositions will be submitted in the portfolio as audio recordings I think it essential also that I present notated and transcribed examples of the pieces selected for discussion and analysis to try and show how, for example, they convey a certain notion of 'swing' or rhythmic impulse to the band. So a simple piece may be analysed for the way rhythmic placement in otherwise simple musical materials alters the feeling of movement or rhythmic impetus of a piece in performance. These elements in compositions are discussed regularly in rehearsals and we talk about the implications that these composed materials have for anyone wishing to improvise alongside or 'over' them and these

'lessons' hopefully carry the improvisers forward in their approach to the band's collective musical effect. But written, or fixed but aurally transmitted, instrumental parts and musical sections are themselves shaped, to some extent, by working in rehearsal with the musicians and adapting them to make them more playable. Years of working in this way has helped me create parts that need less moulding after the arrangement has been given out, and this practice, a research method in itself, has led to the examples of scores offered as case studies in chapter three of this submission. However these analyses cannot stand by themselves and my assertions about their purpose and effect will need to be triangulated with analysis, opinion and experiences from the band collected in other ways; through cascade interviews, focus groups and via questionnaires.

My analyses will be geared towards illustrating two purposes:

- how certain compositions aim to catch, exploit or amplify the individual characteristics of certain players, or even force them to play in a certain way

and

- how certain composition and/or arrangements promote certain styles of swing or rhythmic impetus and embed it in the band in performance.

I will purposefully limit the scope of my musical analysis to illustrate these two tendencies in the music I make with and for Wonderbrass. Whilst the band is very good at extending the feeling of community it engenders to engage an audience in a performance either through dancing or singing, this audience reaction to, or 'reception' of the band is not part of this study. It is the experiences of people actually in the band that I want to study and here I must move on to discuss collecting this data.

Interviews

There are two kinds of interviews I have conducted for this part of my research, one-to-one discussions between myself and key ex-members of the band, and 'cascade' group interviews and discussions between the current members of the band. I have chosen 'cascade' interviews and focus groups led by facilitators from within the band to allow members to speak more freely about my work, but also to allow them to range more widely in discussion than might be the case if I were present and too focussed upon the questions I would like their answers to. So, whilst agreed outline questions and prompts were used, the facilitators of the focus groups were encouraged to sit back and allow the discussions to roam freely and allow the participants to ask and say what they wanted to. This allowed for points I had not anticipated coming through, such as the band as a space where intergenerational friendships could be made.

The testimonies of practising musicians, collected via interview, are vital to this study and variations of this research method have been deployed by writers as diverse as Berliner (1994), Green (2002), Lewis (2008) and Monson (1996). Green kept an open mind about the number of musicians she would interview about their experiences of learning to play rock music by peer learning in informal contexts:

...on the grounds that I would continue interviewing until the responses kept on raising the same issues without introducing new ones (or in more technical terms, until the data were repeating themselves).

Green (2002:8)

My research will differ in that there are a finite number of band members, around thirty at present, and key ex-members whose experience of joining, being in the band and leaving it are crucial to the research. So for ex members I have conducted face-to-face interviews for as long as the interviewee wants to speak. I will also show them a transcript of the full interview for them to approve, clarify or change so as to refine their views. This is a technique I used in 2003 when I was trying to make a comparative study of the teaching of free musical improvisation in UK and Norway. For that I conducted six interviews and these produced enough data to make the comparisons. The questions for the UK/Norway study were fairly focussed but in the interview situation I found that

as long as my basic questions were answered it became productive then to let the interviewee just speak their mind and that this process, of just keeping the conversation flowing, produced very rich data. Two of the interviews, one with the very experienced Norwegian trumpeter and teacher Torgrim Sollid and the other with even more experienced English pianist and teacher Keith Tippett lasted over two hours each.

Lewis (2008) states that his interviews:

...provided me with important insights, reminded me of things I had forgotten, and destabilized comfortable assumptions I had made.'

Lewis 2008: xxv

Therefore my one-to-one interviews have tested my assertions against other people's recollections and accounts of their experiences. On occasions my assertions have been disputed, contradicted and subsequently modified. Not all the interviewees who agreed to speak to me have entirely positive accounts of their time with Wonderbrass and not all left the band happy and fulfilled. These comings and goings of members often marked crises in the band's history and the way the band overcame and responded to these crises often created the characteristics of a new phase in the band's development and accounting for

these differences and disputes is as important to this study as are the musical analysis elements.

Cascade Interviews

A problem with working as musical director of the band and then, in essence, asking them to comment upon the experiences of being in the band, experiences that will necessarily include responses about working with me, is that people may feel they are helping by giving a positive and complimentary (to me) assessment of matters. This was certainly the case with preliminary interviews I conducted with current members.

In order to circumvent this I instituted a series of cascade 'interviews' where a small group interviewed each other, and focus groups where topics were discussed at length, under questioning and prompts from a chair, whilst the session was recorded. I was not at these sessions. I feel this shifted the focus away from my contribution and created a more rounded discussion.

The process has precedents even within the band. Regular meetings of full band and committee are held to discuss the progress of the band and future plans. As I mentioned in the chapter one above, in 2006 a full consultation process was carried out to ask members of Wonderbrass what they thought the band's philosophy and working methods were and should be, resulting in a new mission statement and set of agreed priorities (see appendix 2).

However it has been essential that I formulate strategies for preparing people for the interviews, i.e. introducing them to the positive nature of critical thinking and writing. To achieve this I piloted methods on handpicked and volunteer members of the band who then acted as facilitators of the 'cascade' process. (see Appendix 7).

Cascade interviews were used because I wanted the band to talk amongst themselves and share experiences and ideas rather than address me personally. I hoped the material I needed to contextualise my compositions etc as *inclusive musical structures* emerge from the focus groups rather than be teased out of them.

MacDonald and Wilson (2005: 398) state that: 'if jazz is to be seen as a socially generated music, then social understandings of it should be examined; if you create the music in a group then it is worth asking a group about it'.

Focus group discussions were chosen because I wanted the groups to discuss the experience of participation in Wonderbrass, and in playing my pieces, amongst themselves and with each other. Cascade interviews were chosen because I wanted the issues to be discussed with each other and not in my presence.

Creative Thinking

Wonderbrass is a creative enterprise, full of creative people and it seemed wise to engage some of this creativity in the research process in the interests of both

enriching the data and giving the band some creative ownership of the research process. In this I have been inspired by the work of David Gauntlett.

Gauntlett engages his research subjects in various creative activities to explore their ideas and feelings about certain issues (2007: 92-127) and to construct visual metaphors of elements of their own 'identities' (ibid: 128-181) expressed through personal narratives, goals, relationships and so forth.

What interests and excites me here is that this quest for the elusive idea of 'identity' is approached by creative play with Lego pieces. The Lego set is inherently modular and contains ready-mades such as animals, human figures (including skeletons), furniture, architectural features such as walls, windows and arches, motor vehicles, machines and historical figures such as queens and knights.

Musical 'personality' might, in the case of my research replace Gauntlett's notion of 'identity' in his, but it also occurred to me that the band itself could substitute for his Lego set. Its physical sections (saxophones, flutes, trumpets, trombones and rhythm sections), as well as purely musical notions such as rhythmic style (ska, swing, funk, and so forth), keys, modes, arrangement details, relationships between soloist(s) and backings or holding patterns could be offered up as modular elements for the members of the band to play with and create their ideal piece of music. The end results have hopefully shone some light upon its

members' creative vision of what the band is and could be. The resulting data may have ramifications for the band that continue well after the period of study of this project.

I more or less stumbled upon a great example of this kind of 'creative thinking' as research when, in May 2012 we were sight reading through some arrangements made by my second year composition students from the B.A. Popular Music degree programme at the University of Glamorgan. After a couple of plays through each arrangement, which were recorded so that the students could hear the arrangements played by the real instruments they were intended for, I asked the band for feedback which I could filter and give back to the students.

When discussing one arrangements comments made were:

"When you do an arrangement of a pop tune for this band you have to do something more than the original, do something *further* with the material...this just sounds like an *orchestration* [rather than an arrangement]"

"I think she deserves credit for making Wonderbrass play quietly."

"She shares the material well between the band so everybody gets something interesting to do."

"He's not using enough of the textures that are possible with this instrumental combination. It is also quite boring and difficult for the trumpets to play because we're just playing one very high riff all the time."

These and other comments show a good awareness, fairly well spread through the band, of the character and potential of the band, an ability to 'play with' the

musical materials presented and think creatively around them. The other evidence yielded by this 'creative play' is spread, where relevant, through the submission.

Conclusion

The research methods for this portfolio are a combination of the music-analytical (illustrating musical method by identifying and presenting musical elements of compositions, arrangements and performances), ethnographic (interviews and focus groups) and a complementary process of *creative reflection* by the participants in the Wonderbrass project. Thus the methods I have chosen combine analysis of the texts (compositions, arrangements and performances) with band members' reflections on working with, inhabiting and bringing to life those texts. Whilst I will try to show that the compositions and arrangements are designed to be inclusive musical structures, that is solid musical structures that can stand up as pieces in their own right in a professional context, they are nevertheless intended to encourage creative contribution through improvisation, interpretation and adaptation. These processes of participation and of a sense of ownership, or a perception of the 'added value' of these musical materials will be strengthened by the discussions that arise about them in the interviews and creative reflections.

Chapter 3: Commentary and Analysis of Compositions and Arrangements for Wonderbrass.

In this chapter I examine certain features of what I have identified as key, or indicative, pieces of creative work I have made for Wonderbrass. I examine four types of composition that illustrate areas of exploration and development of my relationship with the band. These are

1. Arrangements of well-known tunes or jazz standard repertoire.
2. Pieces designed and composed to facilitate collaborations with other ensembles.
3. Concertos intended to feature a key member of the band as a soloist.
4. Pieces addressing contemporary dance music styles such as drum 'n' bass, hip hop and electronica.

The aim of presenting, analysing and commenting upon such compositions is to establish their credentials as inclusive musical structures. Most of the music I have written for Wonderbrass should be viewed as serving at least two purposes: to entertain the people playing the music and a potential audience, and to provide material for the band to play that enables players to engage with it with different levels of skill. The former purpose is probably a goal of most musical compositions. The latter is an attempt by me to create a body of work that facilitates participation in music-making by non-specialists and learners.

Wonderbrass itself is a musical structure in that it exists to play music, to foster participation and to promote active engagement with, rather than passive consumption of, culture. As such it requires music to play and perform and the inclusiveness of the band has to be enacted in the design of these compositions and arrangements such that participation at different skill levels is facilitated. But composing inclusive musical structures must go beyond creating pieces that musicians with different skill levels can participate in alongside each other. They must be capable of producing the quasi-professional performing outcomes that members of Wonderbrass aspire to. Connecting these two ideals is the art of composing for Wonderbrass and other participatory musical projects. Evidence of the design of these musical structures to be inclusive is offered here, as is evidence from members of the band who speak of their experiences of playing and performing the music.

The main ways of interacting with the band and its music are by playing the composed pieces and improvising within or around them. Sometimes this is extended to players making their own (non-improvised) parts, sometimes in groups, and, in some cases, creating whole arrangements or original pieces for the band. Whilst the band does not eschew standard repertoire, even jazz standards, the presence of and commitment to original material within the band's repertoire, is very important and 'adds value' to the experience of being in Wonderbrass.

One current member sums up the increased sense of engagement they felt with the band as qualitatively different to that of other musical groups they had experience of:

CC: But it's the mode [of engagement], not just the style of music. It's how much participation and creativity that's involved for everyone in the band. You can do as much or as little of that as you want really. If you want to compose something you can, or if you want to change your part slightly by harmonizing with someone next to you, you can try doing that [...] and that's very different to a lot of other musical experiences where it's a lot stricter and the rules are more dictatorial.

3.1 Arrangements:

This category continues to evolve but it originates in my belief (on taking over the running of the WJS Workshop Band) that in order to become an effective large unit or big band, then flexible arrangements of tunes needed to be made. This approach starkly contrasts with the usual model of a jazz workshop band where a standard musical theme would be chosen and played in unison by the ensemble together followed by numerous solos by various members of the band, rounded off by a restatement of the theme. My vision was to create a working process for the Workshop Band that enabled me to incorporate the whole band playing together for more of the time, not just at the 'heads'.

The usual model, heads and solos, is conceived to allow people the chance to develop their individual soloing skills but, once a larger size of band is present, it results in most players not playing for most of the time. In an ideal situation this non-playing time would be used to listen critically and analytically to the other players' solos and learn from this process. Discussions could be held to exchange soloing ideas and learn from each others' playing, and I have experienced such a reflective approach being used very successfully for example in Keith Tippett's free improvisation sessions in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. It takes a large amount of discipline, and self-discipline, to listen critically, engage with and discuss other people's playing, especially if that criticism is to be framed positively and constructively. My engagement with Keith's workshops in 2003-2005 certainly taught me a lot about listening critically and engaging in constructive dialogue about musical utterance. But, importantly, in these sessions, there was not the head-solo-head structure; instead Keith would select a group to play and they would improvise collectively for around five minutes. Everyone selected was playing as much as they decided was appropriate to the musical situation.

