

Musicking in Groningen

Towards a Grounded Theory of the Uses and Functions of Music in a Modern Western Society

Evert Bisschop Boele



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Music in a Modern Western Society

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Evert Hendrik Bisschop Boele

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tel.: 015-2131484 / fax: 015-2146888
info@eburon.nl / www.eburon.nl

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"I have been thinking about existence lately. In fact, I have been so full of admiration for existence that I have hardly been able to enjoy it properly. As I was walking up to the church this morning, I passed that row of big oaks by the war memorial – if you remember them – and I thought of another morning, fall a year or two ago, when they were dropping their acorns thick as hail almost. There was all sorts of thrashing in the leaves and there were acorns hitting the pavement so hard they'd fly past my head. All this in the dark of course. I remember a slice of moon, no more than that. It was a very clear night, or morning, very still, and then there was such energy in the things transpiring among the trees, like a storm, like travail. I stood there a little out of range, and I thought, It is all still new to me. I have lived my life on the prairie and a line of oak trees can still astonish me."¹

¹ Marylinne Robinson, *Gilead*. New York: FSG, 2004, pp. 56-57.

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Erklärung

1. Die Gelegenheit zum vorliegenden Promotionsvorhaben ist mir nicht kommerziell vermittelt worden. Insbesondere habe ich keine Organisation eingeschaltet, die gegen Entgelt Betreuerinnen und Betreuer für die Anfertigung von Dissertationen sucht oder die mir obliegenden Pflichten hinsichtlich der Prüfungsleistungen für mich ganz oder teilweise erledigt.
2. Ich versichere, dass ich die eingereichte Dissertation *Musicking in Groningen. Towards a Grounded Theory of the Uses and Functions of Music in a Modern Western Society* selbstständig und ohne unerlaubte Hilfsmittel verfasst habe; fremde Hilfe habe ich dazu weder unentgeltlich noch entgeltlich entgegengenommen und werde dies auch zukünftig so halten. Anderer als der von mir angegebenen Hilfsmittel und Schriften habe ich mich nicht bedient. Alle wörtlich oder sinngemäß den Schriften anderer Autoren entnommenen Stellen habe ich kenntlich gemacht.
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PART I. BACKGROUNDS

1. Introduction

1.1 Telling a plausible story

In the cool of the early morning, just before sunrise, my grey Peugeot 308 headed from Amsterdam Schiphol towards the north, where I knew the silhouette of the city of Groningen should become visible after a two hour's drive. Slowly the silhouette grew into a rugged mass of buildings, standing up seemingly isolated from the green meadows; then as I approached within a few miles it showed its many detached houses and smaller villages around it. The sullen grey day with its lowering clouds strengthened the impression of a solitary city in the midst of a vast flatland of meadows, lakes and woods, smaller towns, villages and hamlets, roads, canals and railroad tracks.

In a couple of minutes I was driving on the rather busy city bypass and could see cars and vans drive to and fro. The drivers looked like drivers anywhere – of course the amount of blond-haired and fair-skinned people seemed bigger than in some other places I knew, and their cars looked tidy and well-kept in general. Some drove in small cars, some in bigger ones; some – though not many – were smoking while driving, some talked with fellow-passengers or on their cell phones. I left the city ring and parked in an underground car park near the city centre. No one seemed to pay much attention to me, people spoke their guttural Dutch language or the regional Groningen dialect to each other, in some cases I recognized other languages, assuming those were used by either tourists or immigrants. I wondered if such middle-of-the-road human material could really be submitted to ethnomusicological study in a meaningful way.

I met Frederik, the Dutch student from Amsterdam who was appointed my assistant for a year. He looked around him. "My word, it's quiet here", he said with a grin. "I hope these farmers will not bore me to death." 'Farmers' is the expression sometimes used by the Dutch inhabiting the west of the country for the inhabitants of the northern and eastern regions. Perhaps he was having second thoughts about leaving the busy and bristling Amsterdam, the national capital some 200 kilometers away, for a year to help me carry out my study in the province of Groningen, of which the city of Groningen is the capital. Feeling none too certain myself of the research that awaited me here – though I knew that it would certainly stop short of either one of us being bored to death – I reassured him, and we extracted some money from a cash machine. We then walked into the city center. As we came to the central market place, called Grote Markt, a heavy shower of rain suddenly fell down, and we hurried into a big department store together with many of the locals, exchanging faint smiles and nods in lieu of anything more outspoken at the moment. We were surrounded by crowds of wet chattering youngsters, wearing, as in Amsterdam – or London for that matter –, jeans, sneakers, sweaters, and baseball caps. They darted about a bit like young

dogs, pushing and pulling each other in the entrance of the department store, some of them nearly falling against other people in their raucous enthusiasm. As we finally arrived inside the department store itself, we took the escalator to the restaurant on the fourth floor, passing the men's and women's clothing departments and the toy department – a home-like touch; it was like a children's paradise – and poured ourselves a coffee at the self-service counter, paying to a woman clad in the warehouse's uniform (black pants and a blue shirt with the company logo) who was sitting behind the cash desk with a slightly absent gaze.

The precise moment when I started this study is hard to pinpoint. But there is a formal moment: from the first of September, 2009, my employers at the Prince Claus Conservatoire of Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen allowed me to spend part of my working time on writing a doctoral dissertation on the then admittedly still very wide subject of music audiences in present-day Dutch society. As I thought of the study as primarily an ethnomusicological study, an ethnographic study of 'music in culture'², at the time it seemed fitting to start the study with an ethnographic opening section. So I imagined myself returning from a far-away holiday in the summer of 2009, ready to start my research project and driving back to my home where my field work would take place, and wrote the impressionistic introduction above. Or rather: rewrote, as the text is a paraphrase of the beginning of the first chapter of Raymond Firth's *We, the Tikopia* from 1937, as quoted by Clifford Geertz in his famous discussion of the anthropologist as author³.

The opening paraphrase above aims at doing at least three things. The first is that it hopes to establish in the reader the assumption that this study is intended to be a form of ethnographic writing; "an authentic account by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place, at some time, among some group"⁴, aimed at "making sense of the social world"⁵ as experienced by those studied, in order to "enlarge the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different from one another in interest, outlook, wealth, and power, and yet contained in a world where tumbled as they are into endless connection, it is increasingly difficult to get out of each other's way"⁶. The basic question of this study is the question often attributed to Clifford Geertz: "What the hell is going on here?"⁷ To be slightly more precise and turn it into the direction of the discipline

² See Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology. Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005, ch. 16.

³ Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988, pp. 11-13.

⁴ Id., p. 143.

⁵ Martyn Hammersley & Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography. Principles in Practice*. 3d Edition. London: Routledge, 2007, p. 4.

⁶ Geertz, 1988, p. 147. I am aware that this quote refers originally to discourse between 'peoples' in the traditional anthropological sense, but 'people' may in this particular case also be read as 'individuals' – the quote then seems completely fitting for the current study of the uses and functions of music for individuals living in a late-modern western society.

⁷ See e.g. the quote in Klaus Amann & Stefan Hirschauer, 'Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur. Ein Programm.' ['The estrangement of your own culture. A programme.'] In: Stefan Hirschauer & Klaus

of ethnomusicology: how can we make sense of musical life in the Dutch province of Groningen around the year 2010 AD?

The second point the paraphrase makes is that it positions the ‘I’, the author, from the start right at the center of the study. I do that because I see this study not only as a study but also as a ‘work’, with an author, and telling a story; or, following Geertz, with a signature and a discourse⁸. Both aspects will be accounted for in this study: the aspect of signature by making a point of reflexivity⁹, and the aspect of discourse by pointing out, here and in the conclusion again, that this study is a story – it is “imaginative writing about real people in real places at real times”¹⁰. A story which tries to be as plausible as possible, but which eventually has to be seconded by – or even replaced by – other, equally or more plausible, stories.

As such, this study may, in Kathy Charmaz’ terms, be identified as a constructivist, rather than objectivist, study which will deliver a “theory [which] depends on the researcher’s view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it”¹¹. However, it does not attempt to be radical-constructivist-turning-subjectivist¹² in stressing its auto-ethnographicity¹³, but rather it tries to adopt a middle course. It is definitely the situated work of one specific author informed by his specific history and world views and therefore asks for reflexivity¹⁴. But at the same time it is an enterprise to “produce accounts of the social world and justify them”; to “describe phenomena as they are, and not merely how we perceive them or how we would like them to be”¹⁵; “to learn about things outside ourselves, not knowable through introspection”¹⁶ – an enterprise informed by what John

Amann (Eds.), *Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur. Zur ethnographischen Herausforderung soziologischer Empirie*. [‘The estrangement of your own culture. On the ethnographic challenging of sociological empiry.’] Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997, p. 7. Usually the Geertzian question is presented as a quote from the famous first chapter of his *The Interpretation of Cultures*. The question is not found in that form there; Geertz does speak, however, of “a state of general bewilderment as to what the devil is going on”. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 27.

⁸ Geertz, 1988, p. 9. ‘Discourse’ as used here should not be confused with discourse in the Foucauldian sense; see section 2.3.1.3. Cf. Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p. 29, where they characterize the ethnographer as a writer, in contrast with the quantitative sociologist who is a mathematician and for example the researcher of biographies who is a reader.

⁹ See e.g. Charlotte Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography. A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London: Routledge, 1999.

¹⁰ Geertz, 1988, p. 141.

¹¹ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*.

London: Sage, 2006, pp. 130; cf. Kathy Charmaz, ‘Grounded Theory Methods in Social Justice Research.’ In: Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Fourth Edition. London: Sage, 2011, p. 365, and Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Edition 4. London: Sage, 2009, pp. 69-72.

¹² Cf. Judith Preissle, ‘Qualitative Futures. Where We Might Go From Where We Have Been.’ In: Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), 2011, p. 691.

¹³ Cf. Tami Spry, ‘Performative Autoethnography. Critical Embodiments and Possibilities.’ In: Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), 2011.

¹⁴ Cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 18; and Davies, 1999.

¹⁵ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 18; p. 16.

¹⁶ Davies, 1999, p. 17.

Lofland calls ‘analytic ethnography’, and specifically by what he terms the principle of ‘unfettered’ or ‘naturalistic’ inquiry¹⁷.

Part of the telling of a plausible story is precisely to show how it is plausible that the story eventually told by the researcher is not completely personal. The point of view of this study may therefore be described as constructivist-reflexive with an objectivist-realist tinge¹⁸. The realist tinge consists of a sort of positive agnosticism: although I do not know to what extent it is possible to deliver a plausible account of a social world out there, it is definitely worth a try. I will make the situated and the personal visible by stressing the authored character of this study reflexively in several places. But I will attempt to keep reflexivity within limits, in order to prevent an “ultimately pessimistic, unproductive and completely inward-directed perspective”¹⁹. Thus, seemingly paradoxically, it is the constructivist-reflexive stance that makes the writing of a plausible story with some objectivist-realist pretensions possible in the first place.

The third and final point the paraphrase above tries to make is that it may leave readers wondering whether writing a study on the ordinary everyday musical life of average people in the average place the researcher happens to live in – a place probably resembling the various places many of the potential readers of this study live in – will result in describing only what everybody already knows. This study deliberately intends to tackle that problem, the problem of *how* to study what it studies – how to make sense of the musical life in one’s own everyday-life context without delivering only the already known; how to perform ethnomusicology-at-home, a form of ethnomusicology which turns its eye from ‘the other’ to ourselves²⁰. This study in that respect raises two questions. There is the question how to characterize the society under study, a question which will be answered in chapter 2 where I treat the theoretical backgrounds of this study. Then there is the methodological question how to study this society, a question which will be answered in chapter 4. Ethnomusicology-at-home in that latter aspect seems a rather underreflected branch of ethnomusicology, and one of the aims of this study is to contribute to the discussion about the methodological issues of ethnomusicology-at-home.

Summing up, this study can be characterized as an attempt at a methodologically underpinned and reflexive ethnomusicological study of musical life in a present-day western society.

¹⁷ John Lofland, ‘Analytic Ethnography. Features, Failings, and Futures.’ *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 24 (1995), specifically pp. 40-44.

¹⁸ Cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, pp. 5-19.

¹⁹ Davies, 1999, p. 17.

²⁰ A more extensive discussion of ethnomusicology-at-home may be found in chapter 4.

1.2 General and disciplinary backgrounds, research question and aims of the study

1.2.1 General background of the study

The motive for this research project originates from personal observations, implicit at first and gradually growing more and more explicit as I grew older. For me – as a music listener, a musician, a music teacher, and a music researcher – music has always been an important force in life. This feeling of the importance of music however isn't just an individual whim, nor is it solely connected to the fact that music is at the very heart of my personal and professional life. In interacting with people and talking to people, I came to understand over the years that for nearly every individual I met and discussed music with (be it a fellow-musician, a neighbor, or the plumber), music is an important factor in life, in endlessly varied ways. It is “incredibly healthy in society”²¹, in that “thriving, colorful, and diverse musical culture in which we live”²² and for many “a practice (...) laden with emotional investment and (...) central to the invention of one's own identity”²³; and that counts not only for modern musical life in the United States, to which all three quotations before refer, but also for current musical life in the Netherlands²⁴.

With a background in ethnomusicology and music education, I have been working in conservatoires – those institutes of higher education considering it as their core business to prepare students to become professional musicians²⁵ – for many years in many different capacities. My observation from within this very specific context is that most teachers and students in conservatoire settings base their musical activities not so much on the acknowledgement of the importance of music for (nearly) everybody in everyday life noted above, but on a narrower and more specialized view on music, which probably is best characterized as an autonomous view on music as performed art works²⁶, and is tied intrinsically to the roots of the conservatoire as an institute educating professional musicians in one kind of music: western classical music²⁷.

Conservatoires at present, however, find themselves in a phase of transition. More and more they are asked, and ask themselves, to prepare their students for a professional

²¹ Thomas A. Regelski, ‘Conclusion. An End Is a Beginning.’ In: Thomas A. Regelski & J. Terry Gates (Eds.), *Music Education for Changing Times. Guiding Visions for Practice*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2009, p. 190.

²² Bennett Reimer, ‘Comprehensive Education, Comprehensive Music Education. A New Vision.’ Unpublished article, 2007 (frank.mtsu.edu/~nboone/reading1.pdf).

²³ George Lipsitz, ‘Foreword.’ In: Susan D. Crafts, Daniel Cavicchi & Charles Keil (Eds.), *My Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993, p. xii.

²⁴ Cf. e.g. Vincent Meelberg, *Kernthema's in het muziekonderzoek*. [‘Core themes in music research.’] Den Haag: Boom Lemma, 2010, p. 11.

²⁵ Harald Jørgensen, *Research into Higher Music Education. An Overview From a Quality Improvement Perspective*. Oslo: Novus Press, 2009, pp. 11-12.

²⁶ Eric Clarke, *Ways of Listening. An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 127 ff. See section 8.3.2 for a further elucidation of the view of music as art.

²⁷ Cf. Bruno Nettl, *Heartland Excursions. Ethnomusicological Reflections On Schools of Music*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

career that responds to the needs of 21st century audiences²⁸ – audiences which are less and less to be taken for granted but have to be won over from performance to performance²⁹. But what those audiences are, what their needs are, which responses to those needs are adequate, and how to prepare music students for giving those responses, are questions not answered easily.

It is this gap between on the one hand the important place of music in the life of most individuals living in post-modern modern western society³⁰, and on the other hand the problem professional musicians apparently have in reaching their audience, that puzzled me. If it is true – as I am inclined to argue – that the present-day musician’s audience consists of individuals constructing themselves and their world in meaningful (musical) practice, and that their world of music consists of an interrelated network of concrete and contingent musical social situations³¹ in which music plays a role in some way and where individuals by their actions call music into being at the same time³², then the musician of the 21st century should, one could argue, at least develop some feeling for this. Might one of the problems not be that professional musicians still think too much of music as a product, a thing, and of their audiences in terms of static target-groups of consumers (‘the’ classical music audience, ‘the’ jazz audience et cetera)³³, and might musicians not benefit from insight into an explanation of ‘what the hell is going on here’ musically?

1.2.2 Disciplinary background of the study

In this study, I try to make sense of everyday musical life here and now. ‘Now’ means: at the beginning of the twenty-first century; and ‘here’ means: in the Dutch province of Groningen. This here and now for me is ‘home’, not only because I live in Groningen but also because I am born and bred in the Netherlands, of which Groningen is a part. As stated, I see this study therefore as a form of ethnomusicology-at-home and ethnomusicology as its primary disciplinary background. This, however, requires some explanation.

²⁸ See for an outlook on the wide variety of questions this raises the various articles in George Odam & Nicholas Bannan (Eds.), *The Reflective Conservatoire. Studies in Music Education*. London: Ashgate, 2005.