When Jess Phillips and I took over the running of the WJS Workshop in 1987 we wanted to harness the desire to learn, via exploration and the deployment of theoretical knowledge, the art of jazz improvisation as a large group. We were committed to the development of a big band model whereby non-soloists would play active and supportive roles throughout the performance. Simple 'blowing' tunes, where a solo could be attempted with very basic theoretical information

such as the notes of the blues scale, were adapted by the addition of 'backing lines' played behind and beneath the soloist. After a while, this created a performing unit, a band, out of what had previously been a fairly random collection of aspiring jazz soloists, because everyone was encouraged to share responsibility for creating and playing lines that would support a soloist. The ensemble became more cohesive. As I said in Chapter 1, this approach continues to be useful in creating backing lines, particularly for street performances where no loud harmonic (polyphonic) instruments are available, and fostering ensemble performance over a string of unrelated solos.

Another exercise I have devised to help members create memorable backing lines and soloing ideas is a 'follow-the-leader' style game whereby a mode and a rhythmic backing are set up and each member of the band or occasionally selected members of the band' take turns to play a short phrase within an agreed number of bars and the rest of the ensemble is required to play their line back to them instantly. This 'call-and-response' puts the onus on the 'caller' to be clear in their statement in order to help the responding group to play their idea back instantly. It would be possible here for the caller to try and trip up the responders by playing something ambiguous and complex *too early in the exercise*, but when undertaken co-operatively the same exercise can be a great facilitator of melodic clarity, quickness of analysis and response as well understanding of the chosen mode. Increasing complexity of calls, with no loss of accuracy in responses, usually does occur with patient development.

The pieces we used in this way early in the band's development included Charles Mingus' 'Haitian Fight Song' (1957), Herbie Hancock's 'Watermelon Man' (1962), Mongo Santamaria's 'Sweet Tater Pie' (1976), Abdullah Ibrahim's 'The Homecoming' (1980) and 'Ekaya' (1983) and Bobby Timmons' 'Moanin' (1958). Typically we would take the tune, learn it as a group, preferably by ear although people would often write it down to help them remember it and practice alone, and then either give out lines we had composed ourselves (Rob Smith, Jess Phillips) or occasionally invite the band to create their own lines. Many of the ideas and strategies we deployed were devised after working with, and listening to, streetbands such as 'The Fallout Band' who formed to play on CND marches and events in the 1980's, but the idea of 'workshopping' an arrangement, devoting time in the weekly sessions to allow people in the band to generate their own material from within the ranks of the band, felt new to us. We were familiar with the concepts of 'head arrangement', or giving out parts aurally rather than in notated form, and 'collective improvisation', where members would extemporize from within a predetermined role or within predetermined limitations. The workshop band became quickly too large to allow collective improvisation, and anyway members were often nervous of attempting it, but this halfway house allowed people to input musical ideas into the arrangements and leave the leaders to organize this material into workable arrangements.

In 'Musicking', Christopher Small writes that 'Playing by ear almost always leaves the performing musicians some latitude to invent for themselves and to respond directly to one another's actions (...) not all notated scores even attempt to

specify in every detail what the performers are to do, and many styles of notation leave a great deal up to them to decide.' (1998: 195) Elsewhere Small writes that playing by ear (with or without improvised elements) generally leads to closer and more attentive relationships between performers. Going this far strikes me as somewhat idealistic and fails to take into account the case of inexperienced players who learn a part by rote and doggedly stick to it whatever happens around them. To me it is clear that more work needs to be done to create an *ensemble* dynamic amongst a group of musicians than just 'learning by ear'. Mixing score reading, 'ear learning' and improvisation has helped us to foster the idea of a piece of music as a musical structure with room for spontaneity and invention within it.

A memorable early example of this was an arrangement we did in 1990 of a traditional Trinidadian masquerade tune called 'Dame Lorraine'. This tune is melodically simple and harmonically very plain, being mostly in C minor and apart from a concluding cadence to each strain, not departing from a chord of C minor. To liven up lengthy performances of it we encouraged the band to create their own backing lines to accompany soloists. This proved to be a valuable experience as many of the lines created were too busy to sit comfortably behind a solo and had to be used as interludes *between* solos. Other lines clearly strayed from C minor to F or G minor, but this showed the band that chords could be superimposed upon each other, especially in modal jazz.

The material generated by the band is set out in example 1 below, with treble range material first, then bass range, and with the original and traditional Dame Lorraine tune at the end. All this material was subsequently available to the band; either to create a formal arrangement, for instance in an indoor or concert style presentation, or as an ad hoc arrangement created on a parade where the tune may be required to be played for a long time. This is just an example of one piece in which the creative contribution of Wonderbrass' members were incorporated into arrangements for the band, creating a more flexible arrangement for the bands use in different performance situations

Example 1: 'Dame Lorraine'

Dame Lorraine

Traditional Trinidadian
Arranged by Wonderbrass and WJS Workshop Band

The musical score for 'Dame Lorraine' is written in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of nine sections, each marked with a letter in a box. Section A starts with a tempo marking of quarter note = 90. The score is as follows:

- A**: Measures 1-4. Quarter note = 90.
- B**: Measures 5-8. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 8.
- C**: Measures 9-12. Features a half note in measure 9 and a dotted half note in measure 12.
- D**: Measures 13-16. Includes a quarter rest in measure 13 and a dotted quarter note in measure 14.
- E**: Measures 17-20. Features a dotted quarter note in measure 17 and a dotted half note in measure 18.
- F**: Measures 21-24. Includes a quarter rest in measure 21 and a dotted quarter note in measure 22.
- G**: Measures 25-28. Features a quarter note in measure 25 and a dotted quarter note in measure 26.
- H**: Measures 29-32. Includes a quarter rest in measure 29 and a dotted quarter note in measure 30.
- I**: Measures 33-36. Features a quarter note in measure 33 and a dotted quarter note in measure 34.

Another example is the arrangement of Count Basie’s ‘Jive at Five’. This, in the Basie Big Band’s version, is a powerful, upbeat dance arrangement. Once again the harmonic palette is fairly restricted, alternating between tonic and subdominant for four bars, hovering on the submediant for bars 5 and 6 before rounding off the A sequence with subdominant, tonic then dominant turn-around. In my arrangement I kept this harmonic movement for the A section but in rehearsals, whilst we were learning the tune, I pointed out that the melody obeyed a simple myxolydian rising phrase followed by descending blues-scale answering phrase structure and this can be retained for improvised solos over the A section. In the B section I ditched the very simple cycling harmonies and created a fast octotonic bass line, doubled on trombones and keyboards, which was so powerful in performance that the soloist could concentrate on producing noise rather than notes. In its recorded version the first ‘in sequence’ solo (excluding the introductory solo played by myself on bass clarinet) is played by

Ex Member 3 and is a good vehicle for two sides of his playing, earthy and growling blues phrases and squawking, abandoned free improvisation.

Example 2: 'Jive at Five' arranged by Rob Smith as performed by Wonderbrass on the Album *Jive @ 5* (2007).

Jive At Five

Count Basie
Arr. Rob Smith

$\text{♩} = 120$

The first system of the musical score is for measures 1-5. It features five staves: Flute, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trumpet, and Trombone. The Flute, Trumpet, and Trombone parts are mostly rests, with some notes in measure 5. The Alto Sax and Tenor Sax parts play a rhythmic melody. The Bass part shows the chord progression: G, C7, G, C7, Em.

6

The second system of the musical score is for measures 6-10. It features six staves: Flute (Fl.), Alto Sax (A. Sax), Tenor Sax (T. Sax), Trumpet (Tpt.), Trombone (Tib.), and Bass. The Flute, Trumpet, and Trombone parts have rests. The Alto Sax and Tenor Sax parts play a rhythmic melody. The Bass part shows the chord progression: Em7, C7, G, D+7.

11

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

15

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

On 5th July 2012 I interviewed Ex Member 3 about his solo, my transcription of it, and his experience of being in Wonderbrass. Whilst the solo had been created to feature his playing, allowing him lots of space to build a lengthy musical statement that progressed in intensity towards a wild, abandoned outburst over the B section. During the creation of this arrangement this player and I discussed

what I was asking him to do in the solo in terms of modes, scales but also in creating a narrative of a gradual journey from spacious, easy playing towards wild abandon. The arrangement of other accompanying instrumental parts were built around this solo (and subsequent solos by other band members who were able to create the right amount of energy and dynamic range⁶), he had nevertheless given much time to thinking about how to structure it:

‘So I think that was an approach I took (...) hearing it in half time...and knowing that I wanted to...what I do at the beginning is I’m just behind the beat here, and then there is a note here where I attack it just before the beat, and then eventually I start attacking before the beat more and more and more. And then eventually I’m adding... I start to add grace notes as well. So I’m getting further and further in front of the beat and just attacking the beat all the time. And that was intentional, to start here [points to bar 11 on solo – see Score 1.2 in appendix no. 1] ...so you know that shape of a solo where you build it towards about three-quarters of the way through and then tail off at the end to finish, yeah? So what I did was I attacked the beat so I start slightly behind the beat, and then I gradually get more and more in front of the beat and I’m just pushing the beat and that is something quite difficult for me because I tend to be listening and reacting to what the band’s doing, and this one I intentionally went for: ‘let’s get in front of the beat because that’s what gives funk its drive...’

This strategy only really applies to the first section of the solo over the A section of the score. The second half is mostly abandoned screaming on the sax but on the recorded version ex-member 3 was disappointed that he couldn't follow his usual strategy of making a controlled transition to the, seemingly uncontrolled, 'screaming sax'.

'I actually remember it. It's funny when you listen to the music... I now remember the recording session, and the screaming in the B section, what happened was I forgot to carry the solo through to the B section and although I usually did do a screaming solo, this bit (the notated section) would integrate more into it... I'll build up to it. You can hear there's a kind of, a couple of bars rest, and what happened was I looked at [Ex-member 2] and then [He mimes the signal for carry on] 'Oh yeah, oh yeah...I'm meant to carry on!' So that's what happened there. I'm a bit disappointed with that because, you know I was saying that I like it when it's integrated and I usually used to do this and then the screaming thing would get more and more extreme through the sixteen bars and then I'd finish it off coming back into a blues. That was the usual shape of it. And because I forgot I just got straight into the screaming'.

Ex-member 3's approach to soloing is based on his own notions of expressing emotion and instinct whilst soloing. This often incorporates growled notes, pitch bent notes and other 'extended' techniques that, whilst making it difficult to

incorporate his sound into the ensemble, made him a compelling soloist when his style of playing could be featured in the foreground and supported. The following lengthy passage explains much of his approach and philosophy.

RS: You can say a bit about your background as well...

ExM3: Well it is a bit odd for me because I'm not very technical, generally. Things are much more instinctive with me, and I would say also that I play music because it saved my life. Literally. From, you know, I've had trouble with depression and music has been the thing that pulls me through it. And when I've been really at my lowest, playing the sax has been the thing that pulls me through. But also I do a lot of practice and a lot of scales but then they're hard and I have a problem with memory. And I think that is connected with...I had a brain injury when I was little, so I have a real problem with memory. So although I practise scales and I practise chord progressions, I rarely remember them the next time I go back to practise. It's like starting again, sometimes. I've had rehearsals with people where I get so frustrated because I could never remember the tune. It's just gone.

RS: But you do eventually remember them...

ExM3: I do!

RS: It just takes longer. I mean, you were one of the one's who didn't like to use [notated] music on stage. There have been a few members of Wonderbrass that have really resisted using written music (...)

ExM3: Well I always felt that I didn't know a tune unless I could actually play it without the music. Until then I'm not really playing the tune. I'm not, you know, and notes I struggle with. Because even now I can't read music.

RS: You can't *sight read* music.

ExM3: I can't sight read. And I have trouble reading in rhythm. I spent six months going with pages and pages of syncopated rhythms in bed at night, half an hour before I went to bed, just doing the rhythm and I still can't do it. And in the end I decided that, probably because of my brain injury, this isn't something I'm going to be able to do, so it is best to find a different way to do it. So at rehearsals I stopped trying to learn a whole tune. So what I'd do is I'd learn the first two phrases and when the band plays that phrase I'd play that phrase. And then the next week I'd add the next phrase on. And eventually I'd learn the tune. Yeah, so I'd eventually

get there. But it would be a very slow process for me. And improvisation has always been...I only learn music so that I can improvise. That's, you know, I don't learn music for any other reason.

So to sum up Ex Member 3's approach, he is uncomfortable relying on notation and much prefers to rely upon his (by his own estimation unreliable) memory. He approaches improvising in a similar way. He tries to learn the theory behind an improvisation, the mode and backing chords, but then to forget, or clear this information from the front of his mind in the moment of improvisation:

RS: How would you describe your improvising then? Or your approach to improvising?

ExM3: Erm..., it's very instinctive. But it is informed by stuff I learned. There was a famous bass player on one of the jazz programmes recently, who said that the reason that jazz is difficult to do is because you have to learn everything you possibly can and then when you get on stage you have to forget it all. And I don't have a problem forgetting...[laughs]. And I think some people, when they're beginning improvising, have a real problem with: 'well I've learned all these things and I'm going to show you what I've learned!' And it can sound very, erm...it sounds like they're practising. They're doing technical exercises. And that was never the point for me. It was always about, erm..., emotional content.

RS: So when people are learning to improvise they usually come at it from one or the other angle. One is the instinctive angle whereby they think it's 'in them' and they just need to get it out, so they have no problem just playing. Iterating. And the other way is saying: 'if I learn all this information, at the end of it I will be able to improvise!'

ExM3: Yeah!

RS: But when they get there they find that they've got all the information, but it's not internalised. And they have real trouble just iterating, just playing without anybody telling them what to play

ExM3: Yeah. And I come to it from the instinctive angle, and I started like that but then I've learned the technical stuff to feed into it, because without that it's very difficult to play with other people, without knowing more about the structure of the music. It's very difficult to play with other people because, you know, if you don't know what key they're in or have some idea of how the chords work as a structure, and have more idea about how emotion... it's really about emotion for me but it's 'how do those chords imbue that emotion?' So what do I have to do to get through that? The problem is, if you do too much of playing in the arpeggios and

the scales, you do a solo and you end up playing the arpeggios and the scales. So it's a really fine balance for me, about learning...It's important to learn the stuff, but it's also important to look outside what you're learning and listen to what sounds right.

So ex-member 3, to whom playing the saxophone represents a lifeline and a safety valve for depressive episodes he's encountered, has really learned to play by exploring the non-conventional sounds the instrument can make, but he has tried to socialise that sound by learning about the theory and structure of music so he can play with others and partake in group music-making. On the other hand, soloing remains his passion, the 'reason' for playing music and as such he learns the written sections of a piece slowly and his unique sound can make it difficult for him to integrate into unison or harmony passages of the arrangements. But ex-member 3 is aware of this tension between individual expression and collective responsibility on both a musical and social level:

ExM2: The thing I found difficult though, about Wonderbrass, is...I think I've had a lot of time working in co-ops. In my early life I was in a lot of co-ops and voluntary organisations, and bands with similar forms of organisation to Wonderbrass. And people don't understand that those kinds of organisations have a life of their own and because you enjoy this bit of it, there are going to be bits that you don't like. But that doesn't mean that you can't do that bit and there will be bits for you and, you

know, people can get a bit bitchy about preserving their area, and not realising that, look, this is the way the band's going. If you stick with it you'll get something from it. And there have been times (when) it hasn't quite been right for me. But always for me the upside has been ok. So nothing's ever right, and you can't... fixing an organisation that will just grow, because it has a revolving membership, the nature of that organisation will change. Because you have all these different members who do different things and are better at some things than others, so the organisation's going to change and those periods of transition I just found really bitter. But I don't think (they) needed to be...Because people put a lot of time into it, of their own time, I can see how it is very precious for people. But they don't see there's an organisation beyond their personal needs and they don't...they fight their corner and it can be tricky.

For all his emphasis on 'instinct' and 'emotion' in his playing, Ex Member 3 does acknowledge benefitting from the rolling programme of aural skill development and exploration of the theoretical side of improvisation that I have instigated in Wonderbrass:

ExM3: I had also been experimenting with doing different blues scales. Originally, I think it was a conversation I had with you, where it was like 'If you had a blues in C then I'd play a C blues scale'. And then we were having a conversation about blues scales and what ones to use and you were saying how, if it's in a major key, you could use the blues scale, which is very similar to the pentatonic scale, only a note's difference, so if your playing in the major key you can play the (blues in the) minor key a

third below. Relative minor! It works because it's based on practically a pentatonic. And then I was practising going: 'Ok if you can play a third below, if you play a third above, how does that sound?' You know, because that's a possible response and trickier, but you can make it work. You just have to be a bit more careful, because there's some huge clashes to be aware of. So I was experimenting with doing different blues scales over chords, which was away from what I thought you did with them.

RS: I think I can remember that conversation actually, not until this moment, but now you've said it. Because if you only know the blues scale, then one of the ways of making it interesting is to build that...if you know that blues scale and can take it into quite a few different areas like C blues, G blues, B flat, then you can play the wrong blues scale and how does that sound and...some notes will work, some notes won't but then you won't dwell on them,

ExM3: And, you know, there's always the old adage that if you play the wrong note you're only a semitone away from where you need to be.

It is useful to note Ex Member 3's engagement with theory, but also his articulation of the need to 'internalise' what you're learning so that a player doesn't have to have the theoretical framework at the 'front' of their mind in the moment of improvising. This is a recurring problem for me, and to almost everyone I've spoken to about teaching improvisation. A balance has to be found

between learning and internalising the relevant theory, and not inhibiting the iteration of raw musical ideas often encapsulated by the phrase ‘just play!’ An added problem is that this balance point appears to be slightly differently located for every different player. Patience is required in finding the right combination of theory and instinct, not just for each individual, but for each ensemble of individuals. This is one of the problems that make community music leadership simultaneously difficult and rewarding. It is worth comparing Ex Member 3’s comments with a comment made by Member Z:

You just have to sort of play it by ear and you learn what sounds rubbish. You play something and if it sounds rubbish you don’t play that again. It’s been really good for my ear. Definitely.

This is coming from a classically trained musician, well schooled in theory, but with a fear of being asked, or forced, to improvise. Another classically trained player, Member H, commented:

It’s teaching me how to use my ears more.

3.2 Collaborative Compositions with other musicians and ensembles:

This is a key area of work that is strategically very important for finding common ground and for performing with other ensembles. This is especially rewarding when this is an encounter with music from another musical tradition such as samba with Samba Gales, or with people from a different performing tradition such as with Amampondo. However because of the relative rarity, and short time-span of these collaborations, combined with the fact that these multi-

ensemble pieces can only really be performed with all their constituent ensembles, these projects can appear less important in Wonderbrass's total activity than they really are. In the band's history these projects have included:

1996 Four Samba Interludes. Composed by Rob Smith and Simon Preston. Performed by Wonderbrass and Samba Gales. Commissioned by South Wales Intercultural Community Arts.

1998 The Bridge/Y Bont. Composed by Rob Smith. Performed by Wonderbrass, Butetown Gospel Choir, Shri Kutchi Levi Patel Samaj Centre Tabla Group, SWICA All-Stars Steel Pan Ensemble, Soloists – Julie Murphy, Rapper Idris Mohammed, Stifyn Parri, Bobby Singh. Commissioned by SWICA as part of EU Leaders' Conference in Cardiff.

2006 The Meeting Place. Composed by Rob Smith and Amampondo. Performed by Wonderbrass and Amampondo. Commissioned by Valleys Kids.

I will focus upon the last of these, the collaboration with Amampondo. It was proposed in a two-week residency in South Wales that Wonderbrass and Amampondo together create some new pieces and record them as a project called Ubuntu. The band had previously been paired up for the 2005 Brecon Jazz

Festival where we had sent a CD of arrangements to Capetown, Amampondo had created their own parts, mostly percussion, to several of our existing arrangements and then we performed them together (with no rehearsal) in a high profile performance on a Saturday evening to around 2000 people with no dedicated rehearsal of the whole ensemble. The public response, and the great experience for both bands of working together, made us determined to repeat the experience but with a residency for Amampondo in South Wales so that we would have time to develop material together and learn more from each other. Whilst Amampondo sent only their 5-man international performing unit, back in Capetown they also function as an inclusive, community based music and dance organization, springing from a culture where the concepts of professional versus amateur, and of musical participation, are more productively intertwined. This meant that Amampondo quickly understood what Wonderbrass was about and was trying to do with and for its members.

The technical challenge of creating music from scratch and the two bands learning it in the two weeks available for the project necessitated some shortcuts. Each band chose two pieces from our respective repertoires that we felt could be quickly and easily adapted to incorporate the other band. A fifth piece was especially written for the project by my creating a big score that incorporated extemporized routines that Amampondo already featured in their set. So this was, in effect, an original composition of mine that incorporated elements of set routines composed and performed by Amampondo.

After many sessions of watching them and listening to them perform live I chose two of their existing compositions or musical performance routines. (See Score 2 in Appendix no. 1)

The first was a kind of four-part hoquet played on the hollowed out horns of an indigenous antelope (kudu) each of which could produce one note each but by combining them in polyrhythmic patterns, a recognizable melody would emerge with a tonality or modality centred roughly upon concert Db. These four kudu horns were accompanied by two large wood and animal skin drums played with mallets by Michael Ludonga.

The second featured Michael Ludonga, again on the drums played by mallets, but this time the other four members of the group played an Akadinda, a huge marimba originating from Uganda, at which four players sat and played interlocking rhythms again creating resulting patterns from four polyphonic layers. Here the modality was Gb major or Eb minor pentatonics, two modes that share the same pentatonic scale: Eb, Gb, Ab, Bb and Db. These could be added to by having the band include notes between the notches on the Akadinda's scale, but in the written material I only used the F natural. Other, non-scale notes were used in the solo over this section.

I called the finished piece 'The Meeting Place' to point to the fact that both bands were moving out of their respective comfort zones in order to meet in some

musical middle-ground. The score for 'The Meeting Place' is in appendix 1.2. The piece comprised three sections.

Section A was an eight bar chorale-like episode for full brass section, rhythm section and Amampondo extemporizing percussion parts on their own instruments.

Section B was the kudu horns section accompanied by written saxophone lines and had a solo over it, reacting to what the other parts were playing. It was not intended to be a solo over the other material but to keep emerging from and disappearing back into the pre-composed lines. This solo was originally played by Member CC on trombone, but he was never happy with the way he executed it. Consequently I played the solo on the recording and, as I was the 'official' soloist on the other (section C) solo, I played all the solos on the studio-recorded version of 'Meeting Place'. Whilst this is not recommended community music practice it was done to achieve presentable results within a limited time scale. On the official premiere of the piece at Brecon International Jazz Festival in August 2006, we had a guest soloist on the project, South African born, Britain based trumpeter Claude Deppa, who took the B section solo. The written music for the B section was a five bar (A1) strain repeated, followed by a four bar (A2) strain also repeated.

There is then a transition section (T) where the Wonderbrass brass section is given a short descending riff that they repeat until signalled to stop. They are then quickly joined by the reed section. At some point indicated by the conductor a rhythmic, but stable in pitch, counter riff is introduced by the lower brass. Most of the above events are short, repetitive and cued by the conductor. The transition in this section is twofold: firstly the four players in Amampondo other than Michael have to put down the horns, move to the akadinda, settle themselves and begin playing the akadinda material. Meanwhile there is a rhythmic transition from straight 4/4 to 12/8 with the crotchet from the 4/4 becoming the new dotted crotchet pulse in 12/8. This is in part facilitated by the fact that the trumpet entry with the T material is at double speed, causing a rhythmic ambiguity that masks the transition.

Section C is initiated and led by the akadinda, once again accompanied by Michael on drums. The 12/8 rhythm emerges as the brass and reeds are cycling around the section T material to be left alone as that material stops. The solo is this time played by myself on soprano sax. On cue the trombones introduce a fairly forthright 12/8 line (C1) that then gathers strength as it is joined by the rhythm section playing articulated chords. This trombone and rhythm section combination then stops to leave the akadinda, African drums and solo sax again. Next, cued by Michael, the full Wonderbrass ensemble enter with a harmonized (in parallel) version of a resulting pattern (C2) that can be heard on the akadinda. The trombones then introduce a counter-rhythm and this repeats around twenty times before fading out leaving the akadindas only. These

remaining instruments then crossfade live with a swelling G major chord in the brass and rhythm section and this fades out and ends the piece.

Three extra things are worthy of mention here. First is the way that Wonderbrass's bass player picks out the long held notes at the end of the saxophone phrases in sections B1 and B2. This is something he has introduced on occasion, the picking out of important melodic notes, a kind of underscoring or emphasizing them with a single bass note in rhythmic unison. I asked him to do this here as it added power and shape to the ends of these melodic lines, though admittedly this is a simple compositional device.

Also noteworthy is the fade ending, which is unconventional, as it appears not to conclude the piece in the sense that the piece could just as easily carry on at this point as it could stop. Originally I had sketched a *da capo* ending at this point but the material has travelled so far to reach this point that it sounded contrived to reverse the metric change and return to the beginning. As inconclusive as this sounds, it felt like the most convincing way of ending the piece so I left it as it appears here with the akadindas trailing out to a brass chord.