²⁹ See for example Koen van Eijck, Lara van Bree & Karin Derickx, ‘Op zoek naar de nieuwe bezoeker.’ [‘Searching for the new visitor.’] In: Teunis IJdens, Marjo van Hoorn, Andries van den Broek & Chrit van Rensen (Eds.), *Jaarboek Actieve Cultuurparticipatie 2011. Participanten, projecten en beleid*. [‘Yearbook active culture participation 2011. Participants, projects and policies.’] Utrecht: Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie, 2011.

³⁰ For an explanation of the characterization of Dutch society in 2010 as ‘post-modern modern western’, see section 2.3.3.3.

³¹ I consider a situation musical if music in any form (as sound, as a subject of talk, in the form of a record sleeve, et cetera) is involved in the situation. Note that this broad focus on social situations where music plays any role is meant to prevent a too early and too explicit focus on those social situations where ‘real’ musicking – i.e. performing and/or listening - takes place (cf. section 3.5.1).

³² A further explanation of the theoretical backgrounds of this study can be found in chapter 2.

³³ For evidence that this is indeed the case, at least in the Netherlands, one needs to look only at websites focusing on the entrepreneurial competencies of professional musicians and music students, such as www.cultuur-ondernemen.nl, www.beroepkunstenaar.nl, or the pages dedicated to entrepreneurship on www.mcn.nl (all websites consulted September 28, 2012).

Although above I characterized this study as an ethnographic study, aimed at accounting ‘how life proceeds in some place, at some time, in some group’, this last element – the group – should not be taken in the traditional ethnomusicological sense as a specific community with a specific ‘culture’. Although a focus on communities-with-cultures is rather persistent within the discipline³⁴, it is not a necessary focus. Ethnomusicology is a heterogeneous discipline of conflicting views in which presumed key concepts such as ‘music’, ‘culture’, or ‘community’ are debated rather than accepted³⁵. For this study I adopt a more fluid understanding of social life and culture, an understanding with which at least a considerable part of the discipline may feel more or less at home. This understanding sees ethnomusicology not so much as a study of communities-with-cultures³⁶ but as an ethnographic endeavor aimed at ‘making sense of the social world’, at studying “participants’ knowledge and practices”³⁷, at “investigating how people experience the world and/or how they make sense of it”³⁸ through studying music³⁹. Specifically, by adopting practice theory and its ‘thin theory of culture’ as its specific theoretical basis⁴⁰, I aim to prevent a too taken-for-granted use of the word ‘culture’ in this study.

³⁴ Cf. for the persistent linkage of communities and cultures in ethnomusicology for example the first sentence of the definition of ethnomusicology given by Oxford Music Online: “The study of social and cultural aspects of music and dance in local and global contexts” (Carole Pegg, Helen Myers, Philip V. Bohlmann & Martin Stokes, ‘Ethnomusicology.’ In: *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52178*, consulted September 25, 2012), or Nettl’s description of ethnomusicological studies of music in America since the 1980s as studies of which “the concern focused on groups who agreed, not with idiosyncratic individuals” (Bruno Nettl, *Nettl’s Elephant. On the History of Ethnomusicology*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010, p. 208). See also Ruth M. Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008, p. 20; although Stone mentions other study objects than groups, communities or cultures (e.g. songs, events, individuals, or genres), the idea that ethnomusicology studies cultures of groups is quite pervasive here too, as is shown in Stone’s remark that her own object of study is not so much a song or a community but the ‘music event’, adding that “the event is a unit of analysis with saliency for *the Kpelle people*” (p. 18; italics added), thus reintroducing the community through the back door.

³⁵ Cf. the essays in Henry Stobart (Ed.), *The New (Ethno)musicologies*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2008; and Pegg, Myers et al., 2012. An interesting mixed definition of the topic of ethnomusicological studies is given by Adelaida Reyes: music as a ‘social object’, a result (thing) of the social world (activities). Adelaida Reyes, ‘What Do Ethnomusicologists Do? An Old Question for a New Century.’ *Ethnomusicology* 53/1 (2009), p. 13. Further on she adds ‘human agency’ explicitly to her characterization of ethnomusicology (id., p. 14). The latter article also contains a useful history of the discussions on disciplinary identity.

³⁶ See for a powerful reflection on the implications of a static definition of the word ‘culture’ Lila Abu-Lughod, ‘Writing Against Culture.’ In: Richard G. Fox (Ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology. Working in the Present*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1991.

³⁷ Flick, 2009, p. 16.

³⁸ Roger Gomm, *Social Research Methodology. A Critical Introduction*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 7; slash omitted in original.

³⁹ Evidence for this may be the fact that Martin Stokes’ description of ‘contemporary theoretical issues’ in Pegg, Myers et al., 2012, questions the validity of the summarization by Bruno Nettl of ethnomusicological theory as the study of music in/as culture, but at the same time identifies mainly theoretical issues concerning precisely music as a social phenomenon (‘communities and their musics’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘nationalism’, ‘diasporas and globalization’, ‘race’); thus de- and re-centering Nettl’s ‘credo’ of ethnomusicology in four ‘beliefs and understandings’, the first of which is that ethnomusicology is the study of music in culture (Nettl, 2005, pp. 12-14).

⁴⁰ See chapter 2, specifically section 2.4.

In that respect, I seek alignment with Timothy Rice's formulation of ethnomusicology's task: to "seek answers to the general question, how do individuals experience music in modernity, in modern life, in the modern world system" through writing "subject-centered musical ethnograph[ies]"⁴¹ with the aim of understanding "[t]he self-reflexive project of self-identity in modernity, understood as a social process"⁴². In accordance with this, I adopt the metaphorical 'fundamental claim of truth' that music is social behavior, rather than other claims identifying music as symbolic systems/texts, commodities, or works of art,⁴³ the latter definition probably being the hegemonic definition of music in many western countries and the one most common in the world of the conservatoire⁴⁴. I acknowledge Christopher Small's much-quoted formulation that "[t]here is no such thing as music. Music is not a thing at all but an activity; something that people do. The apparent thing 'music' is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at it all closely."⁴⁵ I thereby confine myself to the rather loose maxim that ethnomusicological studies indeed "are based in some form of society or community"⁴⁶, and that in my case the studied community is defined – rather loosely – in a temporal-geographic (rather than for example ethnic, stylistic or institutional) way⁴⁷.

The goal of this study is therefore not so much to describe or theorize about 'the music culture' of Groningen AD 2010 in an ethnography. Rather, adopting much of Lila Abu-Lughod's thoughts on the problematic sides of a too taken-for-granted use of the word 'culture'⁴⁸, the term ethnographic should be taken here as referring to the endeavor to make sense of musical life in Groningen AD 2010 as seen from within the perspectives of specific participants in the form of a 'micro-substantive theory'⁴⁹. It studies in detail what individuals⁵⁰ do with music (the 'how'-question), and what music does for those individuals (the 'why'-question). Or, in more ethnomusicological terms: this study

⁴¹ Timothy Rice, 'Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography.' *Ethnomusicology* 47/2 (2003), p. 152.

⁴² Id., p. 158.

⁴³ Id., pp. 165-167.

⁴⁴ For more on the hegemony of the definition of music as art, see section 8.3.2.

⁴⁵ Christopher Small, *Musicking. The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1998, p. 2.

⁴⁶ Timothy Rice, 'Ethnomusicological Theory.' *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 42 (2010b), p. 108.

⁴⁷ Cf. Rice, 2010b, p. 109. Definitions of the study object are notoriously difficult in ethnomusicology-at-home, given the fact that there often is an implicit believe that one studies 'a' culture through music and therefore must determine the location of this culture; see for example the definition problems in Julio Mendivil, *Ein Musikalisches stück Heimat. Ethnologische Beobachtungen zum deutschen Schlager*. ['A musical piece of homeland. Ethnological observations about the German schlager.'] Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008, pp. 28 ff.

⁴⁸ Abu-Lughod, 1991.

⁴⁹ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 189; the difference between formal and substantive theories goes back to Barney G. Glaser & Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 1967, p. 32 ff.

⁵⁰ The choice for a study on the level of individuals is explained in chapters 2 and 3.

focuses on the uses (what people do with music) and functions (what music does for people) of music in the life of individuals in present-day Groningen⁵¹.

Besides ethnomusicology, some other disciplines play a supportive role in this study. One is the (social) psychology of music, in which the functions and (to a lesser extent) the uses of music are serious objects of study. Another one is the sociology of music, where the function(s) of music are studied. Sociology is a supportive discipline in yet another sense, together with cultural anthropology: it is in the qualitative strands of sociology and in cultural anthropology that the methodology of ethnographic research is theorized⁵². As this study can be considered a form of explorative research⁵³ trying to ‘discover’⁵⁴ a (low-level) theory about a certain field (rather than applying a theory to a field of study)⁵⁵, it can be characterized as a qualitative and interpretive study with a grounded theory-approach⁵⁶ inspired by methodological debates in anthropology and, especially, in qualitative sociology.⁵⁷

1.2.3 Research question and aims of the study

I formulate the research question this study seeks to answer as follows:

What are the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century?

As stated above, the study is exploratory in character and will use a grounded theory-approach. It is for that reason that this study starts with a rather broad and open formulated research question and refrains from formulating too specific sub-questions at the beginning.

This study has three aims. Its primary aim is to contribute to an understanding of music in modern Western society as a form of social behavior. Its secondary aim is to contribute to the field of ethnomusicology-at-home, and specifically to its methodological considerations. Its tertiary aim is to contribute to the discussion on what it means to be a professional musician in our present day society.

1.3 Outline of the study

After this introduction, the study will start with the theoretical backgrounds which underpin the study and which lie in the field of theory of practice (chapter 2). Chapter 3

⁵¹ The concepts ‘use’ and ‘function’ go back to Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964, pp. 209-227. For a more detailed discussion see section 3.1.

⁵² See the much-used introduction to ethnography by Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, where about half of the concrete examples of research stem from anthropology and the other half from qualitative sociology.

⁵³ See e.g. Hennie Boeije, *Analysis in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 2010, p. 32.

⁵⁴ Although, given the characterization above of this study as ‘constructivist-reflexive with a realist tinge’, this ‘discovery’ of a grounded theory should be taken to be as much a construction as it is a discovery.

⁵⁵ Flick, 2009, pp. 90-92.

⁵⁶ See Charmaz, 2006, p. 4.

⁵⁷ See chapter 4 for an extensive discussion of methodology and research methods.

gives an overview of the existing literature on the uses and functions of music. Chapter 4 will describe the methodology and research methods of the study. Chapters 1-4 together form Part I of this study, describing its backgrounds.

Chapters 5-8 form Part II of the study, presenting the analysis of the empirical data. In chapter 5, a general context of the individuals studied is given. In chapter 6 and 7, respectively, the uses and functions of music in individual life in Groningen AD 2012 as found in the interviews are described, leading to theoretical models of the uses and functions of music. In chapter 8, more critical in part, the focus shifts towards a determination of specific cultural codes about music as found in the interviews.

The study finishes with Part III, where conclusions and recommendations are formulated. Part III is subdivided in two chapters. Chapter 9 summarizes and discusses the results and formulates the conclusions of the study, as well as directions of further research and practical recommendations. The study ends with a short final reflection in chapter 10. In the appendices, an overview of the main features of the interviewees on which this study is based is given and short individual portraits of the 30 interviewees can be found.

2. Theoretical backgrounds of the study

2.1 Studying ‘musicking’ on the basis of a culturalist social theory

“Music is not a thing at all, but an activity, something that people do”, Christopher Small wrote¹. In this study, I therefore look at music as social behavior, rather than as art, symbolic systems/texts, or commodities. Music is ‘something that people do’, and given the fact that (individual) reality in essence is socially grounded² therefore it is essentially a social phenomenon, something that is inherently social in character. Studying music from that assumption means therefore studying music on the basis of a social (rather than for example an arts) theory³.

In this study, I adopt a culturalist theory of the social, defining man as a ‘homo culturalis’. Where a purpose-oriented social theory of the ‘homo economicus’ sees social order as the product of the combination of individual interests, and a norm-oriented social theory of the ‘homo sociologicus’ sees social order as the result of normative consensus, culturalist social theories understand human life as being based on symbolic structures of meaning⁴. The social order in which human life unrolls itself is “embedded in collective cognitive and symbolic structures, in a ‘shared knowledge’ which enables a socially shared way of ascribing meaning to the world”⁵.

Culturalist social theories have come into being after the ‘interpretive turn’ in the social sciences⁶. Culturalist theories of the social are ‘interpretive’ in two ways. Firstly because they maintain that the world people live in is an interpreted world by definition. Following Herbert Blumer, one might say that people handle the world on the basis of meanings established in processes of symbolic interpretation. Those interpretations of the world are not individual but essentially social phenomena⁷. Individuals in everyday life perform this symbolic interpretation of reality continuously in order to make sense of reality. This makes the interpreted world a world of contingency; as Anselm Strauss describes, individual actions are the result of constant evaluative interpretations of others and of self (and, it should be added, of the material and

¹ Small, 1998, p. 2.

² Cf. e.g. George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self & Society*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962 (1934); and Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Penguin, 1966.

³ Cf. Rice, 2003, p. 165-167.

⁴ Andreas Reckwitz, ‘Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing.’ *European Journal of Social Theory* 5/2 (2002) pp. 245-246. Cf. Hans Joas & Wolfgang Knöbl, *Sozialtheorie. Zwanzig einführende Vorlesungen*. [‘Social theory. Twenty introductory lectures.’] Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004, p. 183.

⁵ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 246.

⁶ Id., p. 243.

⁷ Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1969, pp. 2-6. Cf. Joas & Knöbl, 2004, pp. 183-184. For a short description of Blumer and his relation to Mead see Joas & Knöbl, 2004, pp. 189-195. For a description of the social character of knowledge in general, see Berger & Luckmann, 1966.

immaterial contexts of others and self), and these evaluations lead to contingency and to room for individual agency: “The reappraisal of past acts and the appearance of surprise in present acts gives men indeterminate futures. (...) Self-appraisal leads to decisions: to avoid acts, to make amends, to do better, to repent, to do as well. The I, as subject (...), continually moves into a partially uncharted future.”⁸

Culturalist social theories are interpretive in another sense too: not only do they describe an interpreted and contingent reality, researchers working from culturalist social theories also interpret this interpreted reality by researching it – culturalist social research is an interpretation of an already interpreted world. This leads to a preference for qualitative forms of research⁹, as “[q]ualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible”¹⁰. It is this interpretive character of research that connects to my earlier remark that this study will contain, in Geertzian terms, signature as well as discourse¹¹.

2.2 The choice for a theory of practice

Where exactly is the social located in culturalist social theories? Where do we find the ‘collective cognitive and symbolic structures’ of social life? There are four possible answers to this question, leading to four possible forms of culturalist social theory¹². In culturalist mentalism, the social is located in mental structures – “so to speak, in the ‘head’ of human beings”¹³. Examples are Lévi-Strauss’ structuralism (as a form of ‘objectivist’ cultural mentalism) and Schütz’s social phenomenology (as a ‘subjectivist’ cultural mentalism). In cultural textualism, the social is to be found in symbols, discourse or texts; examples are the works of early Foucault, or Geertz’ symbolic anthropology. The social can, as a third option, be found in interaction, leading to culturalist intersubjectivism as exemplified for example by the work of Habermas. Finally, practices can be deemed the primary place of the social, which leads to a culturalist practice theory, exemplified (in a variety of forms) in the works of e.g. Bourdieu, Giddens, Garfinkel, Taylor and Schatzki.

In this study, I choose to use practice theory. Practice theory locates the social in culture (as all culturalist social theories do), and within culture in cultural practices. A practice in

⁸ Anselm Strauss, *Mirrors and Masks. The Search for Identity*. San Francisco: The Sociology Press, 1969, pp. 33-34.

⁹ There is, however, no strict equation of culturalist social theory and qualitative research; for example, what Reckwitz (2002, p. 247) calls ‘objectivist culturalist mentalism’ is not using predominantly qualitative research principles or methodologies.

¹⁰ Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln, ‘Introduction. The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research.’ In: Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), 2011, p. 3 (italics in original omitted). Cf. e.g. Flick 2009, p. 76 ff, using Alfred Schütz’ ideas on first-degree and second-degree constructions. More on methodology and methods arising from the adoption of a culturalist social theory can be found in chapter 4.

¹¹ See section 1.1.

¹² Reckwitz, 2002, pp. 247-250.

¹³ Id., p. 247.

practice theory does not refer to acts in specific social situations, specific ‘cases’, or specific social processes in which individuals act¹⁴. A practice should rather be understood as “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood”¹⁵. Practices are ‘ways of...’; for example, ways of cooking or of greeting; or ways of playing music, of listening to music, of talking about music.