The third and final point relates to the fact that Michael Ludonga, Amampondo's drummer, cued the final big ensemble by bringing Wonderbrass in at C2 rather than, as might otherwise be expected, myself as Wonderbrass's conductor. When we were rehearsing this section, and trying to fit the Wonderbrass written

material into the akadinda polyphony, we had great difficulty in locating the downbeat of the akadinda pattern. This was because the correlation between Michael's drumming pulse and the akadinda parts would move. Mark O'Connor, (Wonderbrass's drummer and musical director 1999-present) and myself tended to use the percussion part to locate the beginning of the bar whereas it seemed that as long as the akadinda parts were played together correctly, it didn't matter so much to Amampondo how they related to the drum part. In other words the bar lines were important in our minds but not so important to Amampondo. As Michael was the pivotal link between Amampondo and Wonderbrass in this arrangement, we suggested that he cued the C2 entry by singing the brass part to them and this worked. The principle of 'Michael is right' worked although to my mind the relationship between the C2 riff and the barline was variable. So the 'meeting point' here was the unison achieved rather than instinctive 'feel' for each others' rhythmic sense which would possibly have come with a longer period of working together, but at the time of writing I can't be sure of this.

This principle of ditching my theoretical reference points and just *listening* has served me well on previous occasions when working with musicians from different musical backgrounds such as in Gambia in April 1992 and with certain British-based musicians with backgrounds in other cultures. The realization that we could design musical materials that the band could play, but these events could be led or triggered by members of Amampondo in performance was an important development in this process of learning to make original and new

music together. It encouraged full attention to be given by all performers on stage to each other and it enabled the strong ethic of 'in-performance' communication between players to be embraced by the members of Wonderbrass whose attention would normally be entirely focused on their conductor. Apart from other vital lessons learned through the composition and execution of this piece, this new 'on-stage' dynamic of attentiveness and readiness was a valuable multicultural experience for the band. It means we are confident and ready to work with any musicians anywhere, or at least confident to try to do so.

The structure, as a timeline, of 'The Meeting Place' is therefore as follows (bar numbers from the score are in brackets):

0:00 – 1:04 Section A Chorale with everybody playing.

Rob Smith solos over 3rd and fourth playthroughs. (bars 1-8)

1:04 – 1:23 Section B1 saxophone section plays with kudu horns building up.

This is a transition as the four kudu horn players are moving from small percussion to taking up their horns and playing them. A five bar section played twice. (bars 9-12)

1:23 – 1:40 Section B2 a continuation of B1, still in transition but the kudu

horns are now fully established. Four bar section played twice. (bars 14-17)

- 1:40 – 2:08 Just kudu horn and soloist. Open. (bar 18)
- 2:08 – 2:19 Section B1 is reprised and the long chordal tail extended to six bars and one beat. Only played once. (bars 9-12)
- 2:19 – 2:43 Just kudu horn and soloist. Open. (bar 18)
- 2:43 – 2:56 Section B1 is reprised and the long chordal tail extended to seven bars and one beat. Only played once. (bars 9-12)
- 2:56 – 3:17 Just kudu horn and soloist. Open. (bar 18)
- 3.17 – 4:07 Sections B1 and B2 are reprised as above but soloist and kudu horns continue through them. B1 is played twice, back down to five bars in length again, B2 is a four bar section as before but this time played through four times. Soloist continues and even increases intensity but kudu horns are winding down. (bars 9-17)
- 4:07 – 4:46 Brass and woodwind move to a new section which has a fast descending phrase over and over and a two-note rhythmic phrase on lower pitched instruments (trombones, baritone sax) played ad libitum but inside a double time pulse. This is another transition section as four members of Amampondo (all except Michael) put down the kudu horns and seat themselves at and begin playing the akadinda. Originally this section was designated C but is only really a transition so was referred to as such. (T) (bars 19-22)

4:46 – 5:09 Soloists continues with Akadinda. Scale is Eb, F (for soloist only), Gb, Ab, Bb, Db.

5:09 – 5:50 Trombones creep in with written section D, a four bar tune repeated six times, and gradually reinforced by the rhythm section playing along with them and underpinning their line with harmonies. A gradual strengthening and quickening is this achieved.
(bars 23- 26)

5.50 – 6.19 This section, D2, is cued by Michael and introduces the brass section playing a harmonized version of the resulting pattern of several parts played on the akadinda. (bars 27-30)

6.19 – 7:31 This section, D2, is cued by Michael and introduces the brass section playing a harmonized version of the resulting pattern of several parts played on the akadinda. The four bar phrase (double time now) is played many times and instruments extemporize their own variations. Trombones have a composed counter rhythm to move to ad libitum. Soloist winds down and stops. (bars 27-30)

7:31 – 7:54 Akadinda and rhythm continue. (bars 31-32)

7:54 - 8:15 An ambiguous and irresolute chord fades in from brass and as it fades out so do all other instruments. (bar 33)

8:15 End.

I learned from creating and performing this piece that strong starting points can, if built around carefully and sensitively, become the basis for musical 'meeting points'. I also learned, or was really reminded of, the need for respectful and concentrated attention to each other's musical utterances when working cross culturally because, more than when operating within one musical culture, in cross-cultural musical encounters the empirical evidence of the sounds being made have to be taken on board without the help of the mediating language of a musical theory system or even a shared language. Attentive listening and presence are vital, therefore.

3.3 The Concertos

I have, to date, composed a few 'concertos' for selected players in Wonderbrass. The qualification having one's own concerto is long standing membership of and contribution to the band, and having a birthday that launched them into a new decade. There have been three so far, 'Big One for Howard' for Howard Lloyd in 2003 for his 60th birthday, 'Coasting' for Neil Langford in 2005 for his 50th birthday and 'Dunkin' with Rich T' for Richard Thurston for his 40th birthday in 2008.

These have been concertos in the Ellingtonian, rather than the classical, sense. Duke Ellington created a series of 'feature pieces' to show off the idiosyncrasies or instrumental individuality of certain players in his orchestra, with his 15th March 1940 version of 'Concerto for Cootie' being one of the best known, especially to musicologists via the analysed version in Rattenbury.

(1990:164-201).

Ellington composed this piece to showcase the gentle growling and plunger mute playing of his trumpeter Charles Melvin ('Cootie') Williams. It pitches the single soloist against some beautifully controlled ensemble playing. It does not, in its recorded versions of the 45rpm disc era, feature much virtuosic soloing, but rather has extemporized or, as Rattenbury says 'paraphrased' variations on the initial melodic cell. Rather it appears that Ellington wanted to create a platform for the highly individual *sound* of Williams' playing whilst, as usual, elegantly filling out the around three-minute canvas of the 45rpm record side.

I had the idea in mind of 'portraying' the players with these pieces, as well as giving them an opportunity to create something idiosyncratic with their improvising. So 'Big One for Howard' pitches a tricky 12 bar tune (or improvised solo later on) against an intentionally Basie Band-like riff-based response from the full band. 'Coasting' has a ballad-like melody that turns into a reggae sequence for solo electric guitar improvisation before a gentle return to the ballad theme at the end. 'Dunkin' with Rich T' has a very simple and forthright

trombone tune contrasted with increasingly turbulent answering lines from various sections of the band until the trombone breaks free into some soloing space. It is this third 'concerto' that I'd like to examine more closely. (See Score 3 in appendix no.1)

Reggae music has emerged in recent years as a one of the stylistic rallying points for Wonderbrass and the reasons for this are diverse. Many of the band are of an age such as to be able to remember the two-tone revival of the late 1970's and early 80's. This initial 'two-tone' revival is subject itself to a further 'underground' revival at the time of writing. Certain members are aware of the original instrumental ska material, realizing that it itself grew to a large extent out of the music education project conducted at Alpha Boys' School in Jamaica. (Bradley 2000: 100-103)

We also had a major artistic collaboration with ska and reggae composer, producer and bandleader King Django in 2008 that deepened members of Wonderbrass' interest in playing ska and reggae music.

The band has throughout the first decade of the 21st century incorporated into its repertoire arrangements of well known tunes such as Roland Alphonso's 'Phoenix City' (1966), Harry J's 'The Liquidator' (1969), Toots and The Maytals' 'Pressure Drop' (1970) as well as rarities such as Derrick Harriott's 'The

Undertaker's Burial' (1970). So a new concerto for Richard Thurston gave me a chance to create a new original piece with a reggae rhythm.

For non-musical or programmatic reasons, the conceit of the piece was to pitch Richard's habitually solid and forthright playing against some very florid and turbulent (unstable) horn lines for either brass with flutes or the reed section.

(See exx. 3 and 3a below)

Ex. 3: Written solo trombone line in 'Dunkin' with Rich T' as performed by Wonderbrass on *Bonedrops* (2009)

The image shows musical notation for two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Trombone' and has a 'solo' marking above it. It is in 4/4 time and begins with a whole rest, followed by a series of notes: a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter rest, a quarter note C3, a quarter note B2, a quarter note A2, and a quarter note G2. The bottom staff is labeled 'Trb.' and has a '5' marking above it. It begins with a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter rest, a quarter note C3, a quarter note B2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note G2, a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, a quarter note D2, and a quarter note C2. There is a first ending bracket over the last four notes of the Trb. staff.

Ex 3a: Flutes and saxophones' answering phrase for second play through of solo trombone line on 'Dunkin' with Rich T, as performed by Wonderbrass on *Bonedrops* (2009)

The image shows musical notation for three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Fl.' and has a '25' marking above it. The middle staff is labeled 'A. Sax' and the bottom staff is labeled 'T. Sax'. All three staves are in 4/4 time and begin with a quarter rest, followed by a series of notes: a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note B2, a quarter note C3, a quarter note B2, a quarter note A2, a quarter note G2, a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, a quarter note D2, and a quarter note C2. The notation is complex, with many beamed notes and rests.

So the piece begins, after an offbeat introduction on melodica (known as the 'skank' in reggae glossary) the rest of the band enter with the trombone playing a melody whose notes are very much the notes of the surrounding harmonies:

Unusually in this 'concerto' there is more than just one soloist. We have frequently used two other soloists, Brett Chandra on flute and Andrew Roberts on harmonica. The programmatic aspect of the solos is that the accompanists, the rhythm section plus myself on melodica, are instructed to create 'live dub' effects where we simulate the use of echo units set to triplet crochets, or even real echo units and other effects to disturb the solid ground or the eight-bar repeated chord sequence behind the soloist. Thus for example an improvised 32-bar sequence from the version recorded for the Wonderbrass album *Bone Drops* sounds:

Ex 4: Transcription of improvised trombone solo in 'Dunkin with Rich T' as performed by Wonderbrass on *Bonedrops* (2009):

Trombone Solo on 'Dunkin' with Rich T'

The musical score is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature and a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. It consists of six staves. The first staff is labeled 'Trombone' and contains the main solo line. The subsequent five staves are labeled 'Trb.' and contain a transposed version of the solo. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Am, Dm, slide, Am, E, F, G, Am, E7, Am, Dm, Am, E, F, G, Am, E7, Am, Dm, Am, E, F, G, Am, E7, Am, Dm, Am, E, F, G, Am, E7.

3.4 Embracing Contemporary Dance Music.

I have experimented with using contemporary dance music styles for some time now, especially 'drum 'n' bass' which fascinates me as an evolution from dub and reggae which I grew up with. In 2009 I began looking around for ideas for pieces which would draw people into dancing to and with the band, as well as exploiting the 'recognition factor' whereby people in an audience are drawn into

the band's performances when they recognize a current popular tune and this effect is heightened when the tune is one that people generally would not expect a brass band to be playing. Hence I created arrangements of 'Love Lockdown' by Kanye West (2008) and 'I'm Not Alone' by Calvin Harris (2009), both of which work well in performance, though highly contemporary music is divisive sometimes and more recent arrangements of Spice Girls and Lady Gaga tunes have been more controversial and divisive of opinion within the band.

As a more personal and creative response to this I wanted to create an original piece that exploited some of the techniques we'd been using in the dance music arrangements, but use them in an original piece. So 'Midnight Sun' came about as a response to the genre 'dubstep', but also to test out a couple of questions in my mind; firstly what would happen if I created parts for the band that they were able to start and stop autonomously behind solos when they themselves decided to, and secondly, was it possible to create a coherent piece where the bass line was entirely off the beat? Other electronic effects I wanted to utilize from dance music were 'dropouts' where riffs are subtracted from the mix and then are reintroduced at the climax of a build-up, and the repeated chords being filter-swept to exploit their upper partials as dynamic, moving musical events in themselves. This latter effect has proved difficult to achieve, given that we are trying to imitate an exclusively electronic process with non-electronic acoustic means, but we have worked on the old principle of covering the bell of the trumpets to darken the sound, then releasing the covering gradually in a coordinated way, to brighten the sound by releasing its upper partials.

Another 'problem' I set myself, the solution of which was to result in the composition of 'Midnight Sun' was to create a piece of music that was built from only eight bars of material. For some time we had been playing a piece by 'The Dirty Dozen' called 'Remember When' (Harris 1996). This piece has two contrasting four bar sections, each built up of simple riffs, with soloists improvising over the first section to be concluded on cue by the introduction of the second section (in the dominant).

Ex. 5: Transcription of 'Remember When' (1996) by Craig Harris as performed by The Dirty Dozen (version is an amalgamation of versions of the tune by The Dirty Dozen):

Remember When

Craig Harris

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The score consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system (measures 1-3) features a melody in the treble staff with triplet eighth notes and a bass line with chords and eighth notes. The second system (measures 4-7) includes a repeat sign and a key change to one flat (F major). The third system (measures 8-10) concludes the piece with a final cadence.

This in some ways represents, for me, the 'perfect' street arrangement, one that is malleable in the sense that its component parts are simple and can be picked up by ear very quickly and then arranged quickly for the available instruments. It marries a Weberian economy of scale and gesture with versatility of deployment. The heavily swung groove is powerful enough to keep the piece going for some time. So I set about creating my own eight bar piece:

Ex 6: Short score notated version of main melody and bassline of 'Midnight Sun'
as performed by Wonderbrass on *Blown Away* (2011):

The musical score is written in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system contains three measures. The second system starts at measure 4 and contains three measures, with a first ending bracket over the final measure. The third system starts at measure 8 and contains three measures, with a second ending bracket over the final measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line. Dynamics include 'mf' in the second system.

(For fully scored version see Score no. 4 in appendix no.1)

Later on I decided that the structure and balance of the piece would be enhanced by the addition of a four bar brass 'chorale' that could be varied by the players but also superimposed over the first four bars above.

Ex. 7: Brass chorale from 'Midnight Sun' as performed by Wonderbrass on *Blown Away* (2011)

The image shows a musical score for a brass chorale. It consists of two staves: Trumpet (top) and Trombone (bottom). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 90. The music is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The Trumpet part starts with a whole note chord of B-flat, D, and F, followed by a quarter note G. The Trombone part starts with a whole note chord of B-flat, D, and F, followed by a quarter note G. The dynamic is marked as *p* (piano) and *tutti*. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

This adds to the dynamic range of the piece, allowing for some very busy drumming alongside this section and which (ironically as the title refers to uninterrupted daylight) adds to the sense of 'darkness' in the piece, or as band member C says:

I like Midnight Sun and Bore Sul, (...) but the ones of that kind of style. The ones where it's kind of dense, dark but up tempo...interesting.

This piece attracted a fair bit of comment in the cascade focus groups, so I followed these up with questions about how members of the band react to this modern dance-based material here, how aware they were of it as a recognizable genre, and how they felt about the piece and playing it.

Member C commented:

'So, yeah, I think that because *he* [RS] wrote them *for* Wonderbrass they are perhaps the songs that work best for Wonderbrass. (...)I think the rhythms are probably more difficult than a lot of the other things that we play. (...) But I think in general they've got a good..., because they have such a different rhythm compared to everything else we play, they're slightly more difficult but worth it. (...)It's a really tiring song to play on the trumpet but it's really rewarding. In fact the trumpet part isn't that great but the song as a whole is amazing. And it's really nice to solo on. The tune that the saxes play is the best bit. (...)I do solo on Midnight Sun occasionally. Sometimes I find it very easy and sometimes I find it insanely hard. I don't know why. A lot of Rob's songs are like that actually because I think generally, for most of them you're supposed to solo with different chords, whereas I solo with one scale only and sometimes I don't get the scale right. When I do it sounds great, but I think because the solo sections for Rob's songs are generally about having lots going on in the backing, you can play off of the backing a lot more than some of the other songs where you kind of have to lead yourself. And also there's a lot of space to play, so you can play a phrase, pause, and then think about it and play again. Without it ever sounding wrong. On Rob's pieces, in the main, I think because he's thought about the solo sections, it's actually written *for solos*, rather than some of the other arrangements where it's not specifically written with solos in mind.

So this band member realises that, though the piece is ostensibly simple in construction there are a lot of layers to the music, and certain sections of the band have the freedom to introduce riffs on cue, as they, or their section leader, sees fit. This, as I had hoped, keeps the arrangement fresh and unpredictable, even to those in the band, though routines still set in from time to time and the same structure emerges as a stable routine. In their interview members F and J also discussed Midnight Sun:

F: Midnight Sun is one of my favourites. It's grown on me over the years actually. They're [the dance-based compositions] quite distinctive. There's something quite unusual about them. They're usually quite funky and I like that. There's usually something you can get into for soloing. And I think Midnight Sun... Bore Sul is one of my favourite pieces. There's such a variety in that piece; the groove and solo section is absolutely brilliant. Yeah, there's a great feel to them and I think actually they complement the other stuff. They're different from the arranged stuff that we do. They are different from the street stuff. I've not really thought about it before but they are quite distinctive. There's bits that remind me of all sorts of different things like, erm, what's the one? [Sings it] The flute bit, is it Midnight Sun, well it reminds me of Vampire Weekend actually. Anyway there's all sorts of stuff. Yeah I really enjoy them.

J: OK, Second question: What about Midnight Sun? How is that to play?

F: Great. Great. I really like playing pieces where I don't need the music and I can remember it. One of the things that's really nice about that is there is a good build up to the entrance of the (sings main A theme) and it feels really good the way that that comes in and you're part of the whole band, sort of giving that full-on... it's good to solo on, nice chords, good feel to it....

J: Do you ever solo on Midnight Sun?

F: Yes!

J: OK. How easy do you find it and have you had any guidance on it? What influences, if any, do you use?

F: I find that one quite easy to solo on I think. I don't think I've had any guidance. What influences? I always try and take it from the piece itself, you know. I try and play something in keeping. I don't know if I always achieve that. Sometimes, just something distracts me onto my own thing

but I always try and be influenced by the piece. I don't know, that's not a very clear answer.

Another player, Member J, in answer to a questionnaire wrote:

As a player it's really easy to get into those pieces, because while the individual parts are quite simple and repetitive, the way they all build up and come together really grabs you and it's quite easy to get carried away with it (...) These pieces become lots more than the sum of their parts, I think.

And Member C again:

My yoga teacher always tells me that yoga isn't easy, but it's simple, and I think you could apply that with many Wonderbrass tunes. They're not easy to play, they challenge us and make us think about what we're doing. You have to consider what key you're in for solos, you have to know how to read music – or at least, as in my case quite often, use your ear to mimic what other players in your section are playing, and you have to listen to the other sections and yours to know when to come in and to get dynamics right. But they are often simple too... and he uses the instruments to play short simple phrases against and with each other to create a big sound with lots of detail.

Refreshingly and, to me, totally unsurprisingly, this admiration for 'Midnight Sun' is not unanimous throughout the band.

Member P: Midnight Sun? It's never really been one I'm partial to, to be honest. I don't know why. I find it very tiring as well, with lots of block chords and so forth. It's just never really grabbed me as one of my favourite ones. (...) I don't mind playing it but, you know, but if someone was to say '[P], you can pick the set' I would leave it out every time.

So the same block chords that are so tiring to play are 'worth it' for member C because that person really likes the piece overall, but not 'worth it' for member P. This playing of supporting riffs behind solos or maybe as backdrops to more foregrounded and melodic material is vitally important in Wonderbrass as a support to emerging soloists (as opposed to established and confident ones). It is, however, important to be reminded that the members are constantly making their own judgements about the effectiveness and attractiveness (as material to play) of their parts. Member T goes even further than member P in exploring this issue and thinking about the idea of imitating synthesized parts on 'real' brass instruments:

Member T: I think, what certainly works incredibly well is when we take well known synthesized pieces and play them with brass and that really works incredibly well. And I think some of Rob's ones which are based on

dance are performing the same sort of function, which is fine. I mean...I wouldn't want everything to be like that, but it has its place. (...). They can be quite difficult, depending on... because very often you're playing rhythms which are easy to play on a synthesizer when you're just chopping up stuff and throwing it together, but when you actually need to play that on a physical instrument, to actually get around that rhythm, it's demanding a very different sort of skill and approach in some other way. But once you get what you're meant to do, fine, you can do it!

There is a sense here in which the band is appreciating a dialectic between representing a jazz tradition of playing the music of now (as represented here by contemporary dance music, Lady Gaga songs, Kanye West) and making it one's own via rearrangement, recontextualisation and improvisation. In order to have these contemporary tunes achieve the recognition factor in an audience not schooled in, or necessary familiar with or sympathetic towards, jazz music, it has to make a good and believable attempt to represent the music as it appears in its original form, and this requires great precision and control from brass players. I would argue that this is a vital part of the training process within the band and sharpens up our ensemble precision for *all* our material, arrangement or original.

Conclusion

Earlier, in Chapter One, I explored the notion of jazz collectives, and how they convene, or are externally constituted, to facilitate the kinds of music-making, and the coming together of numbers and types of instrumentalists in configurations that are, commercially speaking, unviable. Through bands such as Sun Ra's Arkestra, The Art Ensemble of Chicago (and splinter groups such as Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy) and British counterparts such as Loose Tubes, Jazz Warriors and London Jazz Composers' Orchestra, we can see the emergence of a tendency to form bands or musicians' collectives to foster social and musical aims that might lie beyond the goals that sit comfortably within the artistic and social policies of modern Western states, or outside commercial, economic viability. By citing such examples I have attempted to give insights into a whole area of musical creativity below the level of professionalism in the strictly commercial sense, but which would include the activities of many internationally renowned improvisers, composers and performers.

I have also talked about the skills and techniques I have used to create music with Wonderbrass in collaboration with other bands from very different musical backgrounds (Amampondo) and looked at ways in which selected players from within Wonderbrass have been foregrounded in an arrangement or by creating the space where their improvising skills can be supported and celebrated.

In referring to examples of my own compositions I have tried to illustrate the notion of inclusive musical structures. These structures include bands like Wonderbrass where participation at different skill levels is encouraged as a way of developing musical and social skills. They also include the kinds of musical compositions and arrangements that facilitate this participation by people with different levels of skilfulness. These compositions seek to unite the notion of wide participation with the high aims of their participants, to *celebrate* their musicality by being the best they can possibly be, and by drawing an audience into that celebration. For Small, it is this celebration of musicality, the musicality which is a trait of all humans, that means 'one is able to feel that this is how the world *really* is, and this is how I *really* relate to it.' (Small, 1998:184 [author's italics]).

Furthermore:

In the modern West it [musical quality] generally implies above all else a high degree of technical skill or virtuosity, but I wish to suggest a different approach to the question of musical quality. If the functioning of musicking is to explore, affirm and celebrate the concepts of ideal relationships of those taking part, then the best performance must be one that empowers all the participants to do this most comprehensively, subtly and clearly, at whatever level of technical accomplishment the performers have attained.

Small, 1998:214-5

But there is no ceiling, no upper limit on this achievement. The journey starts with participation. That journey need have no pre-determined end.

More study is needed of what makes community music projects click and make a real difference to their members. In some cases it really is the *radical hospitality* of the offer, just its open-ended welcome into a community of activity towards making music together. In Wonderbrass' case it asks quite a lot of participants in the sense of bringing skills to the band, leaving some skills outside of the band in some cases and giving something up of one's acquired musicality in order to fully participate in something that *transforms* one's musicality. But more work needs to be done in this area to broaden the definition of community music, not to embrace all amateur music making, but to show the productive areas of crossover where creativity and communal ownership are explored. (Smith 2011: 172-3)

This study adds detailed, practiced-based knowledge to the field. It demonstrates valid approaches to working cross-culturally (with Amampondo), writing and arranging for specific performers and soloists ('Dunkin', 'Jive at Five') and working with new forms based on contemporary dance forms ('Midnight Sun'). Wonderbrass, and my writing for them, are not the only artists mining this latter channel (Hackney Colliery Band, Moon Hooch, numerous New Orleans brass bands), but this might be one of the first academic studies to discuss it.

Chapter 4: **Conclusion and Postscript.**

Wonderbrass, after a difficult summer in 2006, used a couple of rehearsals to discuss, in small focus groups what its priorities should be. Out of that came the idea that one of the things we would like to prove to as many people as we were able was that excellence is not the sole domain of professional musicians. We took this to mean that we had to be as good as we could possibly be, to behave and perform professionally when we were being paid and never under-perform, whatever the size of the audience. This applies even if there are fewer people in the audience than in the band. One of our self-deprecating slogans is 'Outnumbering audiences since 1992'.