These examples make clear that a practice is not ‘in the head’ but ‘out there’ (underlining the difference between practice theory and mentalism), that it need not be discursive (underlining the difference between practice theory and textualism) nor need it be interactive between (groups of) individuals (underlining the difference between practice theory and intersubjectivism):¹⁶ “Practice theory ‘decentres’ mind, texts and conversation. Simultaneously, it shifts bodily movements, things, practical knowledge and routine to the centre of its vocabulary.”¹⁷

The fact that practice theory highlights the body, things, practical knowledge and routines is fitting when one studies music. Looking at the specific social situations in which music plays a role, those social situations are intrinsically tied to the body (the bodily movements needed to play a musical instrument, the senses needed to take in the musical situation, the body needed to dance to the sounds of the music, or the talking heads carrying out conversations about music), to things (instruments, scores, CDs, concert halls, head phones, coins and bank notes, flyers), and to practical knowledge and routines (how to play an instrument, how to listen to a CD on your own, how to behave at a classical or death metal concert). Ignoring those aspects of musical situations may lead to a study of music only weakly related to the reality of actual social situations in which music plays a role.

The fact that practice theory decentres mind, texts and conversation is fitting too for a study of music. Studying the field of music in terms of mental structures may lead to an underestimation of the importance of the bodily and material aspects of music. Music studied as a form of text may put a disproportionate emphasis on music as a (non-verbal) system of symbols and on the meanings expressed by this system. Music studied as interaction between people may focus mainly on the communicative side of music,

¹⁴ Such social situations may be defined as “... observable happenings in the world (...), cases and situations of social interaction, in which through communicative action at the same time social acts take place (...) and meanings are shaped” [“... beobachtbare Vorkommnisse in der Welt (...), Fälle und Situationen sozialer Interaktion, in denen durch kommunikative Aktion zugleich sozial gehandelt wird (...) und Bedeutungen geschaffen werden”]. Christian Meyer & Nikolaus Schareika, ‘Neoklassische Feldforschung. Die mikroskopische Untersuchung sozialer Ereignisse als ethnographische Methode.’ [‘Neo-Classical Field Research. Microscopic Research of Social Events as Ethnographic Method.’] *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 134 (2009a), p. 89. For a processual view on social situations, see e.g. Andreas Glaeser, ‘An Ontology for the Ethnographic Analysis of Social Process. Extending the Extended-Case Method.’ In: T.M.S Evens & Don Handelman (Eds.), *The Manchester School. Practice and Ethnographic Praxis in Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2006, pp. 64-93.

¹⁵ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250.

¹⁶ Id., pp. 249-250.

¹⁷ Id., p. 259.

stressing the transfer of musical ‘messages’ from one person to another – from the performer to the listener, or from the composer via the player to the listener, thus implicitly ruling out solitary musical activities¹⁸.

In practice theory, it is crucial to make a distinction between on the one hand concrete social situations and more abstract (social)¹⁹ practices on the other hand.²⁰ Practices are more abstract bodily-mental routines²¹. Practices are discovered by studying, accurately and intensely, social situations – specific acting individuals in specific situations at a specific time and a specific place in a specific context. In order to study musical practices, a careful empirical study of everyday musical life²² is needed, showing how, in carrying out their everyday life, individuals construct their social world²³ by uncovering, in the words of Harold Garfinkel, “the socially standardized and standardizing, ‘seen but unnoticed,’ expected, background features of everyday scenes”²⁴ and showing how

¹⁸ Unless the solitary character of for example solitary listening to music is explained away because it is argued that there is actually a dialogue going on, for example between the listener and the – bodily absent but as communicator very present – composer, the listener and the equally absent performer, or the listener and the ‘imagined community’ of fellow listeners.

¹⁹ The epithet ‘social’ connected to practices is from the point of view of a theory of practice tautological, as practices are social by definition; Reckwitz 2002, p. 250.

²⁰ To indicate the problem of terminology and translation of terminology, in Reckwitz (2002, p. 249) practice is seen as the equivalent of the German ‘Praktik’, whereas the German ‘Praxis’ is seen as the generic name for “the whole of human action (in contrast to ‘theory’ and mere thinking)”. Reckwitz’ equivalent of the term ‘social situation’ seems to be ‘single and often unique actions’ (id., p. 250). In Mayer & Schareika (2009a), social situations are termed in German ‘soziale Ereignisse’, which could be translated to ‘social events’. I do, however, not choose to use the term ‘social events’ because the term ‘event’ may have the connotation of a specific sort of social situation standing out from everyday life in some sort of exemplary way – the event of a marriage, or, archetypically (but then again referred to as a social situation rather than as an event), the opening of a bridge (Max Gluckman, *Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958). Events are, or may become in relation to a specific question, ‘diagnostic’ (Sally Falk Moore, ‘Explaining the Present. Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography.’ *American Ethnologist* 14/4 (1987)), whereas by using the term social situation I try to encompass not only particular outstanding or diagnostic events but also the ‘spectacularly ordinary’ (a term I borrow from Adelaida Reyes Schramm, ‘Explorations in Urban Ethnomusicology. Hard Lessons from the Spectacularly Ordinary.’ *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 14 (1982)).

²¹ Reckwitz 2002, p. 256.

²² The concept of ‘everyday (musical) life’ requires some explanation, as the study of ‘everyday life’ is quite a topic in qualitative social research. My use of the term in this study aligns with the remark made by Del Negro and Berger that “everyday life is best understood as an interpretive framework defined in dialectical opposition to the notion of special events” in the sense that it uses a populist (rather than elitist) perspective on music, a practice orientation, and ethnographic methods with a concern for non-academic perspectives (Giovanna P. Del Negro & Harris M. Berger, ‘New Directions in the Study of Everyday Life. Expressive Culture and the Interpretation of Practice.’ In: Harris M. Berger & Giovanna P. Del Negro, *Identity and Everyday Life. Essays in the Study of Folklore, Music, and Popular Culture*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004, p. 4; p. 19). Everyday life thus is, in a way, to be understood as ‘life’ simply.

²³ Meyer & Schareika, 2009a. In its most extreme version this leads to the insight that also institutions exist only in as far as they are brought to life in specific social situations by individual actors. See Jeff Coulter, ‘Human Practices and the Observability of the ‘Macro-Social.’ In: Theodore Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina & Eike von Savigny (Eds.), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London: Routledge, 2001.

²⁴ Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984 (1967), p. 36. Giddens would probably conceptualize this idea as ‘structuration’ (Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984). This idea is echoed in Sally Falk Moore’s description of ethnographic fieldwork: “...an attempt to comprehend the interlock between and among the repeated and the unique, the determined and the improvised, the propulsions of ongoing contests,

individuals are “the unique crossing point of practices, of bodily-mental routines”²⁵. The task of the social sciences then is “a systematic elucidation of the logic of our ordinary practices (...) in our ordinary life circumstances”²⁶.

Studying musical social situations from the viewpoint of practice theory makes it possible to study music as a social phenomenon in its full everyday life complexity, without having to reduce music to an inner structure, a symbolic system or an act of communication. On the basis of an empirical study of music in everyday life, it becomes possible to show how through specific ‘ways of musicking’ we socially construct our world and our life.

The choice for practice theory, finally, further underlines as well as specifies the place of this study within the field of ethnomusicology²⁷. By adopting a cultural theory of the social for studying music this study places itself within the discipline of ethnomusicology; by adopting practice theory and its ‘thin theory of culture’²⁸ as its specific theoretical basis, it underlines the validity of many of the arguments against a too taken-for-granted use of the word ‘culture’ in ethnomusicology and in favor of, in Rice’s words, ‘subject-centered ethnographies’²⁹ focusing on self-identity in modernity.

2.3 Reckwitz’ theory of practice of modernity – putting the individual center stage

This study will be based on the formulation of a theory of practice in the work of German sociologist Andreas Reckwitz³⁰. Reckwitz published several books and articles in the domain of the sociology of culture. As his major work until now may be considered *Das hybride Subjekt*³¹ (‘The Hybrid Subject’). Reckwitz bases his theory of the hybrid subject on a wide-ranging integration of ideas of various social theorists and philosophers within the domain of culturalist social theorizing, with an emphasis on the theory of practice. As such his work can be read as an attempt at a grand synthesis of the existing literature on the theory of practice.

the trajectories of ambition and submission, the dynamic factors in the organization of organizations” (Sally Falk Moore, ‘The Ethnography of the Present and the Analysis of Process.’ In: Robert Borofsky (Ed.), *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993.

²⁵ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 256.

²⁶ Coulter, 2001, p. 29. In this quote, ‘practices’ does of course not refer to the practices of a theory of practice, but to concrete acts of individuals in a particular social situation.

²⁷ See section 1.2.2.

²⁸ See section 2.4.

²⁹ Rice, 2003, p. 252.

³⁰ Reckwitz (b. 1970) studied in Bonn, Hamburg and Cambridge and worked as research fellow in Hamburg and as professor in sociology in Konstanz and, since 2010, in Frankfurt (Oder).

³¹ Andreas Reckwitz, *Das hybride Subjekt. Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne*. [‘The hybrid subject. A theory of the subject cultures from the bourgeois modern to the postmodern.’] Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2006.

2.3.1 *The elements of Reckwitz' formulation of a theory of practice*³²

2.3.1.1 Subject forms and hybridity

In his work Reckwitz describes the period of modernity (from the 18th century to the present) as a period in which various definitions of how to be an individual, a person, a self, a subject in the world change over the years. As Reckwitz states, “the problem-setting of modern society exists precisely in the direction in which social practice and the subject are to be fashioned when they have emphasized themselves as contingent”³³; it is therefore a matter of “dealing with contingency”³⁴. These subject definitions, expressed in what Reckwitz calls *subject forms*, are hybrid in essence, which accounts for the continuous change in definitions of the subject in the modern period. The period of modernity may be seen as a period in which different subject forms struggle for hegemony – in vain, due to the hybridity inherent in each subject form. The three consecutive dominant subject forms in modernity are, according to Reckwitz, the ‘bourgeois modern’, the post-bourgeois ‘organized modern’, and the post-organized-modern ‘postmodern modern’ subject forms³⁵.

2.3.1.2 Culture and cultural codes

Reckwitz' theory of practice aims at describing the subject, which holds a central place in modernity, as a cultural form. *Culture* consists of collective cognitive and symbolic structures, it can be seen as a web of *cultural codes*. Cultural codes make distinctions in and classifications of the world possible, and vice versa: distinctions and classifications show cultural codes at work. Sometimes classifications are based on binary distinctions, but they may also be based on more complex systems of distinctions. An individual subject therefore is a “contingent product of symbolic orders which model what a subject is, as what it understands itself, how it should act, talk, move, what it can want”.³⁶

2.3.1.3 Practice, discourse – ‘ways of doing and talking’

The codes of culture can be found in *practices*. A practice, as “a socially regulated, typified, routinized form of bodily acting”³⁷, incorporates know-how knowledge, interpretive knowledge, motives and emotions. Examples of practices mentioned by

³² In this and the following section I will closely follow – sometimes paraphrase – Reckwitz' explanation of subject cultures as seen from a theory of practice, to be found in Reckwitz, 2006, pp. 33-96. Direct quotations are indicated by quotation marks.

³³ “Die Problemstellung der modernen Kultur besteht exact darin, in welche Richtung die soziale Praxis und das Subjekt zu gestalten sind, wenn sie sich als kontingent herausgestellt haben.” Reckwitz, 2006, p. 79.

³⁴ “Das Problem der ‘Kontingenzbewältigung’”; *ibid.*

³⁵ Reckwitz therefore sees the post-modern subject culture (roughly from 1970 onward) not as an era lying after (and therefore outside of) modernity, but as one of the three historical hegemonic subject cultures within modernity at large. Although post-modernity is the most recent subject culture of modernity, Reckwitz argues that is not to be confused with it being the culmination point of modernity in some teleological-developmental scheme (Reckwitz 2006, p. 449). Reckwitz explicitly differentiates post-modernity (as a historic period with a specific hegemonic subject culture) from post-modernism, which he describes as an artistically based subject discourse of the counter culture of the 1960s and 70s (*id.*, p. 444).

³⁶ “... kontingentes Produkt symbolischer Ordnungen, welche (...) modellieren, was ein Subjekt ist, als was es sich versteht, wie es zu handeln, zu reden, sich zu bewegen hat, was es wollen kann”. Reckwitz, 2006, p. 34.

³⁷ “... eine sozial geregelte, typisierte, routinisierte Form des körperlichen Verhaltens”. Reckwitz, 2006, p.

36.

Reckwitz are apologizing, bourgeois family life, making furniture or watching movies; in music they might be listening to music or talking about music. Practices can be intersubjective, in which case signs used between individuals often play a role; they can be interobjective, when artifacts are part of the practice; and they can be self-referential in the case when an individual is mainly directed towards itself. Practices have a normative content – how things ‘should’ be done – and are repeated over and over in time, but they are also able to change over time.

Subject forms and the subject codes present in them are implicitly lived in practices and explicitly formulated in *discourses*. Discourses and practices are tied together in what Reckwitz calls practice/discourse-formations (or, in formations where discourse is dominant over practice, discourse/practice-formations). A discourse can be seen as a specific form of practice: a practice in which regulated representations (for example of specific subject forms) are produced. In those representations, cultural codes manifest themselves, governing the imaginable. By producing representations of subject forms, discourses make models and anti-models of subjects available, thus explicating the subject codes present in specific subject forms. Subject codes, in other words, are used – implicitly in practices, explicitly in discourses³⁸ – for making differences visible, for ‘othering’. As examples of discourses, Reckwitz mentions the discourse of the bourgeois novel in bourgeois modernity, the discourse of social psychology in organized modernity, and the discourse of personal advising in postmodern modernity.

There seems to be a problematic ordering of terms at stake in Reckwitz’ formulations here, in which practice functions at the same time on the same level as discourse (practice and discourse are respectively subject codes ‘as lived’ and subject codes ‘as formulated’) as on a meta-level (a discourse is a specific sort of practice). This unclarity also shows in various slightly different definitions and circumscriptions of what practices are in various Reckwitzian sources: on the one hand a practice is “a socially regulated, typified, routinized form of *bodily acting*”³⁹, focusing on ‘ways of doing’, on the other hand “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, *things are described* and the world is understood”⁴⁰, incorporating ‘ways of talking’ in the practices. I here choose, slightly at odds with the purport of some of the summary above but in line with Reckwitz’ formulation of discourse as discursive practice⁴¹, to consider practice as the overarching concept, containing ‘ways of doing’ (routinized bodily action) and ‘ways of talking’ (discourse).

2.3.1.4 Social fields and life forms

Practices can form complexes which eventually may become *social fields*. Those are not seen as entities with fixed boundaries but rather as soft-boundaried and continuously

³⁸ Reckwitz explicitly states that the difference between practice and discourse is not to be understood in terms of a (Marxian) base-superstructure relation. Reckwitz, 2006, p. 44.

³⁹ Reckwitz, 2006, p. 36; Italics added. For the German original see note 37 in this chapter.

⁴⁰ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250.

⁴¹ Reckwitz speaks of “Practices and discourses (that is: discursive practices)...” [“Praktiken und Diskurse (das heist diskursive Praktiken)...”]. Reckwitz, 2006, p. 44

developing clusters of practices. The three most important social fields in which subject practices in the modern era are found, are the field of work, the field of the private and the intimate, and the field of ‘technologies of the self’ or ‘self practices’ – the field of handling the media, of consumption, and of bodily practices through which the individual builds self-referential relations to itself by developing e.g. specific individual cognitive or emotional competencies. All fields are to be considered as specific formations of routinized bodily actions, discourses and artifacts; through the artifacts, they are bound to very specific historic circumstances in the development of artifacts.

Reckwitz specifically emphasizes the importance for subject forms of a cross-layering of *social fields* and ‘life forms’⁴². If social fields may be considered as a horizontal compartmentalization of practices in everyday life, life forms may be considered as its vertical complement. Life forms are for example the bourgeois or the proletarian subject. They cross the boundaries of the social fields in the same way as the social fields cross the boundaries of life forms – the bourgeois subject is constituted through his practices in the social fields of work, of the private and of the technologies of the self; the social field of work at the same time is constituted in the work practices of bourgeois, proletarian or other subjects. Or in Reckwitz’ words: “Life forms build a network of practices which at the same time participate as segments in various social fields, just as conversely social fields build a network of practices which at the same time participate as segments in various life forms.”⁴³

2.3.1.5 Subject cultures and subject orders

It are the life forms that, through an over-determination in the various social fields (and therefore not restricted to one specific social field), make subject forms visible as *subject cultures* crossing the various social fields.⁴⁴ A specific role here is that of ‘dispersed practices’ and ‘interdiscourses’: dispersed practices are the same practices found in various social fields (for example the practice of experimenting in the post-modern era), interdiscourses are discourses⁴⁵ found in various social fields (for example the subject representations in management literature and in mass media such as movies and television in the era of the organized modern). At any given time in modernity, various subject cultures co-exist. When one subject culture becomes dominant, it becomes a *subject order*⁴⁶.

⁴² See Reckwitz, 2006, pp. 62-66. The concept of ‘life form’ does not become completely clear in Reckwitz’ work, specifically in its relation to subject form and subject order.

⁴³ “Lebensformen bilden ein Netzwerk von Praktiken (...) die zugleich als Segmente an unterschiedlichen Lebensformen partizipieren, so wie umgekehrt soziale Felder ein Netzwerk von Praktiken bilden, die zugleich als Segmente an unterschiedlichen Lebensformen partizipieren.” Reckwitz, 2006, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Reckwitz stresses that this matrix model of social fields and life forms is meant to counter the juxtaposition of for example life world and system world in Habermas (Reckwitz 2006, p. 64). Life world and system world are not mutually exclusive realms, but are different angles from which one may look at the same practices building overarching subject forms.

⁴⁵ Which, in my view, are specific forms of practice.

⁴⁶ See section 2.3.3.

2.3.2 *The individual in Reckwitz' theory of practice*

The individual in Reckwitz' view is, as mentioned earlier, a “unique crossing point of practices”⁴⁷; a ‘bundle of dispositions’: “In so far as it is nothing else but a carrier of routinized practices, it makes itself understood as an agglomeration of competencies, as a set of interiorized criteria and schemes”⁴⁸. The description of the individual as a bundle of dispositions – of possible constellations of doing, knowing and feeling, organized by the interpretation framework of cultural codes – shows the contingent and open character of the subject. Reckwitz calls his theory therefore a “consciously ‘thin’ theory of the subject”⁴⁹. Part of the cultural codes serving as an interpretation framework for the subject as a bundle of dispositions are specific subject codes: codes about what a subject should be. In that sense individual subjects are carriers of more abstract subject forms, typifications of ‘social characters’ which act as norms⁵⁰.

Individuals in this theory never coincide with a specific subject form, but are highly idiosyncratic for various reasons. To start with, subject forms allow within its definitions of the subject room for alternatives, for nuances, without losing the specific character of the subject form. Secondly, individuals are carriers of many different practices, often connected to various subject forms at the same time. Thirdly, because subject forms exist only in their reproduction in the practices as carried out by individuals in everyday life, in reproducing subject forms, individuals can misinterpret, make new nuances and new combinations, thus transforming subject forms continuously. Subject forms therefore are not only a matter of social enforcement; although it cannot be described as sheer ‘free choice’, the individual concretization of subject form(s) leaves room for nuance and contingency, and individuals tend to be attached affectively to their idiosyncratic concretization of subject form(s). Individual ‘identity’ in this theory can be seen as a form of self-understanding through the lens of available subject forms.⁵¹

2.3.3 *A history of modern subject cultures*

In modern society, various subject cultures exist side by side, concentrating themselves in for example specific milieus of interaction, using the same symbolic resources and ‘othering’ other subject forms. Their relation is not one of strict pluralism, nor is it a strictly vertical differentiation in resources or class positions. Rather it is a complex amalgam of cultural differences, in which, seen historically, subject cultures may be residual, emergent, dominant or declining, and seen in terms of power may be hegemonic, sub-hegemonic, non-hegemonic or anti-hegemonic.

⁴⁷ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 256.

⁴⁸ “Indem es nichts anderes ist als ein Träger routinierter Praktiken, lässt es sich als ein Agglomeration von Kompetenzen begreifen, als ein Set interiorisierter Kriterien und Schemata.” Reckwitz, 2006, p. 40.

⁴⁹ “... eine bewusst ‘dünne’ Theorie des Subjekts”. Reckwitz, 2006, p. 40.

⁵⁰ The relation between individual subjects and subject forms may be said to be similar as the relation between social situations and practices; see section 2.2, footnote 14.

⁵¹ This must not be confused with the modern core cultural code of ‘individuality’. This code is central in all modern subject forms, is however in the various variants of modern subjectivity (the bourgeois modern, the organized modern, the postmodern modern) differently defined. See Reckwitz, 2006, p. 48.

Hegemonic subject cultures – subject orders – and subject cultures striving to become hegemonic posit their subject form (also in institutionalized form) as general, universal, without alternatives and attractive. They are not of necessity the subject culture of the majority, but are often tied to the dominant minority in a society. Hegemony is never stable – subject cultures may strive for hegemony, may lose their hegemony, may be sub-hegemonial, may (often in the form of ‘discourse/practice-formations’ with a discourse surplus) be anti-hegemonial, or may exist relatively autonomous next to other subject cultures.

The cultural dominance of subject orders is an instable process, characterized by hybridity and the possibilities of multiple interpretations⁵². Reckwitz describes it as “a conflict-ridden opening, closing and reopening sequence of contingency”⁵³, deeply rooted in a number of general ideas of modern culture, presented as universal: the idea that life is contingent, that practice and subjects are malleable, and that the future is an open space which has to be formed by human beings. He distinguishes three consecutive dominant subject cultures in the modern era: the bourgeois-modern, the organized-modern, and the postmodern modern, each preceded by a transformational aesthetic movement (respectively the romantic, the avant-garde and the counter culture).

Although subject cultures may be dominant and present themselves as homogeneous, they are in fact intrinsically heterogeneous in a number of ways: they are a combination of practices and codes from various social fields, single codes are internally hybrid because they relate to different social fields at the same time, and there is always a ‘constitutive outside’, an ‘anti-subject’, which is hybrid in itself and may contain attractive elements. Therefore within a subject culture there are always two contrary tendencies: the tendency to unify on the basis of the over-determination of cultural codes on the one hand and the tendency to differentiate in and between codes on the other hand. The individual subject as well as the various subject forms therefore must be analyzed on the levels of unity and diversity at the same time; as a hybrid subject. And history must be seen as a combination of continuity and discontinuity at the same time: the continuity of the transfer of meaning from older subject forms to newer ones as well as the discontinuity of the acceptance of conflicting or new meanings in new subject forms – in Reckwitz’ words a growing intertextual “selective reworking of the earlier in the later”⁵⁴.

2.3.3.1 The bourgeois-modern subject order and the moral-sovereign subject⁵⁵

The first subject order of the modern era is the bourgeois-modern, dominant from about the second half of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The bourgeois-

⁵² See for more on this section 2.3.3.4.

⁵³ “... eine konflikthafte Sequenz der Öffnung, der Schließung, der erneuten Öffnung, erneuten Schließung etc. von Kontingenz”; Reckwitz, 2006, p. 76.

⁵⁴ “... die selektive Verarbeitung des Früheren im Späteren”; Reckwitz, 2006, p. 88.

⁵⁵ In the sections 2.3.3.1-2.3.3.4 I will, in a slightly changed order and in a very abridged way, follow Reckwitz’ own summarizing explanations of the historical dimensions of subject forms as found in Reckwitz, 2006, pp. 97-108, 275-288, and 441-451.

modern subject is the first ‘modern way to be a subject’, time and place specific but with universal pretensions. Reckwitz describes the bourgeois-modern subject as a subject governed by two codes: the bourgeois-modern subject is a ‘subjector’ in the sense that it is autonomous self-governing (the code of the reflexive-sovereign, self-oriented subject), and at the same time it is ‘subjected’ to the ideas of what it means to be a moral subject (the code of the moral and principle-oriented subject). This moral-sovereign subject is set apart against its predecessors of folk as well as aristocratic subject culture, the first being perceived as non-sovereign and the latter as a-moral. An important impetus for the genesis of the bourgeois-modern subject was given by the transformational aesthetic movement of romanticism⁵⁶.

In the social fields of work, the private and the technologies of the self, specific practices emerge in which the bourgeois-modern subject materializes. Their genesis is stimulated by the specific material circumstances of the time, specifically by the growing transport possibilities of persons, goods and money through modern traffic as well as of signs through the growing importance of print. Examples of practices in which the bourgeois-modern subject establishes itself are in the field of work the profession of the merchant, sovereign in the handling of information and moral in its moderation, transparency and goal-orientation; in the field of the private the psychologization of personal relationships as well as of the self, leading to a building of an affective inner world; and in the field of the technologies of the self the practices of diary writing and solitary reading, leading to a constant autobiographical awareness. The bourgeois-modern subject thus becomes a self-governing sovereign individual competent in reflecting on and communicating about things and the self, as well as a moral individual following natural moral principles with a universal pretention.

The bourgeois-modern subject is inherently hybrid. Dualisms exist between as well as within the two codes of sovereignty and morality, exemplified by e.g. the contrast between self-discipline and emotional sensibility, a balanced life vs. the risks of the market, or the detailed individual self-perception against an orientation towards the essential and universal general. Furthermore, Reckwitz describes two stages in the bourgeois-modern: a first stage which is more inward oriented, focusing on morality as opposed against its contrast the excessive as exemplified in the aristocrat ‘other’; and a second stage which is more outward-oriented, focusing on the respectable-civilized as opposed against its contrast the primitive as found in the proletarian and colonial ‘others’. In this second phase of the bourgeois modern, a bifurcation takes place between the spheres of work (becoming de-moralized and economicized) and the private (becoming romanticized and ‘domesticated’), and between a male/active and female/passive opposition.

The bourgeois-modern subject order stands in a specific relationship towards the organized-modern as well as the postmodern subject orders. In the organized-modern, an

⁵⁶ See section 2.3.3.4.

opposition is expressed against the inner, moral as well as the individual self-orientation, whereas the anti-expressive rule orientation of the bourgeois-modern is translated towards an organized-modern order. In the postmodern modern, sovereign self-government, entrepreneurship and sensitivity are adopted from the bourgeois modern, whereas the opposition is sought with its anti-expressive rule orientation.

2.3.3.2 The organized-modern subject order and the employee subject

At the beginning of the 20th century, the bourgeois-modern subject order erodes due to a number of developments. Material-technological developments in transport (trains, cars, planes), information (audio-visual media), organization ('scientific management'), production (electric instead of mechanical) and city building (architecture and urban planning) lead to a 'time-space-compression' and thus to changes in the subject form, in which the social and the technical as well as the visual become central. In new interdiscourses in the human sciences (psychology, sociology, management science) codes of the fundamental social character of the subject (a code of 'social normalism') and of the possibilities of technical 'social engineering' (a code of 'rule orientation') are developed, whereas at the same time, aesthetic counter movements of the avant-garde⁵⁷ produce a radical-aesthetic 'new man' geared towards the 'consumption of visual surfaces' led by a code of 'attractive surface aesthetics'. In the period of 1940-1970, this new, 'Americanist' subject culture is dominant.

In the three social fields of work, the private and technologies of the self, the organized-modern subject materializes through specific practices. In the field of work, socio-technical practices are developed focusing on effective intersubjective and interobjective coordination, with as subject model the 'manager-engineer'. In the private field, 'peer society' is dominant, exemplified in the building of free-time sportsmanship-like relations in which individuals are extrovert, socially oriented as well as socially 'available', and where 'social normality' is the norm. When it comes to the field of technologies of the self, the consumption of 'visual surfaces' (audio-visual media, but also consumer goods) as an identity-asserting form of practice is central, leading also to the perception of a visibly performed self. All this leads to an extroverted organized-modern employee subject form in which the codes of social normalism, rule orientation and attractive surface aesthetics are combined.

This organized-modern 'employee subject' again is an intrinsically hybrid subject. Various tensions exist in and between codes. The code of social normalism as materialized in the work field, for example, gives room for a focus on the individual within the collective as well as a contrasting focus on personality salesmanship for career building. In the field of the technologies of the self, tensions exist between for example the imaginative and the realistic in audio-visual productions as well as between the stylized and the useful in consumption. Between the codes of social normalism and rule orientation on the one hand and the aesthetic-visual on the other hand, there is a tension between boundary setting and boundary transgression.

⁵⁷ See section 2.3.3.4

As shown above, the organized modern builds on *and* opposes the bourgeois modern subject order. It has the same double relationship with the postmodern modern: there is a shared aesthetization of everyday life and a focus on consumption, but a contrast in the stress put in the postmodern modern on the eccentric ‘a-normal’ and on the introvert.

2.3.3.3 The postmodern-modern subject order and the consumptive-creative subject

The dominance of the organized-modern subject culture erodes since the 1960s. Central notions of the organized modern such as functional hierarchic organizational structures, the socially controlled core family, the peer society, mass consumption, and the dominance of the audiovisual are left behind. Various developments influence this: the influence from the aesthetic movement of the ‘counter culture’ of the 1960s and 70s⁵⁸; the digital revolution which weakens boundaries between the social ‘inner’ and ‘outer’, between the technical and the visual, between the real and the fictitious; human science discourses centering around the development of the self and about the contingency of identity and self-interpretation; and the development of an economy based on freedom of choice. As a result, two codes become central simultaneously: the aesthetic/expressive and the economic/market-oriented. This leads to a rising dominance of the consumptive-creative subject form.

The consumptive-creative subject form is exemplified in the urban-dwelling ‘creative class’ and, formed by the two codes of the aesthetic/expressive and the economic/market-oriented, manifests itself in shifts in the importance of certain practices. In the social field of work there is a shift towards subjective self creation through symbol-processing work in project form by entrepreneurial selves. In the field of the private, social relations are more and more seen as temporary products of processes of choice which (should) foster self growth. In the field of the techniques of the self practices of individual aesthetic consumption, ‘experience consumption’ and stylization of the body become expressions of the consumptive-creative subject form.

Again, the consumptive-creative subject form is intrinsically hybrid. The main tension stems from the difference between the code of the inward oriented aesthetic/expressive and the code of the outward oriented economic/market-oriented. The two codes lead for example to a double definition of the social: the social may be considered as based in more fixed communities as well as in more fluid networks. Another tension between the codes is the tension between the idea of self governance and self optimization on the one hand whereas at the same time the individual seems subjected to the contingency of the market on the other hand. But the codes themselves are also hybrid; inside the code of the aesthetic/expressive, for example, there is a tension between an orientation towards an authentic self which must be uncovered and a contingent self which must be produced and innovated continuously.

⁵⁸ See section 2.3.3.4

The postmodern modern subject order of the consumptive-creative subject is oriented again, as was the bourgeois-modern, towards the sovereignty of the subject, as opposed to the organized-modern subject order which stresses the normalized social subject. There is, however, also an orientation towards the organized modern in its rejection of the bourgeois-modern code of morality and its orientation towards the aestheticism of life.⁵⁹

2.3.3.4 Transformational aesthetic subject cultures: romanticism, avant-garde and counter culture

Hegemonic subject cultures are, in Reckwitz' view, by definition unstable. There are three main sources of this instability. Hegemonic subject cultures are hybrid constellations and therefore unstable in themselves, for example in the hybrid character of their subject codes. They are unstable because they always interact with developments in for example material culture or scientific discourse. And they are unstable because their hegemony is constantly challenged by other subject cultures (for example residual, emergent or declining subject cultures), which may oppose the dominant subject culture by questioning its principles and proposing alternative definitions of reality and subject.

Reckwitz assigns a special place to what he calls 'transformational aesthetic subject cultures', which he describes as aesthetically grounded "discourse/practice-complexes which in their core conduct the initiation of a new subject model directed against the so far dominant culture"⁶⁰. Transformational subject cultures need not be aesthetic, they can also be based on political or religious ideas for example. Specific for aesthetic oriented transformational subject cultures is their attempt to propose an alternative for the dominant subject culture based on aesthetic subjectivity, on (inward oriented) sensory perception and on (outward oriented) expressive, symbol-creating action, stemming from a 'semiotization of reality' and from an ontology in which the world is not so much a world of things and the social but of the subjective and of play. These alternative aesthetic subject cultures are not anti-modern, but alternative modern – they are part of modernity precisely in the fact that they are subject forms, expressing how to be an individual in the world.

Reckwitz describes how three transformational aesthetic subject cultures helped to establish the three hegemonic subject cultures described above by serving as a means to cross thresholds to new subject orders. The first one is the romantic movement, offering an alternative for the bourgeois modern subject form. The romantic subject is a subject focused on aesthetic experience, striving for individual development and for expression of a unique, individual inner depth; it challenges the individual to continuously transform its self, to explore all possibilities of the self; and it orients the individual towards the experience of the moment and the excessive. Practices in which it concretizes its central code of individual self-expression are romantic love (instead of bourgeois marriage),

⁵⁹ Reckwitz elaborates his analysis of the post-modern creative-consumptive subject form in his recent *Die Erfindung der Kreativität. Zum Prozess gesellschaftlicher Ästhetisierung*. [‘The invention of creativity. On the process of societal aesthetization.’] Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2012.