Striving for this has made it harder for people to join and catch up with the band and some of the projects we have run have seen a few faithful members walk away from the band, sometimes temporarily, sometimes for good. This has been difficult and painful for a band that seeks to maintain an ethos of accessibility and facilitation. In our interview, Ex-member 3 suggested there be two versions of the band, an access and training band and a professional standard performing band, with overlap between. My answer has been to declare periods, usually September to Easter, when we are open to new members and the emphasis is on inclusion, but those members are not invited to perform in gigs until their section leader is happy that they know the music well enough. The committee take the view that the maintenance and delivery of quasi-professional

performance standards is necessary for the sustainability of the band, meaning it is able to raise all its own running costs by charging performance fees to promoters and institutions who know they will get musical excellence from the band. So the band maintains its status as an *inclusive musical structure* whilst maintaining quasi-professional performance standards. The compositions I have presented are case studies in models of *inclusive musical structure* as musical pieces. They facilitate performance with other ensembles, from different musical traditions or cultures, they create space for participation via improvisation, they build around band members' existing skills and they build bridges with newer audiences.

I have attempted to show, in this submission, how community engagement in music-making can enrich people's lives; those who involve themselves in the music-making itself but, beyond that, partners and family members, friends and audiences beyond. The contemporary phenomenon of 'consuming' culture rather than participating in and contributing to it may have its limits. It may not be a healthy or democratic state of affairs, and anyway, who wants only off the shelf cultural products where all the work has been done for us. (Putnam 2001)

Obviously many do: the proliferation of ready-meals, TV sport, pay-to-view films and even homes to rent that are as instantly habitable as hotel suites are all evidence of this off-the-shelf culture. Many either reject this, or they use it but also participate in culture when it suits them: they play sport, they write, paint, go to dance classes and pick up an instrument and participate. In working with such cultural participants artists can become leaders of such activities. We can

become facilitators of cultural participation. We can create the circumstances where participation is necessary, desired and where people learn through taking part. They can grow, diversify and be so much more than the work they are paid to do, or the family responsibilities they willingly honour, important and rewarding though these activities can be. It is the choice to participate, given the opportunity, in creative activity, which is important here.

Professional artists can become, if only as part of what they do, community arts leaders: teachers who can create the circumstances where learning and taking part happens. Beyond this however, I have attempted to demonstrate that creating structures that encourage or even require creative input from participants adds value to the experience of cultural participation. For some art forms where ensemble work is the norm, such as theatre, dance and music, this can be a challenge. But it is a challenge worth engaging with because of the value it adds to the experience of participation and the greater sense of ownership it can engender in active participants. My strategy for this has been to devise *inclusive musical structures* both at ensemble level and at the level of musical materials (compositions). Other artists seeking to lead community arts projects will devise their own solutions. I believe the goal of participatory art is to give the tools for creative participation to the people taking part. If people are to compose music, they need access to the means of production, whether human or mechanical, and the creative tools and theoretical understanding to shape their ideas and communicate them to others.

The tension between excellence and inclusivity that the inclusive approach, alongside the concomitant commitment to aspiring to musical excellence, appears to be one the majority of the members of the band are prepared to live out. There are practicing community musicians for whom the performance-focus of Wonderbrass would exclude it from their definition of 'Community Music', and would prefer to focus on process over product. (Moser & McKay 2005) But for me Community Music is a broad church that facilitates participation in a wide range of ways, and Wonderbrass sits happily at the high-performance end of the community music spectrum. There are other ways of democratizing the band such as encouraging its members to write and arrange for it, learning to improvise (a strange and endless journey as testifies in the data gathered from the band and presented above) and allowing members to direct the band, all of which happen but detailed examination of these activities lies outside the scope of this submission.

The band Wonderbrass are very successful for a community music group: participation in the cultural Olympiad, commissions funded by various organizations such as BBC Performing Arts Fund, PRS Foundation, foreign tours to Spain, France, Republic of Ireland, residencies at major British festivals. It is interesting and productive to understand how such an organization has been and currently is constituted and how it operates, how it has been lead, how the strong bonds between its members have been forged. It is productive to consider whether these methods and practices can be applied to other projects and organizations and, if so, how. It is also productive to note how such projects,

which do not teach from beginner entry level, differ from other projects which are (such as drumming ensembles, community choirs for instance) and how they are similar.

The methodology I have used combines musical analysis, both of purpose and significant detail in my compositions, with a phenomenological study of the experience of participating in the band. The concept that connects these two strands is that the compositions (and in some senses the band itself) are vehicles for creative participation in the music-making process. The experiences of this participation are compared with the purpose and design of the compositions (plus some exercises) themselves. So the compositions need the creative input of performers to complete them, and the band members need the compositions as contexts for their participation. This relationship is investigated by looking at the design and intended propose of compositions, the experience of partaking in them, and by allowing participants to suggest ways of adapting the compositions. This sense of creative play as a research tool could and should be taken further than it is possible to present in this Ph.D. by Portfolio thesis.

Cascade interviews were used because I wanted the band to talk amongst themselves and share experiences and ideas rather than address me personally. I hoped the material I needed to contextualise my compositions etc as *inclusive musical structures* emerge from the focus groups rather than be teased out of them.

MacDonald and Wilson (2005) state that: 'if jazz is to be seen as a socially generated music, then social understandings of it should be examined; if you create the music in a group then it is worth asking a group about it'.

Focus group discussions were chosen because I wanted the groups to discuss the experience of participation in Wonderbrass, and in playing my pieces, amongst themselves and with each other. Cascade interviews were chosen because I wanted the issues to be discussed with each other and not in my presence.

Apart from analyzing the presented folio of compositions from the perspective of their intended use, the research is clustered around the band, Wonderbrass, and its members, their experiences of participating in the band and its music, and their responses to the opportunity to participate. Every active member of the band contributed to the focus groups so the data is very rich, and can and will be used in further research. It is also strong because it is contextualized by the comments from the band themselves who broadly testify to a sense of ownership and belonging within the band, as well as commenting on how the *inclusive musical structures* have facilitated their creative engagement with the band on various levels. I am aware of no other such project where the intended purpose of musical materials, for a given body of players has been tested against their responses to that opportunity. If anyone else were to learn from or adopt the Wonderbrass development model, the outcome would be different depending on place and participants (i.e. there was as much folk influence early on in Wonderbrass as there was jazz, and this 'flavour' of a mix of genres has subtly

changed through our history) so any similar organizations that were to arise, or already exist would be one-offs in a sense and worthy of similar study.

There is strong evidence that the band values my compositions and arrangements. As band member C says, "I think that because *he* wrote them *for* Wonderbrass they are perhaps the songs that work best for Wonderbrass". The compositions add value to the experience of being in the band because nobody else plays them. They can be designed to show the band in its best light, to test the band and improve it in certain ways, and members can be in a form of dialogue with the pieces as they improvise within them or on them. So they form a part of the 'member of Wonderbrass' identity.

Member Y: They [RS's compositions] are like Wonderbrass really. That is the thing isn't it? They are like Wonderbrass. So yeah it works well!

The pursuit of excellence has precipitated some uncomfortable breaks with valued members of the organization. This has proved a challenge to the inclusive identity of the band but it has proved a positive challenge to those who have worked hard to stay with the band. In 2012 we commissioned Jason Yarde to write a twelve-minute piece for us a part of the Performing Right Society's 20x12 scheme of commissioning twenty composers to write twelve-minute compositions for twenty professional and amateur performers, often in combination. Jason's piece was by some considerable distance the most ambitious, complex and technically demanding piece we have ever played. It

uses sections polyphonically (as opposed to having all the members of a section play one line). It explores polyrhythmic sounds in asymmetrical time signatures such as 11/4. It has very concise solo sections. It has very intricate passages played at breakneck speeds. The process of learning and performing it has raised the technical ability of the band as a whole noticeably over a short period of time. It can now enter our repertoire as a benchmark piece of quality and technical accomplishment. Pieces I have included as case studies in this submission, as well as others I've written in the past but not included here, have also set more modest technical challenges for the band, but ones that I have used to build techniques and confidence. One member talked of their fear on confronting the fast saxophone line in Midnight Sun:

Midnight Sun I really like...was one which really scared the hell out of me to start with but then when I started playing it more and more, like I can't actually read the music for it any more. If I try and read the music I just get really confused and I still fuck up on the fingerings sometimes but I really like Midnight Sun. And I think it sounds great as well. When I've heard it in gigs when I haven't been playing, it's one that the audience seem to like as well.

So the members of the band that understand the importance of the journey join in a collective, but also an individual journey of musical exploration and technical development; a journey towards the goal of musical excellence that the band

agrees is one of its goals. But this personal journey is undertaken very publicly and it feels to many members of the band as if their journey is being writ large, its key moments enacted upon a giant stage:

E-mail from member M, to the whole band on 16/07/2012:

It was such a buzz being part of the weekend - the chance to play the Southbank was for me an opportunity of a lifetime - beyond anything I'd imagined could happen 3 years ago "B.W." (Before Wonderbrass)

Member Y: My best memory is playing at Brecon with Amampondo. It was a boiling hot August night with hundreds of people there and it was electric. I think it was 2005 or 2004. And it was really good, I think that's my best bit.

Member F: I think, for me, when I'm playing with Wonderbrass, I feel probably more alive than when I'm doing anything else really. There's a sort of sense of vitality about it. It's more than just the playing (...) It's not just about what I do, it's about what *we* do.

So for many in the band it is a dramatic and rewarding journey towards something many of them hadn't envisaged. The band's power, as an inclusive musical structure *in itself*, is its ability to deliver that for its members.

I wrote a little about politics at the beginning of this submission. To me it is the way that the band is organized and the way that the people in it deal with each other within the band that is a political model, because that is what politics is; it is the way people behave towards each other and at its best it is almost like a little model of an ideal society in itself, if such a thing as an ideal society ever existed. The band constitutes a political entity in itself and empowers its members to celebrate their musicality and musical skills.

Notes:

¹ Since the initial conclusion of this thesis I have had the chance to read Higgins (2012) and in the second section of that a theory of radical *hospitality* around the offer of community music emerges. I feel that in his introduction he leaves space in the broader definition for Wonderbrass as a style of project: 'an active intervention between a music leader or facilitator and participants'. (Note the use of *between*). See also Higgins (2012: 4-5, 133-142).

² Even in relating this simple distinction I am paraphrasing to explain because the opposition of *syntactical* and *processual* are, in Keil and Feld's system, modes of understanding the music and are tendencies rather than absolutes. Too much 'coherence' in a composition would render it devoid of surprise and wit; too much 'processual' iteration would render any improvisation incoherent. Here they can be seen to be building on Meyer's theory of 'embodied meaning', a kind of syntactical and predictive understanding of the grammar of music whereby familiarity with its style will lead to certain expectations about where it will lead the listener; expectations which then can be fulfilled or subverted. (Meyer, 1956: 32-42)

³ 'For many of the people involved in it, one of the enduring attractions of improvisation is its momentary existence: the absence of a residual document.' (Bailey, 1992: 35)

⁴ Normally the better the members of a small band such as this know each other, and the more used they are to each others' playing, the more freedom and responsiveness they develop and the more of a collective improvisation unit they become. (Monson, 1996: 83-4).

⁵ This rough outline of the role of improvisation in jazz performance owes much to Ned Sublette's highly contentious outline of the different styles of Afro-American Latin-American and Afro-Caribbean improvised music, but one which nevertheless tries to account for the diversity of musical expressions in that larger geographical area and one which does not ignore the importance of where the contributing African population came from within Africa. (Sublette, 2004: 25-58).

⁶ It is worth noting that the other solos here are played by myself on bass clarinet, really exploring the spaciousness of the funk backing as an introductory section and not attempting to build any energy, and synthesizer and electric guitar, both of which can call on electrical energy to create their impact, but neither of which approach the screaming heights of the sax solo during the B section.

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'Phoenix City' by Roland Alphonso 1966 (Island Records, WIP 6514, 7" single, UK)

'Pressure Drop' by Toots and The Maytals 1970 (Fontana 6064 007, 7" single, Germany)

'Racist Friend' by The Specials AKA 1983 (Two-Tone Records, CHS TT 25, 7" Single, UK)

'Remember When' by The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, (1996) from *This Is Jazz* Columbia, CK 65046, CD, US.

'Stop!' by The Spice Girls 1998 (Virgin Records America, 7243 8 38641 2 6, US)

'Sweet Tater Pie' by Mongo Santamaria *Skins* 1976 (Milestone Records, 47038, 2 x LP, EU and US)

'Too Much' by The Spice Girls *Spice World* 1997 (Virgin, CDV 2850, UK)

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Appendix 1 Scores

'Jive At Five' (Count Basie, arranged Rob Smith)

'The Meeting Place' (Amampondo and Rob Smith)

'Dunkin' With Rich T' (Rob Smith)

'Midnight Sun' (Rob Smith)

Jive At Five

Count Basie
Arr. Rob Smith

$\text{♩} = 120$

This system contains the first five measures of the piece. It features staves for Flute, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trumpet, Trombone, and Bass. The Flute, Trumpet, and Trombone parts are mostly silent, with some notes in the fifth measure. The Alto and Tenor Sax parts play a rhythmic melody. The Bass part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords G, C7, G, C7, and Em.