⁶⁰ "... Diskurs-/Praxiskomplexe, die in ihrem Kern die Initiierung eines neuartigen, gegen die bisher dominanten Kultur gerichteten Subjektmodells betreiben". Reckwitz, 2006, p. 92.

artistic originality (instead of bourgeois work), and an inner sensitivity in for example the experience of nature or of music listening.

The second transformational aesthetic subject culture is the avant-garde movement from the early twentieth century onwards – or rather: the various avant-garde movements such as aestheticism, symbolism, expressionism, futurism, surrealism and Dadaism. Central in all these avant-garde movements is the code of the transgressive – the avant-garde subject wants to cross the (organized-modern) boundaries through perception and experience, and continuously wants to renew itself in that. It delights itself in experimental play with contingent meanings, in giving free reign to the subconscious and the primitive, in focusing on artificial, technical structures, and in an aesthetic stylization of outward appearances. Practices in which this happens are for example city life (the ‘Metropole-experience’), film reception, artistic activities, as well as experiments in intimacy, sexuality and gender.

The third transformational aesthetic subject culture is the counter culture of the 1960s and 1970s. This subject culture is aesthetically grounded but does not limit itself to the world of art, for example because it also has a thoroughly political side to it. Basic to the counter culture is the wish to reach individual fulfillment through extraordinary experiences. It experiments with the sensitization of sensory experience, bodily experience and emotions; with creative activity and lively group experiences; and with stylization of the self. Practices in which this takes form are for example the experiencing of pop- and rock music, perceptual expansion through psychedelic drugs, Asian meditation techniques, sexual practices, self-stylization, and the foundation of creative communities.

2.4 Studying the musical present through Reckwitz’ eyes

2.4.1 Summary

Summarizing, music in this study is considered as a social phenomenon and therefore studied from the perspective of social theory. Specifically, I choose to adopt a culturalist social theory: a social theory in which human life is understood on the basis of symbolic structures of meaning. This leads to a double interpretive position: people live in an interpreted world, and research is an interpretation thereof. Practice theory is a specific form of culturalist social theory, placing the social not in minds, texts or interactions, but in practices: routinized ways of doing and talking. Practices are abstractions from the concrete acting of individuals in specific social situations, uncovered by a careful study of everyday life.

The formulation of practice theory on which this study rests is Reckwitz’ theory of subject cultures in modernity. According to that theory, the central question in the modern era is one of subject definitions, answered in specific subject forms. Those subject forms are cultural forms; they are part of subject cultures, expressing what an individual is by

using specific cultural codes, which can be found in practices in various social fields and life forms. Individuals are to be seen as bundles of dispositions, contingent carriers of routinized practices.

Subject cultures in modernity exist beside each other. Some of them become, with help from aesthetic transformational subject cultures such as romanticism, avant garde and counter culture, hegemonic subject orders eventually: consecutively the bourgeois modern with its moral-sovereign subject, the organized modern with its social, rule-oriented and surface-aesthetic oriented subject, and the post-modern modern with its consumptive-creative subject.

Central in this formulation of practice theory is the notion of hybridity. The present is seen as an era in which various subject cultures are present. Those subject cultures are hybrid in itself, due to the inherent contradictions within and between their cultural codes, the struggle with other subject codes, and historical developments in for example the production of artifacts. And individuals are never simple images of specific subject forms, but in their acts in specific social situations referring to a multiplicity of subject forms.

2.4.2 Implications

As formulated in section 1.3, the general research question of this study is the following: what are the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century? The theoretical background of practice theory as pictured above has a number of implications for the present study.

The general research question focuses on the present: the beginning of the twenty-first century. The theoretical background pictured above leads to a characterization of that present as a modern present – a present belonging firmly to the era of modernity (the period roughly from the eighteenth century to the present), in which the main question is what it means to be an individual in the world, and how we are to ‘deal with contingency’. Formulated on the level of music, the study may also be characterized as a study into how individuals are, or become, an individual through music; a study, in other words, into “the ways in which each person ha[s], in practice, developed a whole and unique understanding of how to be musical in this world”⁶¹.

The present furnishes us with a specific postmodern modern answer to the question of the individual. A postmodern modern subject form, says Reckwitz, is holding hegemony at present, in which the truly modern individual is defined as an “aesthetic-economic double”⁶². However, this subject form coexists and often competes with other subject forms. Analyzing the role of music in present postmodern modernity is therefore not a question of simply seeing reality as an instantiation of one hegemonic, postmodern

⁶¹ Daniel Cavicchi, ‘My Music, their Music, and the Irrelevance of Music Education.’ In: Thomas A. Regelski & J. Terry Gates (Eds.), *Music Education for Changing Times*. New York: Springer, 2009, p. 97.

⁶² An “ästhetisch-ökonomische Doublette”; Reckwitz, 2006, p. 500 ff.

modern aesthetic-economic subject form. Rather, an analysis of individual musical life in the present must focus on the way individuals constitute themselves as subjects through music. It may look for evidence for the hegemony of the postmodern-modern subject form, but must be very observant to hybridity, to tensions in various subject cultures and between competing subject cultures.

Individuals become individuals through subject cultures. Accepting that the individual is a 'homo culturalis' means highlighting the importance of culture – as indicated earlier, in that this study is firmly ethnomusicological. It chooses however for a specific view on what culture is – one might say, paraphrasing Reckwitz, that it adopts a 'consciously thin theory of culture'. The study does not presuppose that culture exists 'somewhere', waiting to be identified and studied; rather, it finds culture through cultural codes as expressed in practices, in routinized ways of doing and talking. Culture is a symbolic order, a web of cultural codes making the world intelligible, but this symbolic order exists nowhere else than in practices as performed in everyday social situations. Combined with the hybridity of modern life described above, culture may therefore be described not only as shared ways of doing and talking, but also as disputed ways of doing and talking. If culture is a noun, then a plural; but it is more likely to be a verb. A verb covering, in the case of music, activities in which "the cultural agency of (...) musico-stylistic forms[,] is constantly being made and remade by social agents acting in real-time situations in response to circumstances and contingencies arising from the flow and process of everyday life as this is experienced in micro-social situations"⁶³.

Given the above, in order to unravel the role of music in present life, the focus must be the individual. Individuals acting in social situations (moving their bodies, treating other subjects, handling objects, describing their actions and through all that understanding their world) conjure up their shared and disputed ways of doing and talking, bundling them in specific practices. Again, an open eye for hybridity is required; individuals never coincide with one specific subject form (and therefore can never be seen as carriers of one specific subject culture) but are to be seen as 'bundles of dispositions' which in a contingent way act in everyday social situations and thus, 'seen but (often) unnoticed', contribute to the hybridity of present-day life.

Connected to the focus on the individual in this study, two interrelated points are finally to be made:

- individuals act in all kinds of social situations belonging to a wide variety of social fields. In order to cover not one but various social fields (thus being able to uncover Reckwitz' 'dispersed practices' and 'interdiscourses'), the study of individual musical life should cover a wide variety of social situations;
- knowing that subject forms are often instantiated in specific 'life forms', it is crucial that a study of music as practice in individual musical life encompasses individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and social positions.

⁶³ Andy Bennett, 'Towards a Cultural Sociology of Popular Music.' *Journal of Sociology* 44 (2008), p. 430.

The question about the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century therefore generates a study of how a wide variety of individuals in current postmodern modern society – as instantiated by life in the province of Groningen – is using music in a wide variety of social situations, what this brings them, and how their musical behavior can be interpreted in terms of practice theory as described in this chapter.

3. Uses and functions of music – a review

3.1 Studying ‘musicking’ in everyday life

In this study, I try to understand the uses (the ‘how’s’) and functions (the ‘why’s’) of musical life AD 2010 in Groningen, the Netherlands. As expressed in the introduction, I see music in this study not so much as a work of art, but rather, in line with the theoretical background of this study in practice theory as treated in chapter 2, as social behavior: as musical activities meaningful for individuals in everyday life.

My first point of orientation is existing research on the uses and functions of music as carried out by (ethno)musicologists, in particular the uses and functions of music in western societies as studied in ethnomusicology-at-home. Ethnomusicology, however, is far from the only discipline studying the uses and functions of music in western societies. As DeNora remarks, “the boundaries between ‘sociology’ of music, ‘musicology’, ‘ethnomusicology’, ‘anthropology of music’ and ‘social psychology’ of music continue to blur”¹. Therefore, in this short literature review I will take into account research in (qualitative) music sociology and in the (social) psychology of music on the subject as well, including some works from the adjacent fields of music therapy and music education.

3.2 Uses and functions of music

The distinction between the uses and functions of music has been formulated paradigmatically in ethnomusicology when Alan Merriam dedicated a separate chapter to it² in his *The Anthropology of Music*, “the guiding text for a generation of ethnomusicologists”³. There he connects the distinction between uses and functions to other distinctions, amongst which the distinction between activity and purpose. Merriam defines uses as “the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice⁴ or customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities”; function “concerns the reason for [music’s] employment and particularly the broader purpose which it serves”⁵. A way of phrasing of the basic difference between the uses and functions of music in Merriam’s view, indicating their relationship, is that “we use music to serve several functions”⁶. As in many later studies on uses and functions of music, Merriam focuses on the functions of music and spends relatively little attention to uses, defining a list of ten functions of music. It is Merriam’s distinction in

¹ Tia DeNora, ‘Music Sociology. Getting the Music Into the Action.’ *British Journal of Music Education* 20/2 (2003), p. 175.

² Merriam, 1964, pp. 209-227.

³ Nicholas Cook, ‘We Are All Ethnomusicologists Now.’ In: Stobart (Ed.), 2008, p. 56.

⁴ The word ‘practice’ here is used in its everyday rather than in its Reckwitzian sense.

⁵ Merriam, 1964, p. 210.

⁶ Thomas Schäfer & Peter Sedlmeier, ‘From the Functions of Music to Music Preference.’ *Psychology of Music* 37 (2009), p. 280.

uses and functions I will basically follow in this study; I define uses as the customary exercise of music, and functions as the broader purpose of the uses of music.

Merriam's distinction of uses and functions of music has been included later by Bruno Nettl in his chapter on the uses and functions of music in *The Study of Ethnomusicology*⁷, a book possibly characterizable as a guiding text for yet another generation of ethnomusicologists. Nettl reformulates the uses-functions distinction not so much as a dichotomy but rather as "the opposite ends of a continuum, that moves from the absolutely down-to-earth and factual to the most vitally interpretive and thus perhaps unprovable"⁸.

Discussions of the uses and – especially – the functions of music are found in other disciplines than ethnomusicology. In music psychology, regular attention is paid to the uses and/or functions of music. In the sub-discipline of the social psychology of music, the turn towards contextualized research on the purposes and implications (functions) of musical experiences (uses) is even characterized as a change of paradigm in music psychology⁹. Although definitions of the uses and functions of music in music psychology differ¹⁰ and sometimes a clear distinction between the two is lacking¹¹, often the definition of uses and functions of music closely match the distinction in

⁷ Nettl, 2005, pp. 244-258.

⁸ Id., p. 251.

⁹ Adrian North & David Hargreaves, *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 9. It must be said though, that much research in music psychology still is done from what Clarke describes as a reductionist impetus and with little sense of the cultural context of musical behavior. Cf. Eric Clarke, 'Music and Psychology.' In: Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert & Richard Middleton (Eds.), *The Cultural Study of Music. A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 114.

¹⁰ See for example Eric Clarke, Nicola Dibben & Stephanie Pitts, *Music and Mind in Everyday Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, which makes in the table of content a distinction between making music (performing, composing), using music (listening), and acquiring music (learning) – indicating the tendency in much research in the psychology of music to equate 'using music' and 'listening to music' (see section 3.3); the text seems not quite clear on what is meant by functions and on the demarcation with uses (see e.g. pp. 123-124 which seem to contrast with the distinction suggested by the table of contents). Or the work of Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, often together with Adrian Furnham, where what is termed 'uses' is the equivalent of the 'functions' of Merriam; see e.g. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic & Adrian Furnham, 'Personality and Music. Can Traits Explain How People Use Music in Everyday Life?' *British Journal of Psychology* 98 (2007) (in my terms the subtitle might have read: 'Can Traits Explain What People Use Music For in Everyday Life?'); Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Viren Swami & Blanka Cermekova, 'Individual Differences in Music Consumption Are Predicted by Uses of Music and Age Rather Than Emotional Intelligence, Neuroticism, Extraversion or Openness.' *Psychology of Music* 40 (2012).

¹¹ See e.g. the circumscription "... uses of music in everyday life: frequency of listening, situations where music is encountered, emotional responses to music, and motives for listening", combining aspects of Merriam's uses and functions under the heading of uses. Petri Laukka, 'Uses of Music and Psychological Well-Being Among the Elderly.' *Journal of Happiness Studies* 8 (2007), p. 215; or the identification of six 'functional niches' (such as 'travel', 'body work' or 'emotional work' – uses and functions seem to be not strictly separated here) within which four recurring functions appear (such as 'distraction' or 'meaning enhancement') in John Sloboda, Alexandra Lamont & Alinka Greasley, 'Choosing to Hear Music. Motivation, Process, and Effect.' In: Susan Hallam, Ian Cross & Michael Thaut (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

ethnomusicology as described above¹². As in ethnomusicology, the focus in music psychology lies very much on the functions of music rather than on the more prosaic uses¹³. Much of music psychology's research on functions of music is connected to research on music listeners' preferences¹⁴ and on the effects of listening to music¹⁵, including affect regulation¹⁶ – in ethnomusicological terms the functions of music are researched based on one specific use of music in these cases.

In music sociology one might, following DeNora, maintain that basically three theoretical positions are discernible: a more structuralist view in which music mirrors general social structure; a production-of-culture approach in which music's role is influenced by social factors; and a production-of-social-life view in which music helps to constitute social life¹⁷. It is this third view that has led to research on (uses and) functions of music. The differentiation between uses and functions of music is less of a topic in music sociology than it is in ethnomusicology or music psychology. Although Roy and Dowd in a review article on the sociology of music see the question how individuals and groups 'use' music as one of the four main questions in the sociology of music, actually not so much the bare 'use of music' is the topic there but rather the question what people are 'using music for'¹⁸.

Summarizing, work on the uses and functions of music is found in ethnomusicology and, often in different and not always completely transparent terms, in studies in the fields of the (social) psychology of music as well as in music sociology. In this study I will follow a distinction between uses and functions of music going back to work in the anthropology of music (Alan Merriam) and ethnomusicology (Bruno Nettl), in which the word use

¹² E.g. in Claire McDonald & Lauren Stewart, 'Uses and Functions of Music in Congenital Amusia.' *Music Perception. An Interdisciplinary Journal* 25/4 (2008).

¹³ See e.g. the stress on the 'functions' and 'effects' of listening to music in Alinka Greasley & Alexandra Lamont, 'Exploring Engagement with Music in Everyday Life Using Experience Sampling Methodology.' In: Jukka Louhivuori, Tuomas Eerola, Suuvi Saarikallio, Tommi Himberg & Päivi-Sisko Eerola (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 7th Triennial Conference of European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM 2009), Jyväskylä, Finland* (CD-ROM), p. 165; p. 171.

¹⁴ For an overview see North & Hargreaves, 2008, chapter 4. A clear indication is the work of Chamorro-Premuzic quoted above, where 'uses of music' is equated with the listening to or 'consumption' of music.

¹⁵ Cf. the identification 'using music (for)' and 'listening to music' in part 2 of Clarke, Dibben et al., 2010.

¹⁶ See e.g. Annelies van Goethem & John Sloboda, 'The Functions of Music for Affect Regulation.' *Musicae Scientiae* 15 (2011).

¹⁷ DeNora, 2003, p. 167. Cf. Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 1-7. In Richard A. Peterson & Timothy J. Dowd, 'Making Music Sociology. An Introduction.' *Poetics* 32 (2004), p. 195, the claim is made that "[n]o coherent field of music sociology has developed", but that 6 central themes in music sociology have emerged: the links between social structure and music; the shaping of musical worlds; the social construction of musical aesthetics; the institutionalization of musical fields; the use of music in status distinction making; musical components of identity formation. One might say that the first relates mainly to a structuralist view, the third possibly to the production-of-culture view, and the other four to the production-of-social-life view.

¹⁸ William G. Roy & Timothy J. Dowd, 'What is Sociological About Music?' *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010). Employing the word 'use' in the sense of 'use for' (and therefore as an equivalent of 'function') is a widespread phenomenon in music sociology and elsewhere. See e.g. Sidsel Karlsen, 'Using Musical Agency as a Lens. Researching Music Education from the Angle of Experience.' *Research Studies in Music Education* 33 (2011), p. 111 ff; Kari Batt-Rawden & Tia DeNora, 'Music and Informal Learning in Everyday Life.' *Music Education Research* 7/3 (2005), p. 289; or Clarke, Dibben et al., 2010, p. 63.

refers to the customary exercise of music and the word function to the broader purposes of the uses of music: the uses of music ‘serve’ the functions of music, as Merriam states.