Flute

Alto Sax

Tenor Sax

Trumpet

Trombone

Bass

G C7 G C7 Em

6

This system contains measures 6 through 10. It features staves for Flute (Fl.), Alto Sax (A. Sax), Tenor Sax (T. Sax), Trumpet (Tpt.), Trombone (Trb.), and Bass. The Flute, Alto Sax, and Trumpet parts have more active lines. The Trombone and Bass parts provide harmonic support with chords Em7, C7, G, and D+7.

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

Em7 C7 G D+7

11

Fl.
A. Sax
T. Sax
Tpt.
Trb.
Bass

This musical system covers measures 11 through 14. It features six staves: Flute (Fl.), Alto Saxophone (A. Sax), Tenor Saxophone (T. Sax), Trumpet (Tpt.), Trombone (Trb.), and Bass. The Flute and Trumpet parts have a similar rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Alto and Tenor Saxophones play a more complex line with some grace notes. The Trombone and Bass parts provide a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 4/4.

15

Fl.
A. Sax
T. Sax
Tpt.
Trb.
Bass

This musical system covers measures 15 and 16. It features the same six staves as the previous system. Measures 15 and 16 are marked with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of each staff, indicating a repeat or a section ending. The Flute and Trumpet parts play a simple melodic line. The Alto and Tenor Saxophones play a similar melodic line. The Trombone and Bass parts continue with their eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 4/4.

Ex Member 2's Solo in Jive at Five

Transcribed by Rob Smith

April 2011

♩ = 90
3'30"

Tenor Sax

Text

6

T. Sax

3'44"

11

T. Sax

16

T. Sax

3'58"

gr

gr

21

T. Sax

4'12"

26

T. Sax

gr

gr

32

T. Sax

4'25"

37

T. Sax

4'39"

43

T. Sax

gr

49

T. Sax

'Screaming' over B section for 16 bars

The Meeting Place

Rob Smith and Amampondo
July-August 05

A

$\text{♩} = 120$

Flute

Alto Sax

Tenor Sax

Trumpet

Trombone

Bass

F Gbmaj7 #11 Gm7 C7 F Gbmaj7 #11

B

7

x4

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

Gm7 C7 Kudu Horns + Shakers + Michael + Hi-Hats

12

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trib.

Bass

18

C

Solo (rest play A and B on cue)

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trib.

Bass

Text

Perc & Kudu Horns continue

21

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

D

23

♩ = 180
Solo sop sax

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

25

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

D2

27

Solo sop sax
on cue

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

29

Fl. continue until the final fermata

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 29 through 31. The Flute (Fl.) part is marked 'continue until the final fermata'. The Alto Saxophone (A. Sax) and Tenor Saxophone (T. Sax) parts feature eighth-note patterns. The Trumpet (Tpt.) part includes two triplet markings (2:3) over eighth notes. The Trombone (Trb.) and Bass parts have simple eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor).

32

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measure 32. All instruments (Flute, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, and Bass) are shown playing a single note. Each part has a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking above the note. The key signature remains three flats.

Dunkin' with Rich T

Rob Smith
April 2008

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trumpet, Trombone, and Bass. The Trombone part features a solo starting at measure 2. The second system begins at measure 6 and includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Alto Sax (A. Sax), Tenor Sax (T. Sax), Trumpet (Tpt.), Trombone (Trib.), and Bass. Chord progressions are indicated above the staves.

System 1 Chord Progression:
 Measure 1: Am, Dm, Am
 Measure 2: Am, Dm, Am

System 2 Chord Progression (starting at measure 6):
 Measure 6: E, F, G, Am, E7
 Measure 7: E, F, G, Am, E7
 Measure 8: E, F, G, Am, E7
 Measure 9: E, F, G, Am, E7
 Measure 10: E, F, G, Am, E7

11 | 2. A

Fl.
A. Sax
T. Sax
Tpt.
Trb.
Bass

16

Fl.
A. Sax
T. Sax
Tpt.
Trb.
Bass

tutti

B

21

Fl. 

A. Sax 

T. Sax 

Tpt. 

Trb. 

Bass 

25

Fl. 

A. Sax 

T. Sax 

Tpt. 

Trb. 

Bass 

30 **C**

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

34

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

38 [2.]

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

Bass

Trombone Solo on 'Dunkin' with Rich T'

♩ = 120

Trombone

Am Dm slide Am E F

6 G Am E7 Am Dm Am

12 E F G Am E7 Am

18 Dm Am E_{early} F G Am E7

25 Am Dm Am E F

30 G Am E7

Midnight Sun

Rob Smith
May 2009

$\text{♩} = 125$

INTRO

Flute

Alto Sax

Tenor Sax

Trumpet

Trombone

Bass Trombone

Bass

mf

mf

5

CHORALE

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

p

p
tutti

The musical score is written for a jazz ensemble. The Intro section (measures 1-4) is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 125. The instruments are Flute, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Trumpet, Trombone, Bass Trombone, and Bass. The Trombone, Bass Trombone, and Bass parts have a melodic line starting on a dotted quarter note. The Choral section (measures 5-8) is also in 4/4 time. The Flute, Alto Sax, and Tenor Sax parts are silent. The Trumpet part has a melodic line starting on a dotted quarter note. The Trombone and Bass Trombone parts have a melodic line starting on a dotted quarter note. The Bass part is silent. The Choral section is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the instruction 'tutti'.

10 **A**

Fl. *f*

A. Sax *f*

T. Sax *f*

Tpt. *f*

Trb.

B. Trb. *f*

Bass *f*

Detailed description: This section of the score, labeled 'A', spans measures 10 to 12. It features a complex rhythmic pattern for the woodwinds and brass. The Flute, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Trumpet, and Bass parts all play a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs and ties. The Trombone part is mostly silent. The dynamic marking is consistently forte (*f*).

13 **B**

Fl. *mf*

A. Sax *mf*

T. Sax *mf*

Tpt. *mf*

Trb. *mf*

B. Trb. *mf*

Bass *mf*

Detailed description: This section, labeled 'B', spans measures 13 to 15. It begins with a measure of rest for all instruments. At measure 14, the Flute has a trill marked with a 'x4' above it. The woodwinds and brass play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking is mezzo-forte (*mf*).

16

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

Detailed description: This system contains measures 16, 17, and 18. The Flute part (Fl.) features a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations. The Saxophone parts (A. Sax and T. Sax) play a simple melodic line with rests. The Trumpet (Tpt.) part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Trombone (Trb.) and Bass parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

19

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

Detailed description: This system contains measures 19, 20, and 21. The Flute part (Fl.) continues with its complex rhythmic pattern. The Saxophone parts (A. Sax and T. Sax) have a melodic line that changes in measure 20. The Trumpet (Tpt.) part has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The Trombone (Trb.) and Bass parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

22 SOLOS over A

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

26 **B**

Fl. *mf*

A. Sax *mf*

T. Sax *mf*

Tpt. *mf*

Trb. *mf*

B. Trb. *mf*

Bass *mf*

29

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

32

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

BRASS STABS

f

f

35

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

38 **A**

Fl.

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt.

Trb.

B. Trb.

Bass

f

f

f

f

bass trb only

41 BRASS CHORALE

Fl. x^4

A. Sax

T. Sax

Tpt. 4th time only

Trb. *mp*

B. Trb. *mp*
tutti

Bass *mp*
tutti

Appendix 3 Audio Recordings of Case Study Compositions (on CD1)

'Jive At Five' (Count Basie, arranged Rob Smith) from Wonderbrass Album *Jive At 5* (2007)

'The Meeting Place' (Amampondo and Rob Smith) from Album *UBUNTU* by Amampondo, Wonderbrass and Valleys Kids (2006)

'Dunkin' With Rich T' (Rob Smith) from Album *Bonedrops* by Wonderbrass (2009)

'Dunkin' With Rich T' (live version – Rob Smith) Unreleased

'Midnight Sun' (Rob Smith) from album *Blown Away* by Wonderbrass (2011)

'Midnight Sun' (Rob Smith) by Occasional Brass Ensemble (released 2012 via Soundcloud <http://soundcloud.com/theobe/midnight-sun>)

Appendix 4 Audio Recordings of other Wonderbrass Recordings (on CD2)

(Rob Smith's Compositions)

'Daisy Roots' (from *Apackalips Now*) 2000

'Lachrymae' (from *Special Brew*) 2002

'Tao Driving' (from *Bonedrops*) 2009

'Daisy Roots' (from *Bonedrops*) 2009

'I thought I heard Buddy Bolden Shout' (from *Bonedrops*) 2009

'Antikudos' (from *Blown Away*) 2011

'Bore Sul' (from *Blown Away*) 2011

'Buddy Stomp' (from *Blown Away*) 2011

Appendix 5 Audio Recordings of other Wonderbrass Recordings (on CD3)

(Versions of standards arranged by Rob Smith)

Remember When (K Harris) (from *Blown Away*) 2011

Love Lockdown (K West) (from *Blown Away*) 2011

Lumba (Trad Jamaican) (from *Blown Away*) 2011

Sweet Tater Pie (M Santamaria) (from *Apackalips Now*) 2000

Caravan (Tizol, Ellington, Mills) (from *Apackalips Now*) 2000

Merengue (Anonymous) (from *Apackalips Now*) 2000

Bembe du Berry (S. Berry) (from *Apackalips Now*) 2000

Vehicle (Anonymous) from *Hollybush Hopkinstown*) 1995 (unreleased)

Watermelon Man (H Hancock) from *Hollybush Hopkinstown*) 1995

Harlem Nocturne (E Hagen) (from *Hollybush Hopkinstown*) 1995 (unreleased)

Blue Monk (T Monk) (from *Where there's muck...*) 1997

Fever (Davenport/Cooley) (from *Where there's muck...*) 1997

I Feel Good (J. Brown) (from *Where there's muck...*) 1997

It Don't Mean A Thing (Ellington, Mills) (from *Where there's muck...*) 1997

St James' Infirmary (Anonymous) (from *Where there's muck...*) 1997

Appendix 6: Data CD's of the Interviews and Focus Groups. (mp3 format) (on CD3)

1. Interviewers' focus Group 07/05/11 The Atrium, Cardiff
2. Focus Group 1 07/05/11 The Atrium, Cardiff
3. Focus Group 2 07/05/11 The Atrium, Cardiff
4. Focus Group 3 14/05/11 The Atrium, Cardiff
5. Focus Group 4 07/06/11 Koko Gorillaz Bar, Cathays, Cardiff
6. Focus Group 5 12/08/11 93 Pencisely Road, Llandaf, Cardiff
7. Interview between Rob Smith and Ex Member 3 on 05/07/12 (in interviewees home, address withheld)
8. *and*
9. Interviews with Jess Phillips, Easter 2012.

Appendix 7: Proposal for Cascade Interviews.

Wonderbrass: Building a Community Through Music.

Wonderbrass is a community big band that was created in 1992 through the amalgamation of two projects, Welsh Jazz Society's Jazz Workshop Band and The Taff-Ely Streetband, which was formed to perform at community carnivals around the South Wales. Wonderbrass has been through numerous personnel, leadership, committee-member, musical and artistic changes but continues to be strong until today. Drawing inspiration from other musical collectives, the band has developed a large repertoire of compositions, arrangements and improvisational practice in its mission to prove that 'musical excellence is not the exclusive property of professionals', to quote from its aims and objectives. It has adapted to changing conditions in order to survive but retains a core philosophy that runs through its nineteen-year history, initially a philosophy shared by its instigators. This survey will focus upon interviews conducted with current and former members of the band, and seeks to establish their reasons for joining the band, their aspirations, both personal and musical, through participation in the band as well as investigating notions of personal and musical identity, cultural capital and relationships with musical instrument, musicality and creativity as expressed through participation in Wonderbrass.

Cascade Interviews will be used as a model for enabling the band to interview each other and discuss freely their experiences, hopes and desires as expressed through membership of the band. I feel that if I chaired these discussions myself the talk would be inhibited, subjects would feel the need to help me by filtering their comments to

'favour' my work . I want the band to feel they can be creative with their suggestions and honest about their experience and I feel this peer interview structure is the best to achieve this in the timeframe available.

Preliminaries:

- Committee to identify and copy for Rob Smith the proceedings and findings of the previous consultation undertaken in October 2005.
- List of questions and entire proposal circulated to the panel of chairs for comment, then to full band.
- Panel of chairs to be chosen by volunteering, Rob and Panel to arbitrate.