3.3 Uses of music

As much of the literature on the uses and functions of music focuses on musical functions, explicit studies of the uses of music – Merriam’s ‘customary exercise of music’ – are scarce. Merriam himself organizes his description of the uses of music around five categories, ranging from ‘material culture and its sanctions’ to ‘language’, and enumerates a wide variety of social situations in which music (and especially song) is used¹⁹. Bruno Nettl expands on this, stating that “music is associated with a plethora of activities. (...) [W]e might present a list of all the activities [that involve music, from concert, church, parade, football game to obligatory background (in the case of teenagers, foreground, at least in terms of volume) at parties, in supermarkets, on elevators, for traveling in cars.”²⁰ Music psychologist Eric Clarke recently indicated in a comparable way the ultimate infinity of such a list of the uses of music: “Music affords dancing, singing (and singing along), playing (and playing along), working, persuading, drinking and eating, doing aerobics, taking drugs, playing air guitar, travelling, protesting, seducing, waiting on the telephone, sleeping... the list is endless.”²¹

An important and seminal contribution to thinking about the uses of music is Small’s (re)invention of the term ‘musicking’ to describe music as a form of human behavior: “To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composition), or by dancing”²². Small’s formulation has been a great help to those who want to study music as a social practice, and has been cited abundantly in all kinds of literature on music. Small’s definition of musicking, broad as it seems, is however limited in one respect: it is intensely tied to the idea that the performance is central in human musical behavior. “To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance”²³, that it is either performing, preparing for a performance, listening to (or dancing to) a performance, or writing music for a performance. Although Small himself states that it is possible with his definition to “extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up

¹⁹ Merriam, 1964, pp. 216-218.

²⁰ Nettl, 2005, p. 250.

²¹ Clarke 2005, p. 204.

²² Small, 1998, p. 9. Small mentions that the word musicking has “an obscure existence in some larger dictionaries” as an equivalent of music performance (ibid.). Earlier use of the expression ‘to music’ is demonstrable for example in Malcolm Ross, ‘What’s Wrong With School Music?’ *British Journal of Music Education* 12 (1995), p. 195; in David Elliott, *Music Matters. A New Philosophy of Music Education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 49 ff (Elliott writes about ‘musicing’ as an equivalent for ‘making music’); and (in the form of ‘to musicate’ as a translation of ‘musiquier’) in Gilbert Rouget, *Music and Trance. A Theory of the Relations Between Music and Possession*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985, p. 105 (cf. Gilbert Rouget, ‘Musical Efficacy. Musicking to Survive – The Case of the Pygmies.’ *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 43 (2011), p. 89, note 2.)

²³ Small, 1998, p. 9.

after everyone else is gone”²⁴, that does not really broaden the concept; it is still centered on music as a performance, as indicated by Small’s consecutive remark that “[t]hey, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance.”²⁵

This focus on the performance as the primary setting of music, the central location of musical behavior²⁶, is taken up in much of the (ethno)musicological literature. In that literature, the focus rests often on the performer side of the performance setting, as can be seen in Titon’s statement that he considers “people *making music* as [the] paradigm case of musical ‘being-in-the-world’”²⁷ as one of the essential elements of ethnography in ethnomusicology, Cook’s definition of participant observation in ethnomusicology as “the bridging of cultural difference through the act of *making music together*”²⁸, or Stone’s mentioning of “[ethnomusicological] fieldwork carried out on location *among the people who perform*”²⁹. This centrality of the performer in thinking about the uses of music is not straightforward however, and is criticized by for example Michelle Bigenho who states that “to privilege ‘doing music’ (...) is to play into Western ideologies about music, talent, giftedness, and so on – all points that should be under anthropological scrutiny rather than assumed as givens”³⁰.

Turning from (ethno)musicology to the social psychology of music, the focus in studies on the uses of music stays on music as a performance, but often shifts from the performer to the listener, and specifically to listening to recorded performances³¹. Some studies have appeared on the uses of music in everyday life using the Experience Sampling Methodology, in which respondents were asked frequently, by use of for example questionnaires on their mobile phones, to report on the music they were hearing or had heard recently, thus leading to a description of for example “the uses of music in everyday life in answer to those general questions of who, what, when, where and why”³² – in which the ‘why’-question of course is in Merriam’s terms not so much a question about uses but about functions of music.

²⁴ Id., p. 9.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ For the relative stress on the performance setting see for example Dowd’s tripartition in musical production (performing) – content (the work) – consumption of music (listening) (Timothy J. Dowd, ‘Introduction: The Sociology of Music. Sounds, Songs, and Society.’ *American Behavioral Scientist* 48 (2005), p. 1408), as well as the centrality of “playing, composing, and listening to music” in Clarke, Dibben et al., 2010, p. 9.

²⁷ Jeff Todd Titon, ‘Knowing Fieldwork.’ In: Barz & Cooley (Eds.), 2008, p. 31. Italics added.

²⁸ Cook, 2008, p. 60. Italics added.

²⁹ Stone, 2008, p. 4. Italics added.

³⁰ Michelle Bigenho, ‘Why I’m Not an Ethnomusicologist. A View from Anthropology.’ In: Stobart (Ed.), 2008, p. 29. See for comparable remarks Antoine Hennion, ‘Music Lovers. Taste as Performance.’ *Theory Culture Society* 18/1 (2001), pp. 1-2; and Roy & Dowd, 2010, p. 187.

³¹ Cf. Simon Frith, ‘Music and Everyday Life.’ In: Clayton, Herbert et al. (Eds.), 2003, p. 100, where he remarks that “[m]ost academic research on everyday music focuses (...) on music listening”, referring to Sloboda (a music psychologist) and DeNora (a music sociologist).

³² Adrian C. North, David J. Hargreaves & Jon J. Hargreaves, ‘Uses of Music in Everyday Life.’ *Music Perception. An Interdisciplinary Journal* 22/1 (2004), p. 46.

Summarizing, work on the uses of music is found in ethnomusicology and in the social psychology of music. In both fields, there seems to be a tendency to focus the attention towards the performance of music, where ethnomusicology often focuses on the performer and the social psychology of music on the listener.

3.4 Functions of music

Merriam's initial formulation of ten principal functions of music has long been the standard in the field of ethnomusicology when thinking about functions of music, and still is cited regularly. Merriam's list of functions ranges from emotional expression via aesthetic enjoyment and physical response to contribution to the integration of society³³. In a section entitled "Response to Alan P. Merriam"³⁴, Bruno Nettl poses the question whether music has not one principal function in a society, "an expression or reflection or direct result of a central cultural core"³⁵, or even a general and unique universal human function. Attempting to explicate the latter, he formulates three universally dominant functions of music: connecting to the deities, connecting to the community, and expressing and communicating messages; further on adding a fourth "very significant group of functions" revolving around the concept of identity³⁶ – one of the dominant concepts in ethnomusicology as well as in sociology and psychology when it comes to the study of the functions of music.

Recently Martin Clayton attempted to rethink the functions of music from the point of view of music psychology but still firmly rooted in ideas as developed in ethnomusicology³⁷. He formulates four central and universal functions of music: regulation of an individual's emotional, cognitive or physiological state; mediation between self and other; symbolic representation; and coordination of action. Those functions are, Clayton states, "largely concerned with relations between the personal and the social", the reason why music "can be described as a flexible tool for managing relationships between self and other"³⁸.

In addition to those attempts to formulate a generic model of the functions of music in, or inspired by, ethnomusicology, many studies in ethnomusicology focus attention on one or a specific set of functions music fulfills in specific contexts – for example how the Suyá sing to "articulate the experiences of their lives with the processes of their society"³⁹; how

³³ Merriam, 1964, pp. 218-227. The complete list of ten functions: emotional expression, aesthetic enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical response, enforcing conformity to social norms, validation of social institutions and religious rituals, contribution to the continuity and stability of culture, contribution to the integrity of society. The last 4 functions convey Merriam's structural-functionalist outlook.

³⁴ Nettl, 2005, pp. 246-248.

³⁵ Id., p. 251.

³⁶ Id., p. 255.

³⁷ Martin Clayton, 'The Social and Personal Functions of Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective.' In: Hallam, Cross et al. (Eds.), 2009, pp. 35-44.

³⁸ Clayton, 2009, p. 42.

³⁹ Anthony Seeger, *Why Suyá Sing. A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004 (1987), p. 128.

Bulgarian music enables people by referring to a tradition to “[reference] many worlds: the past (...); the present (...); and a number of productively imagined worlds”⁴⁰; how country music expresses the working-class social experience⁴¹; or how classical music performances are a way in to understanding our “experiential world of relationships in all its complexity”⁴².

Many researchers from the field of the (social) psychology of music studied the functions of music, often from a standpoint that takes the individual’s music perception (and therefore music listening) as a starting point. These studies formulate many different but similar lists of functions. The most concise overview comes from Hargreaves & North, who mention three domains in the (undefined) field of the “psychological functions of music: (...) its cognitive, emotional and social functions”⁴³. Chamorro-Premuzic, working in various constellations of researchers on what he calls the uses of music but what basically coincides with what I call the functions of music⁴⁴, mentions three major categories of motives for listening to music in his Uses of Music Inventory: manipulation or regulation of emotions, rational appreciation of music, and music as background to other tasks – referring to them as emotional, cognitive and background ‘uses’⁴⁵.

A more extensive list is for example formulated by Schäfer and Sedlmeier, who, on the basis of a study of literature on the functions of music (adequately defined as the phenomenon that “people *use* music to reach certain goals and serve their needs”⁴⁶), devised a list of 17 statements about music functions and eventually identified a group of seven statements on the most important functions of music, ranging from “expresses my identity” to “gives me information”⁴⁷. Boer and Fischer tried to test a similar list of functions cross-culturally, identifying a list of seven (different) main functions of music in the process⁴⁸. North, Hargreaves & Hargreaves worked with a set of 11 statements about reasons for listening to music, compiled from a variety of sources⁴⁹; a probably⁵⁰ similar list was used by Greasley & Lamont⁵¹. Finally, some authors put an emphasis on

⁴⁰ Timothy Rice, *May It Fill Your Soul. Experiencing Bulgarian Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, p. 309.

⁴¹ Aaron A. Fox, *Real Country. Music and Language in Working-Class Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

⁴² Small, 1998, p. 50.

⁴³ David J. Hargreaves & Adrian C. North, ‘The Functions of Music in Everyday Life. Redefining the Social in Music Psychology.’ *Psychology of Music* 27 (1999), pp. 71-72.

⁴⁴ See for example the mentioning of “... uses of music, that is, *why* people use music in everyday life”. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Patrick Fagan & Adrian Furnham, ‘Personality and Uses of Music as Predictors of Preferences for Music Consensually Classified as Happy, Sad, Complex, and Social.’ *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 4/4 (2010), p. 205. Italics added.

⁴⁵ Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007, p. 179.

⁴⁶ Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, p. 280. Italics in original.

⁴⁷ Id., 2009, p. 294.

⁴⁸ Diana Boer & Ronald Fischer, ‘Towards a Holistic Model of Functions of Music Listening Across Cultures. A Culturally Decentred Qualitative Approach.’ *Psychology of Music* 40 (2012).

⁴⁹ North, Hargreaves et al, 2004, p. 50.

⁵⁰ The exact set of statements does not appear in this article.

⁵¹ Greasley & Lamont, 2009.

the way music can be used to influence the behavior of others⁵². The overriding impression of much of this literature is that the focus lies very much on the regulative function of music in individual life as a “personal tool”⁵³ – on a ‘uses and gratifications approach’⁵⁴, and on effects on the well-being of people using music⁵⁵.

In music sociology, research into the functions of music in general is tied to the idea that music ‘produces’ social life; to the idea of, as Antoine Hennion puts it “... the more general capacities of music to produce individual and collective states – or, in other words, the hypothesis of *conditioned performativity of music*”⁵⁶. The main author in this field is probably Tia DeNora, who developed the widely quoted view that music is used as a resource to produce social life and often functions as a ‘technology of the self’⁵⁷. An attempt to summarize existing literature on the functions of music in music sociology is done by Sidsel Karlsen, who generated a model with six ‘individual’ functions (which he actually calls ‘musical use’ or ‘musical action’), ranging from “using music for self-regulation” through “the shaping of self-identity” to “developing music-related skills”⁵⁸, and five ‘collective’ functions ranging from “using music for regulating and structuring social encounters” to “establishing a basis for collaborative musical action”⁵⁹.

Summarizing, the function(s) of music have been widely debated in ethnomusicology (often in the wake of Merriam’s list of ten musical functions), in music psychology, and in music sociology. Much emphasis in psychological and sociological literature especially is laid on the functioning of music as a personal tool.

3.5 Studying uses and functions – some points of attention

In order to clarify the focus of this study, some remarks must be made on the research on uses and functions of music as presented above. They concern: a broad view on the uses and functions of music; a focus on the individual rather than on the collective or on ‘a culture’; and a focus on a holistic (rather than compartmentalized) view of the idiosyncratic (rather than general) individual.

⁵² E.g. Alasdair Forsyth & Martin Cloonan, ‘Alco-pop? The Use of Popular Music in Glasgow Pubs.’ *Popular Music and Society* 31/1 (2008). See also chapters 5.2 and 5.3 in North & Hargreaves, 2008; or Adrian North & David Hargreaves, ‘Music and Consumer Behaviour.’ In: Hallam, Cross et al. (Eds.), 2009.

⁵³ Frith, 2003, p. 98.

⁵⁴ Cf. North & Hargreaves, 2008, p. 225 ff, quoting Dennis Howitt.

⁵⁵ See e.g. Terrence Hays & Victor Minichiello, ‘The Meaning of Music in the Lives of Older People. A Qualitative Study.’ *Psychology of Music* 33/4 (2005).

⁵⁶ Hennion, 2001, p. 3. Italics in original.

⁵⁷ DeNora, 2000.

⁵⁸ Sidsel Karlsen, ‘Using Musical Agency As a Lens. Researching Music Education From the Angle of Experience.’ *Research Studies in Music Education* 33 (2011), p. 111.

⁵⁹ Karlsen, 2011, p. 115. A more general but less systematic attempt to summarize existing attempts at theorizing musical functions can be found in Leon Stefanija, ‘Functions of Music. A Survey of Research Vocabularies.’ *Lietuvos muzikologija* 8 (2007).

3.5.1 *A broad view on the uses and functions of music*

As indicated in section 3.3, there is a certain centrality of the performance setting and a subsequent focus on performing and/or listening in much of the literature on the uses of music when it comes to describing the uses of music. In this study, I adopt a critical position towards this, endorsing Bigenho's remark as quoted in section 3.3 which conforms to Roy & Dowd's warning: "[t]hat so much musicking takes the form of, say, performer/audience relations is a characteristic of Western society to be explained rather than a restrictive assumption to impose on analysis"⁶⁰; and I would like to add that, before explaining the fact, it actually should be demonstrated first. If anything, the centrality of performance and/or listening may be a conclusion; a conclusion after an analysis of the research data has shown that indeed performance or listening are (perceived as) the central forms of musical behavior at this specific time and place.

Until then, I prefer to keep the definition of the uses of music as open as possible. An open eye is needed for any form of human behavior in which music plays a role; a situation is a musical situation when music, in any form and by any behavior, plays a role in it. One of the goals of this study is to produce an overview of the admittedly infinite list of what people do with music – of uses of music – and to gain insight in the relation between its constitutive elements.

The same counts for the functions of music. Here I choose not to lay any claims of the centrality of one or more specific or overarching functions of music in advance. I therefore will not make use of speculative theories about the evolution and evolutionary benefits of music⁶¹ as a starting point for looking at the functions of music, but rather will take a descriptive and 'a-historic' stance towards what could be called the 'ethnographic present' as represented in the interviews forming the empirical basis of this study.⁶²

3.5.2 *A focus on the individual rather than on the social or the cultural*

In the existing literature on the functions of music, functions seem to work on three different levels: the level of the individual, the group/social, and/or the cultural/societal in general. This already can be found in Merriam's ten functions, which are rather diverse when one asks the question for whom or what music fulfills a function – some of Merriam's functions of music are functions for individuals ('emotional response'), some are clearly functions for groups of people ('communication') or for societies as a whole

⁶⁰ Roy & Dowd, 2010, p. 187. Note that their referencing of Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life. The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008) as an antidote only partially solves the bias – whereas Turino rightly extends his view also towards more participatory forms of music making (pp. 20-21), he still sees performance as the central category of musical behavior.

⁶¹ See e.g. Emery Schubert, 'The Fundamental Function of Music.' *Musicae Scientiae* 13 (2009).

⁶² I am aware that this is an upside-down application of the term 'ethnographic present' – the point made here is to look at the interviews as a reflection of the present state of affairs to be studied in its own right rather than as the result of evolutionary processes (or, as the real argument of the 'ethnographic present' suggests, as a reflection of "an unchanging and virtually timeless state"; Davies, 1998, p. 156).

(‘contribution to the integration of society’)⁶³. In music psychology and music sociology, there is a comparable tendency to subdivide functions in individual and collective/societal functions⁶⁴.

In this study, I choose a perspective where functions of music are functions of music for individuals. This is not a restriction in the sense that I do not pay attention to the collective or cultural/societal functions of music. Rather, the perspective emanates from the theoretical background of this study, where the individual and the social stand not in a dichotomous relationship, but rather the individual is a social being essentially⁶⁵ and social reality is the result of actions acted out in everyday life by individuals⁶⁶. As I stated in chapter two, this study looks at the domain of musicking primarily as a domain where individuals construct themselves and the world in meaningful musical practice. It therefore will focus on functions of music as functions for individuals, rather than as functions for groups or ‘cultures’⁶⁷. In studying those individuals, I may shed light on “the shared cognition that lies behind and enables musical life”⁶⁸, the “taken-for-granted ways of viewing the world (...) that bring together individuals and organizations into a (somewhat) coherent field”⁶⁹.

In that respect, Nettl’s shortlist of universal groups of functions of music (circling around the supernatural, the community, communication, and identity) may be useful, as these are all functions which may be functions for individuals. However, the present study will, unlike Nettl’s list, not focus on the production of statements about universal or general functions; on the contrary, it will restrict itself to suggesting an overview of uses and functions of music in the life of 30 idiosyncratic individuals, serving possibly as an indicator of the more general uses and functions in (Groningen’s) modern Western

⁶³ Cf. Stefaniija, 2009, p. 58.

⁶⁴ See e.g. Karlsen, 2011; or Clarke, Dibben et al., 2010, chapters 6 and 7. In North & Hargreaves, 2008, four levels of analysis are discerned: intraindividual, interindividual/situational, socio-positional, and ideological. The first may be seen as connected to the individual, the second and the third to the group/social, the fourth to the cultural/societal.

⁶⁵ Cf. Mead, 1962 (1934); Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 1969.

⁶⁶ Cf. Coulter, 2001, for the most far-ranging standpoint in this; and Reyes (2010, p. 15) for a contrary view where music “belongs first to a society (...) before individuals make it their own”.

⁶⁷ Harwood’s contention that “the implications of moving the field toward the study of individuals are profound” shows the point and, although dating back to 1987, still holds. Dane L. Harwood, ‘A Response to Tim Rice’s “Toward the Remodeling of ethnomusicology”.’ *Ethnomusicology* 31/3 (1987), p. 508. One of the reasons for some doubt about the validity of studying ‘cultures’ (rather than individuals) is a certain imminent threat of methodological circularity. When one studies groups of people or even ‘a culture’, it is methodologically helpful to seek instances which are telling about this ‘culture’ in an exemplary form. That is the reason why Nettl chose to take as the subject of his ethnomusicology-at-home of Western culture the conservatoire, “attempting to relate [them] and the complex of structures and ideas that govern them to the modern western culture of which they are part” (Nettl, 1995, p. 5). And it is the reason why Fox describes in his book on country music as working class culture how he takes much trouble to find the central locus for his fieldwork – one that matches his ideas about what country music is all about (Fox, 2004, specifically p. 49). It seems that in those instances there is some danger that interpretations of ‘a culture’ are informed not only by a careful interpretation of data but also on decisions on the type and provenance of the data the researcher is working with.

⁶⁸ Timothy J. Dowd, ‘Introduction. Explorations in the Sociology of Music.’ *Poetics* 30 (2002), p. 1.

⁶⁹ Roy & Dowd, 2010, p. 191.

society, in that respect leading to a certain decentering of the individual in favor of more general practices⁷⁰.

3.5.3 *A focus on a holistic view of the idiosyncratic individual*

This study aims at being a qualitative study of uses and functions of music in the everyday life of 30 individuals in the form of a careful empirical, if not ‘micro-ethnographic’, study; a specific instance of a “microscopic analysis of naturally occurring human activities and interactions”⁷¹ in which music plays a role. That stands in contrast to much of the research in music psychology quoted in this chapter, in a number of ways. To start with, much of the research on uses and functions of music in music psychology focuses on ‘the’ individual or on certain ‘types’ of individuals rather than on the idiosyncratic individual in everyday life⁷². Individuals – based on what basically is a utilitarian social theory⁷³ – are often depicted basically as need-fulfilling individuals, whose “... daily lives are thought to be driven by certain needs that lead us to a state of subjective well-being or hedonism (...) and music is just one thing that brings us a bit closer this end every day”⁷⁴; hence much attention goes to research into functions of music which are based on the regulative manipulation of music by individuals in order to procure certain effects⁷⁵. Much of the research is heavily dependent on rather homogeneous research populations, often consisting of university students⁷⁶.

⁷⁰ Cf. Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p. 24, where ethnography is characterized as seeing not the individual as the centre of meaning, but rather as an ‘appendix of social situations’ (“... die den Menschen nicht als Sinnzentrum, sondern als Appendix sozialer Situationen betrachtet”)

⁷¹ Jürgen Streeck & Siri Mehus, ‘Microethnography. The Study of Practices.’ In: Kristine L. Fitch & Robert E. Sanders (Eds.), *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005, p. 381. Cf. Meyer & Schareika, 2009a. For a further discussion of what ‘naturally occurring’ may mean, see section 4.4.1.2.

⁷² See Clarke, 2003, p. 115, where he states that “[o]ne central feature of psychology (...) is that it is primarily concerned with the identification and investigation of general principles rather than particular manifestations”. As an example may serve the connection sought between the uses of music and the ‘Big Five personality traits’ in Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007 and in Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Viren Swami, Adrian Furnham & Ismail Maakip, ‘The Big Five Personality Traits and Uses of Music. A Replication in Malaysia Using Structural Equation Modeling.’ *Journal of Individual Differences* 30/1 (2009). As an exception must be mentioned much of the work of Hargreaves and North, for example in North, Hargreaves et al., 2004.

⁷³ Cf. Joas & Knöbl, 2004, pp. 47-49 and chapter 5.

⁷⁴ Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2009, p. 280; cf. Alexandra Lamont, ‘University Students’ Strong Experiences of Music. Pleasure, Engagement, and Meaning.’ *Musica Scientiae* 15/2 (2011) – a study which shows further evidence of the tendency of the social psychology of music to focus on listening, on regulation, and on taking university students as its study objects (cf. footnote 76, this chapter).

⁷⁵ Cf. the stress on music as a ‘technology of the self’ in e.g. DeNora, 2000.

⁷⁶ See for example Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007, where the participants were 341 students from British and American universities; a restriction which is acknowledged in the discussion section of the article (p. 182), but then replicated in Chamorro-Premuzic, Swami et al., 2009, where the sample is characterized as university undergraduates but not acknowledged as a possible limitation in drawing conclusions about “robust personality predictors of music use, which may generalize across cultures” (p.26). Cf. North & Hargreaves, 2008, p. 7, where they remark that “[a] brief inspection of the journals would certainly convey the impression that [music] psychologists believe the world to be populated by undergraduate students who live out their whole existence in research laboratories”.

In this study, an attempt will be made to avoid those backdrops. It aims at sticking closely to a grounded study of 30 individuals firmly located in time and space; it will consider individuals in a holistic manner rather than as a sum of specific psychological functions; it will keep the question open as to what are the incentives behind the actions of individuals, focusing on a study of the actions instead; and it will deliberately seek to study as wide a variety of individuals as possible.

3.6 Summary

To summarize, in this study I will be looking at the uses and functions of music in the province of Groningen AD 2012. With ‘uses’ I mean the habitual exercise of music; ‘what people do with music’. In order to keep an open eye for – to paraphrase Clifford Geertz once more – ‘what the hell is going on in all that musicking’, I define music not as a thing, a work of art, but as human behavior; and I do not consider the performance setting as central by definition, and consequently performing and/or listening are not the central forms of musical behavior a priori, but rather some of the many forms of musical behavior in its broadest sense.

With ‘functions’ I mean the broader purposes of the uses of music – leading to a description of ‘what music does with people’. Human beings as holistic idiosyncratic individual actors (rather than representatives of types of individuals, groups, or ‘cultures’, or as sums of psychological functions) are central. In studying the uses and functions, I will base myself firmly on empirical material from a specific time and a specific place, keeping the study as grounded as possible; and the sample of individuals on which the study is based will be varied. Findings will have no universalistic pretensions, but aim at formulating a ‘micro-substantive theory’.

This view on the uses and functions of music has methodological consequences: in order to study the uses and functions of music, one needs to turn to the everyday musical lives of specific individuals and perform a careful micro-ethnographic study. The next chapter will be dedicated to a description of the methodological aspects of this study.

4. Methodological aspects: ethnomusicology-at-home, grounded theory and the narrative-biographical interview

“The listener is the midwife in the difficult birth of the word.”¹

4.1 Recapitulation: research question and theory

This study is an attempt at a methodologically underpinned and reflexive ethnomusicological study of musical life in a present-day western society. It focuses, against the background of questions concerning the audiences of professional musicians, on the uses and functions of music for individuals: what people do with music, and what music does for people. The general research question is: *What are the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century?*

This study presumes that music is a social phenomenon and therefore can be studied from the viewpoint of a social theory. The study uses Reckwitz’ theory of practice as its theoretical background. That theory states that human life should be understood from a cultural perspective; from the premise that human life is based on culture as symbolic structures of meaning based on cultural codes. In the modern era, many of these symbolic structures of meaning focus on the question of individuality, giving rise to various subject cultures. Those subject cultures can be traced in practices in which cultural codes are expressed. Practices are specific ‘ways of doing and talking’ as abstractions of the routines of everyday life as performed by individuals in concrete social situations. Practice theory states explicitly that culture exists only in practices as acted out in concrete social situations. This study, in answering the question about the uses and functions of music, also sheds light on the question how through music individuals are, or become, individuals in a modern world characterized by hybridization and against the background of culture consisting of shared as well as disputed ways of doing and talking.

This study defines music not as a work of art, but as human behavior; and it does not consider performance and/or listening a priori as the central forms of musical behavior. It describes uses of music as the customary exercise of music (‘what people do with music’). Functions are described as the broader purpose of the uses of music (‘what music does with people’). The study looks at a varied sample of human beings as holistic idiosyncratic individual actors.

The practice theoretical background of this study and its definitions of music, uses and functions have consequences for the methodology and methods used. The study must, according to practice theory, base itself on practices as acted out in social situations by individuals because that is where culture is ‘done’; it must therefore be thoroughly empirical in the sense that it “... in ethnographic manner [has to] show how cultural

¹ Meša Selimović, *The Fortress*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999 (1970), p. 13.

meaning, how this cultural knowing and thinking in *common action is practiced*². Because social situations form an interpreted reality by definition³, this empiricism is an empiricism of interpretations – of how individuals perceive their world and themselves.

This study is an ethnomusicological study with the individual as its starting point. The question is what specific individuals, in their everyday social situations, do with music and what that means to them, thus gathering a bottom-up insight into cultural practices understood as more or less standardized ‘ways of doing and talking’ of individuals. The individuals under study here live in a modern western society, which, given the fact that I as a researcher was born and bred in such a society as well, makes this study an example of ‘ethnomusicology-at-home’: I see the relation between the researcher’s background and the background of the individuals he studies as the defining characteristic of ethnomusicology-at-home⁴. The problematic issue of ethnomusicology-at-home therefore is a methodological problem, as I will argue below.⁵

In section 4.2 I will discuss the methodological consequences of the ‘at home’ character of this study, consequences which are connected to the ambition to carry out ethnography and which lead to a turn from ethnomusicology towards other fields of qualitative social research for inspiration and towards a grounded theory approach (section 4.3). Based on this, the choice for the narrative biographical interview (rather than participant observation as typically used in ethnographies) as the data generator will be discussed (section 4.4). In section 4.5 I will describe the actual research process of this specific study, focusing consecutively on data gathering and the population of interviewees, data analysis, and ethics and reflexivity.

² “.. in ethnographischer Manier aufzuzeigen, wie kultureller Sinn, wie dieses kultureller Wissen und Denken im *gemeinsamen Handeln tatsächlich praktiziert wird*”. Karl H. Hörning & Julia Reuter, ‘Doing Culture. Kultur als Praxis.’ In: Karl H. Hörning & Julia Reuter (Eds.), *Doing Culture. Neue Positionen zum Verhältnis von Kultur und sozialer Praxis*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2004, p. 13. Italics in original.

³ See section 1.1.

⁴ Rather than the fact that the ethnomusicologist studies a modern western society – something at least suggested in Nettl, 2010, e.g. on p. 189 where he defines ethnomusicologists in ‘we’-terms as “... members of Western musical academia. Shall we try our usual questions on our own culture, society, music?”, neglecting in that passage the fact that non-western ethnomusicologists working in non-western countries may not, or only partly, feel included in this ‘we’. The ethnomusicological study of modern western societies (or, as an overlapping variant, of urban settings) surely has its own problematic issues, but they are basically not so much methodological as well as theoretical problems, circling around definitions of what ‘culture’ is. These issues have been discussed in chapter 2. It may be added here that ethnomusicology-at-home is also not to be equated with ‘applied ethnomusicology’, as Stock seems to suggest (2008, pp. 202-203; Stock & Chiener, 2008, pp. 118-120); the principal question of applied ethnomusicology is not a methodological or theoretical question, but a question of research objectives.

⁵ On ethnomusicology-at-home, see e.g. Nettl, 2005, pp. 184-196; Nettl, 2010, pp. 103-104; Jonathan Stock, ‘New Directions in Ethnomusicology.’ In: Stobart (Ed.), 2008, pp. 188-206; Simon Keegan-Phipps, ‘Teaching Folk. The Educational Institutionalization of Folk Music in Contemporary England.’ PhD dissertation. Newcastle: Newcastle University, 2008, pp. 20-31. On anthropology-at-home/‘endo-ethnography’, see Rob van Ginkel, ‘The Repatriation of Anthropology. Some Observations on Endo-Ethnography.’ *Anthropology & Medicine* 5/3 (1998), pp. 251-267, and earlier Donald A. Messerschmidt, *Anthropologists at Home in North America. Methods and Issues in the Study of One’s Own Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; and Anthony Jackson (Ed.), *Anthropology at Home*. London: Tavistock, 1987.

4.2 Ethnomusicology-at-home and the question of estrangement

4.2.1 *The problem of making the familiar strange*

In ethnomusicology, ethnographic fieldwork methods⁶ define the discipline. As Bruno Nettl states, “[t]here are two main attitudes that really distinguish ethnomusicologists in what they actually do from other musical scholarship. One is the centrality of fieldwork.”⁷ The same counts for cultural anthropology (ethnomusicology’s father discipline, with musicology being its mother⁸), where Eriksen states that it “distinguishes itself from the other social sciences through the great emphasis placed on ethnographic fieldwork as the most important source of new knowledge about society and culture”⁹. In ethnographic research as carried out in ethnomusicology and anthropology, studies usually base themselves on three data sources: participant observation, (ethnographic) interviews, and documents/artifacts¹⁰. In ethnography as well as in ethnomusicology, participant observation is the most common and often also most valued data source.¹¹ The force of ethnography lies in the fact that it “exploits the capacity that any social actor

⁶ A note on terminology: I consider ethnography, fieldwork, and participant observation as three separate concepts, in contrast to many sources where they overlap, coincide completely, or where their boundaries are blurred. In this study ethnography refers to (the activities leading to) “an authentic account by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place, at some time, among some group” (Geertz, 1988, p. 143); fieldwork refers to the researcher’s extended stay at the location where the individuals studied live out their daily lives (in opposition to laboratory work); and participant observation is considered to be a specific method of data gathering consisting of the observation of social life while (less or more marginally) taking an active role in that social life.

⁷ Nettl, 2005, p. 9. The other distinguishing attitude is an interculturally comparative perspective; id., p. 10. Cf. the declaration that “[t]he single most important shared aspect among the paradigms of ethnomusicologists at present is ethnography as a way of carrying out research” (Stone, 2008, p. 4). For a powerful critique on the centrality of participant observation translated to the ideal type of the ‘participating musician’ and the insider/outsider-distinction in ethnomusicology, see Bigenho, 2008, pp. 28-39.

⁸ A construct already mentioned in Merriam, 1964.