Step 1: Rob Smith will conduct a round-table interview discussion for the panel of chairs. He will give an overview of the process, as well as the Chair's role, and then conduct the interviews after identifying the key questions that will have been circulated in advance. At the end of the session there will be Q&A to clarify the roles of the interview chairs, and here the chairs will have a chance to suggest new questions or amend the questions given.

Step 2: The same process is conducted with the sub groups, each by one member of the panel chairs who seek to secure answers to the key questions, as well as allowing the discussion to range creatively across topics that might occur during the discussion. The constitution of these Stage 2 groups will attempt to cut across section membership, age,

length of membership etc but the most important of these is section: we must try to mix up sections.

Step 3: Members of the band are given a hard disk recording device and are encouraged to ask as many people questions during a break during rehearsals. This allows for one-to-one interviewing without Rob Smith's intervention, but questions can be more targeted.

Follow-ups;

Rob Smith to conduct one-to-one interviews with key ex-members of Wonderbrass: Jess Phillips and Stuart McHardy.

Collation and publication of findings by Rob Smith.

Guide and Structure for interviews with cross-section sub-groups:

Total Participant time required: 1 hour + 10 minutes – 1 hour + 50 minutes

Total focus group time: 1 hour + 10 minutes – 1 hour + 50 minutes

Break: 0 minutes

OVERALL QUESTION TO ANSWER IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

The purpose of the study is to conduct evaluative research to determine (in order of priority):

- What effects membership of Wonderbrass has on its participants.
- To determine the effect of active participation in music making on peoples' lives, relationships and identity.
- Investigate notions of social and cultural capital through the experience of being a member of Wonderbrass.
- To determine members' hopes and desires through membership of Wonderbrass, and discuss any ideas members may have for current and future activities of the band.

Below is a general guide for leading our focus groups. We may modify this guide as needed as each focus group will inform the subsequent groups.

Before the group begins, conduct the informed consent process.

I. Introduction (10 m)

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Explain the general purpose of the discussion and why the participants were chosen.
- Discuss the purpose and process of focus groups
- Explain the presence and purpose of recording equipment and introduce observers.
- Outline general ground rules and discussion guidelines such as the importance of everyone speaking up, talking one at a time, and being prepared for the moderator to interrupt to assure that all the topics can be covered.
- Review break schedule and where the restrooms are.
- Address the issue of confidentiality.
- Inform the group that information discussed is going to be analyzed as a whole and that participants' names will not be used in any analysis of the discussion unless they specifically request this.

This study is intended to elicit and clarify the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Wonderbrass. It is also looking to gain some insights into the experience of musical participation, especially in groups that require creative input from participators (such as improvising solos, creating or having input to arrangements etc.).

We are specifically interested in identifying and accounting for any differences between the experiences of participating in projects such as ours, where creative input from members is encouraged, and other music-making projects where musical materials

are 'fixed' and input beyond 'realising' or 'just playing' the material to the best effect is all that is required of members (and after all that members want).

We also hope to determine some personal benefits of the musical participation beyond the strictly musical. We are not auditing or evaluating the performance of the musical directors, but any comments about that are certainly welcome and will be addressed.

Discussion Guidelines:

We would like the discussion to be informal, so there's no need to wait for us to call on you to respond. In fact, we encourage you to respond directly to the comments other people make. If you don't understand a question, please let us know. We are here to ask questions, listen, and make sure everyone has a chance to share.

If we seem to be stuck on a topic, we may interrupt you and if you aren't saying much, we may call on you directly. If we do this, please don't feel bad about it; it's just our way of making sure we obtain everyone's perspective and opinion is included.

We do ask that we all keep each other's identities, participation and remarks private. We hope you'll feel free to speak openly and honestly.

As discussed, we will be digitally recording the discussion, because we don't want to miss any of your comments. No one outside of the band will have access to these tapes but they will be retained as part of Wonderbrass and Rob Smith's archive of the band's history.

Let's get started!

- The initial question:
 - *What does being a member of Wonderbrass mean to you, and why do you continue to do it?*

Remember: *We will not address every issue with every group and we may address issues not on this list as they arise.*

Issues for focus group exploration: Questions, followed by suggested prompts in italics.

I. Wonderbrass:

1. How did you first hear about Wonderbrass.
2. How did you approach the band and how did you come to join the band?
3. What were you expecting from the band and how it is run? What was as you expected and what differed from what you expected? How does the way Wonderbrass organises itself and plays together differ from your other or previous experience of being in bands or orchestras?

4. How long have you been in Wonderbrass and how has the band changed if at all during your membership.
5. Has the intensity of your involvement with the band changed or fluctuated at all during your period of membership?
6. What is your favourite and/or worst memory of performing with Wonderbrass, and why? *What has been your favourite trip away with Wonderbrass?*
7. What are your favourite pieces or arrangements in Wonderbrass' repertoire? Is there a particular style or genre you enjoy playing?

II. You

1. What is your musical experience before or outside the band? *Do you have grades? Have you played with formal or informal groups before? Have you played professionally?*
2. What kind of musical education have you had, if any? *Have you done any improvising before?*
3. Do you have any musical qualifications, grades, GCSE's or higher?
4. Before you joined Wonderbrass what was your perception of yourself as a musician? Comment on your interest and skill levels.
5. In the first few months of joining Wonderbrass what was your perception of yourself as a musician? *Did this change at all? If so were the changes sudden or gradual?*
6. What is your current perception of yourself as a musician? *Compare yourself with others if you like, inside or outside the band.*

7. Has your involvement with Wonderbrass changed your perception of yourself as a musician?
8. Has your involvement with Wonderbrass changed your perception or sense of your identity? *(If concepts like 'identity' are not understood, or are understood differently within the discussion group, it is fine to discuss these concepts in the group.)*
9. Has being in Wonderbrass had any effect on your musical tastes and preferences?
10. Has your involvement with Wonderbrass changed you in any other (non-musical) ways? *What effect has being in the band had on your relationships with your families and/or friends?*

III. Closing (10 m)

- Closing remarks
- Thank the participants

Transcription Notes:

The transcription of the interviews and focus groups was not exhaustive. After scoping the recordings I transcribed sections dealing with:

- Material and comments about my compositions.
- Comments about the experience of improvisation and beginning to improvise.
- Comments about how the band functions as a musical community.
- How people heard about or encountered the band initially.
- Expectations and experiences on joining the band.
- The tension around inclusiveness versus musical excellence.
- Preferred musical styles and genres.
- Confidence in musical performance.
- Best and worst experiences in the band.
- Anything distinctive and not covered anywhere else, i.e. a topic that only arises in one group or from one interview.

Full, unedited interviews are presented as mp3 audio files on CD4. The transcription of the interviews as presented in the text is as follows:

... = An ellipsis, such as a pause or an incomplete or abandoned sentence.

(...) = Section of the interview has been missed out by author for editorial reasons.

Italics = emphasis in speech.

[] = clarifications by author of elements of text such as anonymised names of band members referred to, gestures used by speakers.

() = additions and clarifications, by the author, of transcribed material, such as if the speaker is referring to something not mentioned in the selected extract.

Appendix 8: Indicative list of Wonderbrass Gigs 1992-2012.

This list is an indicative. It is intended to demonstrate the range and breadth of the band's activities over its first twenty years; the period from the band's inception (under the name Taff Ely Streetband) until the conclusion of the research in July 2012. Many of the inclusions have been suggested by members of the band as particularly memorable. By focusing on more recent years (particularly from 2010-2012) it is possible to see the frequency of the band's performances, though even here the list is far from exhaustive and focuses on highlights.

1992: July-August, Valleys Live Community Carnivals, Gurnos Estate in Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenrhondda, Blaenafon, Ebbw Vale.

1995 – 2013: Wonderbrass have played every Brecon Jazz Festival since 1995, sometimes on the Fringe, sometimes in special performances (detailed below).

1996: September 23-25th, Fiesta de Santa Maria del Mar, Barcelona.

1997: June 6-8th, International Jazz Festival, Viennes, France

1998: July, Fiesta de Santiago de la Compostela, Galicia, Wonderbrass in residence for one week.

1998: October, Cork International Jazz Festival.

1999: Baltimore Pub - Cardiff Bay

1999: June, Hawthorn Leisure centre – GE (Aeroplane electronics company)
family fun day

2000 – 2004: Mermaid Quay gigs regular annual community arts days.

2000: October, Cork International Jazz Festival.

2002: July, Marlborough Jazz Festival.

2002: 12 October, Wedding of a member of the band at Burnham on Crouch Yacht Club, Essex.

2003-5: Performances at the Riverbank hotel on 28/11/03, 19/12/03, 27/2/04, 26/3/04, 23/4/04, 21/5/04, 25/6/04, 20/8/04, 24/9/04, 19/11/04, 25/2/05, 25/3/05, 27/5/05, 24/6/05, 19/8/05.

2003: 30th August, Community Day, Plasterton Gardens, Pontcanna, Cardiff.

2003: 27th November, Wales Millennium Centre, Glanfa Stage.

2000-2013: Biannual appearances at Lichfield Real Ale, Jazz and Blues Festival, interspersed most years with appearances at Fuse Festival in Lichfield.

2004: July, Marlborough Jazz Festival.

2005: 15th July, Paget Rooms, Penarth.

2005: August, Brecon International Jazz Festival with Amampondo.

2006: August, Brecon International Jazz Festival with Amampondo (first performance of 'The Meeting Place')

2006: 9th September, Community Day, Plasturton Gardns, Pontcanna, Cardiff.

2006: 3rd November, Winter Wonderland, Cardiff City Hall.

2006: 17th December, Meltdown, Cardiff, Clwb Ifor Bach.

2007-8: Gigs in Dempseys Pub, Cardiff: 30/1/07, 30/3/07, 29/4/07, 3/8/07, 23/10/07, 11/11/07, 14/12/07, 29/1/08, 22/7/08.

2007: 28th May, Cardiff Bay, May Beer Festival.

2007: 30th September, Junction Bars, Cardiff University Students' Union.

2007: 23rd December, Meltdown, Clwb Ifor Bach, Cardiff.

2008: April, Two dates with King Django.

2008: August, Performance at Brecon International Jazz Festival with King Django.

2009: 1st August, Cardiff Big Weekend, Cardiff City Hall Lawn.

2009: 6th September, Pontypool Jazz Festival.

2009: September, John Lewis Opening Event in The Hayes, Cardiff (outdoor performance).

2010: Wales Millennium Centre, Glanfa Stage.

2010: 17th July, Cardiff St. David's Hall, Welsh Proms. (Carnival Prom, Main Stage)

2010: April, Performance at Wales Millennium Centre, Glanfa Stage.

2010: June, several performances of 'Dragons' show with South Wales Intercultural Community Arts (SWICA). Wonderbrass only at Lichfield - Real Ale Jazz and Blues Festival.

2010: August, Parade and Performance in Pontardawe International Music Festival. 2010: September: Pontypool Jazz in the Park, Barry Waterfront Festival, Mardi Gras Meltdown at The Globe, Victoria Park, Barry.

2010: October, DRAGON (with SWICA) at Newport Ryder Cup Festival, Wonderbrass @ Buffalo Bar, Cardiff, 'The Haunted Halfway House' Party - Tommy's Bar, Cardiff.

2010: November, Newport Christmas Parade, Barry Lantern Parade.

2010: December, Christmas Meltdown, The Globe, Cardiff, and Caerphilly River of Light Parade.

2011: February, Simon Cox Fundraising event (for ex member who committed suicide in 2010)

2011: March 1st, St Davids Day Parade, Cardiff City Centre.

2011: April, Album Lauch (Blown Away) 10 Feet Tall, St. Donats Arts Centre, Jazz in the Classroom Series, Jazz for Japan fundraiser (28th April) Gwdihw Bar, Cardiff.

2011: May, Heineken European Rugby Cup Final, Cup Parade.

2011: June, Hay-on-Wye Literature Festival.

2011: July, Druidstone Jamboree, Druidstone Hotel, Pembrokeshire. Jazz Concert

inSt Woolos Cathedral, Newport. Welsh Proms at St David's Hall Cardiff.

2011: August, MAS Cardival Parade (with SWICA), Brecon International Jazz Festival Fringe, Barry Summer Festival,

2011: September, Pontypool - town centre outdoor performance. Barry Tall Ships Festival, Wales Millennium Centre, Glanfa Stage.

2011: November, Residency for Wonderbrass and Jason Yarde at Druidstone Hotel including workshops and a performance.

2012: February Wonderbrass Mardi Gras including "Skip, Dash, Flow" Premier which was recorded and played on BBC Radio 3's Music Now programme.

2012: March, St Donats Arts Centre- Jazz in the Classroom Series

2012: July, Druidstone Jamboree, Druidstone Hotel, Druidstone Pembrokeshire.

2012: 14th July, Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, London, with Jason Yarde

2012: 15th July, Bull's Head in Barnes, London, with Jason Yarde