⁹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues. An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. Second Edition. London: Pluto Press, 2001, p. 24. Cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.3, where ethnography is defined by “what ethnographers do”, focusing on fieldwork.

¹⁰ Many (chapters of) textbooks on anthropology and ethnography are, explicitly or implicitly, structured around this tripartition; see. E.g. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, where on p. 3 documentary evidence, participant observation and informal conversations are mentioned as data sources and the book is structured accordingly.

¹¹ See Paul ten Have, *Understanding Qualitative Research and Ethnomethodology*. London: Sage, 2004, p. 7 which mentions interview studies, document studies and participant observation, labeling the latter as “the royal way of doing qualitative research”; James D. Faubion, ‘Currents of Cultural Fieldwork.’ In: Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland & Lyn Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: Sage, 2001, p. 39, where he mentions the “standard of ‘participant observation’, however paradoxical that standard may be”. For ethnomusicology see Stone, 2008, pp. 12-13, where under the heading of ‘method in ethnomusicology’ she mentions just two methods: participant observation and archival work; Chou Chiener, ‘Experience and Fieldwork. A Native Researcher’s View.’ *Ethnomusicology* 46/3 (2002), p. 1, where she states in the first sentence of the article: “Participant-observation is undoubtedly the fundamental fieldwork method in ethnomusicology.”; or Andrew Killick, ‘Holicipation. Prolegomena to an Ethnography of Solitary Music-Making.’ *Ethnomusicology Forum* 15/2 (2006), p. 294, where he states that when (participant) observation of solitary music makers is impossible, “[w]e can, however, talk to them about it, accepting (...) verbal testimony on things that we cannot experience firsthand’. This counts for anthropology and ethnomusicology specifically; in the more qualitative strands of sociology and psychology interviews (and, to a lesser extent, documents) take a more equal place among the data used; cf. Atkinson & Silverman, 1997.

possesses for learning new cultures, and the objectivity to which that process gives rise”¹². It is the journey from being an outsider to becoming more of an insider¹³ that generates knowledge. The ethnographer is “the research instrument par excellence”¹⁴. And although the above characterization of ethnography has been submitted to some erosion over the years, specifically because of the reflexive turn in anthropology and ethnomusicology taking place from the last decennia of the last century onward¹⁵ which has led towards “varying degrees of self-conscious positioning on the part of the author”¹⁶ in order to overcome the insider/outsider dichotomy, in general the characterization, I think, still holds.

For ethnographers working in their own society (such as ethnomusicologists working on ethnomusicology-at-home) it therefore still is the question how this type of knowledge generation where the ethnographer is his own research instrument works. What happens when there actually is no journey from being an outsider to becoming an insider, because the researcher is an insider from the start? What happens when the ethnomusicologist studies his ‘home community’¹⁷ or ‘home society’¹⁸? Does this lead to ‘homeblindness’¹⁹? As Van Ginkel writes in discussing what he calls ‘endo-ethnography’²⁰, “the problem boils down to the question of how to study one’s culture when one lives in it. How is it possible to prevent overlooking important matters and patterns that one sees, hears and smells every day?”²¹ The ethnographic premise in those cases is undoubtedly “... the unfamiliarity of also those worlds we live in ourselves”²². But how do we follow this premise? What can the researcher do to enhance the ‘estrangement of his own culture’²³?

The problem may not be as serious as it presents itself above. Researching ‘at home’ does not necessarily mean that the researcher is an insider. Rather, as may be obvious, ‘at-home-ness’ and insiderness come in gradations from a continuum ranging from a (near-)

¹² Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 9

¹³ Cf. Nettl, 2005, pp.149-160.

¹⁴ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 17.

¹⁵ See e.g. Rice’s position considering the emic/etic distinction in Rice, 1994, pp. 86-88; or many of the chapters in Gregory F. Barz & Timothy J. Cooley (Eds.), *Shadows in the Field. New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; or Stock & Chiener, 2008, p. 110, where they relate this movement to the postcolonial critique and feminist deconstruction movements within ethnomusicology.

¹⁶ Keegan-Phipps, 2008, p. 22.

¹⁷ Stock, 2008, p. 203.

¹⁸ Jonathan Stock & Chou Chiener, ‘Fieldwork at Home. European and Asian Perspectives.’ In: Barz & Cooley (Eds.), 2008, p. 108.

¹⁹ Eriksen, 2001, p. 30.

²⁰ For a list of other terminology for the same phenomenon, see Messerschmidt 1981, p. 13; see also Jackson (Ed.), 1987.

²¹ Van Ginkel, 1998, p. 257.

²² “... die Unbekanntheit gerade auch jener Welten, die wir selbst bewohnen.” Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p. 9.

²³ An expression borrowed from the title of Amann & Hirschauer, 1997.

complete belonging to a ‘marginal nearness’²⁴. As Van Ginkel writes, “[g]iven the heterogeneous character of all cultures, it is not easy to find the locus where any anthropologist would genuinely be ‘at home’. Even if such a setting exists, there will be many unfamiliar situations and moments in which researchers will either assume or will be ascribed the role of outsiders”²⁵, quoting examples of research in Dutch hospitals by Dutch anthropologists where the researcher’s feeling of ‘culture shock’ stayed largely intact. And eventually, the mere fact of being a researcher equipped with a distinct methodological approach while taking part in the social situations he studies may account for a fundamental outsidership, regardless the closeness of the object of study^{26, 27}.

However, given all those nuances, the “... tension between the need for both empathy and detachment [stays] a problem facing all anthropologists”²⁸, and, I should add, specifically those working ‘at home’²⁹. The central matter therefore still is how, in ethnomusicology-at-home, the combination of detachment and empathy, of distance and familiarity is created that makes ethnographic research possible. This is specifically important considering the central position of the method of participant observation in ethnomusicology. Where participant observation in ethnomusicology is traditionally the central research method, with detachment as its starting point and empathy as its goal, delivering sound knowledge – understood in two ways – in the process, in ethnomusicology-at-home the points are reversed: empathy is presupposed, detachment has to be attained in order to “make explicit the presuppositions [the researcher] takes for granted as a culture member”³⁰.

This, then, “... involves a process of making the familiar and the taking-for-granted seem strange to oneself so that one can record what in the first instance seemed insignificant”³¹; and from the ethnographer is asked ... “the potential to make all possible objects ‘strange’,

²⁴ Van Ginkel, 1998, p. 261, with reference to Donald A. Messerschmidt, ‘On Anthropology “at home”.’ In: Donald A. Messerschmidt (Ed.), *Anthropologists at Home in North America. Methods and Issues in the Study of One’s Own Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. Cf. for ethnomusicology Nettl, 2005, p. 154 ff. And see Rice, 1994, p. 86-88, where the existence of an objective insider/outsider (and emic/etic) distinction eventually is dismissed in favor of the stance that research is by definition an emic enterprise, an attempt to broaden the researcher’s horizon in order to gain new horizons for the researcher’s self-understanding.

²⁵ Van Ginkel, 1998, p. 263; cf. Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p.12.

²⁶ Nettl, 2005, p. 160; cf. Nettl, 2010, p. 65, where he refers to Soviet scholars stating, concerning their doing ethnomusicological research in their own country, that “since we are all scholars, we would still be seen as ‘outsiders’”.

²⁷ See for some nuances about the meaning of ‘home’ from an ethnomusicological perspective Stock & Chenier, 2008, pp. 111-113.

²⁸ Sarsby, as quoted in Van Ginkel, 1998, p. 264. Cf. Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p. 11, where they speak of “.. the ethnological guiding difference between strangeness and familiarity” [‘[die] ethnologischen Leitdifferenz von Fremdheit und Vertrautheit’].

²⁹ See for a powerful reflection on the ‘othering’ practices of anthropology (and, by extension, ethnomusicology) and its implications for female and ‘halfie’ researchers Abu-Lughod, 1991. Specifically ‘halfie’ researchers share with ethnomusicologists-at-home a concern for distantiatio – a concern which may be described, if I understand Abu-Lughod right, as the result of a mainly male/white/western definition of the anthropological ‘self’ and the resulting exoticizing paradigm at work in anthropology.

³⁰ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 9.

³¹ Van Ginkel, 1998, p. 257.

to make them the subject of an empirical as well as theoretical curiosity”³²; a demand which is, as Mendívil states, strictly epistemological rather than biological or biographical, as some of the literature on ‘ethnography-at-home’ seems to suggest³³, and a demand which Cottrell rightly links to the attempt to prevent too much subjectivism and impressionism in ethnomusicology-at-home.³⁴

I consider the present study, where I, as a Dutch-raised and Dutch-trained ethnomusicologist, study the uses and functions of music of a wide and varied number of my fellow-citizens, certainly as one of the more at-home variants of ethnomusicology, requiring a specific answer as to how that process of making the familiar strange takes place methodologically. My personal background in that respect is of importance, as my biography shows a wide variety of musical activities in a wide variety of genres over the years. Singing children’s songs at home and at school, hearing classical music as well as pop music and some jazz through family and friends; having classical violin lessons during primary school age, followed by classical guitar lessons; playing the bass guitar in a rock band and learning Irish and other fiddling traditions in my teens; then a deep immersion in classical music in my conservatoire period, followed by an introduction into many ‘non-western’ traditions while studying ethnomusicology (playing actively for some time the central-Javanese gamelan, the Arab lute ‘ud, as well as the stringed zither kacapi in the west-Javanese genre of Tembang Sunda); getting through my marriage acquainted with the Dutch-Indonesian (‘Indo’) musical heritage (specifically krontjong- and Hawaii-music); and gradually gaining an interest as a listener and a performer in Americana, country & western and bluegrass as well as listening with fascination to the Dutch schlager genre makes me somewhat of a musical omnivore, with the effect that I feel easily at home at most of the musical styles, genres and communities I encounter – which makes the methodological question of estrangement even more pressing.

4.2.2 Methodological considerations in ethnomusicology-at-home

Although many ethnomusicologists conduct research which, in one way or another, might qualify as ethnomusicology-at-home (maybe even “the majority worldwide”³⁵), and in spite of the fact that Jonathan Stock recently dubbed ethnomusicology-at-home one of seven new directions in ethnomusicology³⁶ and Martin Stokes (reluctantly) terms its growing importance as a possible sign of “[e]thnomusicology’s coming of age”³⁷, the

³² “... das Potential, alle möglichen Gegenstände ‘kuriös’, also zum Objekt einer ebenso empirischen wie theoretischen Neugier zu machen”. Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p. 9.

³³ Mendívil, 2008, p. 53.

³⁴ Stephen Cottrell, *Professional Music-Making in London. Ethnography and Experience*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. Cf. the remarks in section 1.1 on the constructivist-reflexive point of view with an objectivist-realist tinge of the present study.

³⁵ Stock & Chiener, 2008, p. 108.

³⁶ Stock 2008, p. 189. Nettl 2005, 2010 may serve as an additional example of recent literature paying attention to the theme.

³⁷ Martin Stokes, ‘Afterword.’ In: Stobart (Ed.), 2008, p. 209.

literature discussing ethnomusicology-at-home is small³⁸. Of course much is written on Western music by ethnomusicologists nowadays, as a scan of recent books, journals and collections of essays may bring to the fore³⁹. But apparently ethnomusicologists feel no need to qualify this type of research as standing out, methodologically or otherwise, from other ethnomusicological research in any other sense than that it is a relatively recent development.

Looking closer at the methodological justifications of a selection of recent studies of Western music in ethnomusicology, in many of them methodology is hardly mentioned⁴⁰. One of the rather few studies where the methodological questions of ethnomusicology-at-home are more fundamentally discussed is Stephen Cottrell's study of professional classical musicians in London. There he raises questions about methodological issues around insiderness and the 'native' ethnomusicologist as well as about more theoretical issues such as the concept of 'community' as a study object, and describes the repercussions for the character of his ethnography as a text⁴¹. In many ethnomusicological studies, however, the message seems to be that participant observation works basically, sometimes with some comments in which it, for example, is acknowledged that "the borders between the identity of researcher and subject (...) can only be described as blurred."⁴² In other instances, methodological discussions are kept at a distance by characterizing (aspects of) Western society as "both 'mine' and 'not mine'"⁴³, or by adding some artificial estrangement by calling in an artificial outsider, such as Nettl's 'ethnomusicologist from Mars' in his study of American conservatoires⁴⁴. In yet another type of studies, the methodological ramifications are the inverse to what is pictured above, but with the same effect. Where in the type pictured above participant

³⁸ Stock & Chiener, 2008, p. 108. The near-absence of reflection on the matter in even the more at-homeier chapters of Jennifer C. Post, *Ethnomusicology. A Contemporary Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006, as well as in Stone, 2008, underlines the paucity of the attention, as well as the fact that a search in the musicological database Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale RILM on "ethnomusicology-at-home" dd. 11-10-2012 delivered two hits.

³⁹ For example in the field of classical music more and more studies appear by ethnomusicologists or informed by ethnomusicological methods – see e.g. Cottrell, 2004, specifically the discussion on pp. 2-8; Tina K. Ramnarine, 'Beyond the Academy.' In: Stobart (Ed.), 2008; or the special edition dedicated to Western art music of *Ethnomusicology Forum* 20/3 (2011). Examples from other genres are David Pruett, 'When the Tribe Goes Triple Platinum. A Case Study Toward an Ethnomusicology of Mainstream Popular Music in the U.S.' *Ethnomusicology* 55/1 (2011) (pop); Kristin McGee, 'New York Comes to Groningen: Jazz Star Circuits in the Netherlands.' In: Byron Dueck & Jason Toynbee (Eds.), *Migrating Musics: Media, Politics and Style*. London: Routledge, 2011 (jazz); or Jonathan H. Shannon, 'Sultans of Spin. Syrian Sacred Music on the World Stage.' *American Anthropologist* 105/2 (2003) (world music).

⁴⁰ This may have to do with the allegation sometimes uttered in- and outside of ethnomusicology that ethnomusicology has a tendency to be a descriptive rather than theoretical discipline; see from within ethnomusicology e.g. Rice, 2010b, or earlier Timothy Rice, 'Disciplining Ethnomusicology. A Call for a New Approach.' *Ethnomusicology* 54/2 (2010a); and from outside ethnomusicology e.g. David Grazian, 'Opportunities for Ethnography in the Sociology of Music.' *Poetics* 32 (2004), p. 199.

⁴¹ Cottrell, 2004, chapter 1.

⁴² Kay Kaufman Shelemay, 'Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Early Music Movement. Thoughts on Bridging Disciplines and Musical Worlds.' *Ethnomusicology* 45/1 (2001), p. 8. A similar message for anthropology-at-home can be found in the various chapters of Messerschmidt (Ed.), 1981.

⁴³ Henry Kingsbury, *Music, Talent & Performance. A Conservatory Cultural System*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Nettl, 1995, p. 8.

observation is left intact and unproblematic as a method, in other studies the whole idea of estrangement and distanciation is presented as an over-problematic impossibility. Ethnographic research, the argument goes, has a deeply personal quality. Objectivity is therefore impossible. Ethnomusicology, wherever it takes place, turns into a personal narrative of the ethnomusicologist-as-author.⁴⁵

4.2.3 *The turn towards qualitative sociology*

Because attention for the methodology of ethnomusicology-at-home is so scarce in ethnomusicology itself⁴⁶, I turn to other disciplines of the qualitative social sciences for inspiration, and to qualitative sociology specifically.⁴⁷ Qualitative sociology has methodologically seen roughly the same agenda as ethnomusicology-at-home: the study of everyday life in the modern world. In the broad discipline of qualitative sociology, studies into music as a social practice are widespread, not only in a general sense but also in more specific fields such as education or health studies. Such studies tend to reflect on the methodology used to study music in present-day everyday life in the modern West in more fundamental ways than ethnomusicological studies do.

As an example we may look at the methodological ramifications in an article on teenager perceptions of Britney Spears⁴⁸. The author, Melanie Lowe, opting for interview-based research, explains carefully where and when interviews were held and why, why she chose for focus groups and not for one-to-one-interviews, how she made sure she could create rapport in spite of e.g. age difference between her and her interviewees, what the effect of using recording equipment was on the focus group sessions, the way the focus group recordings were transcribed, the general course of the sessions, and why she eventually bases her article on only two of the focus groups. Another example is Ruth Finnegan's *The Hidden Musicians*⁴⁹, an eminent study of musicians in the author's home town, where in the methodological addendum she writes extensively on what it means to do fieldwork in an urban context, to do fieldwork in a place where you are already established as a person and not immediately recognizable as researcher, and on the insider/outsider-debate, expressing the central methodological problem of ethnomusicology-at-home in her remark that "[t]he well-known issue of how far one should or should not 'become a native' looks rather different, if still pressing, in one's own community"^{50, 51}.

⁴⁵ See Michelle Kisliuk, '(Un)doing Fieldwork. Sharing Songs, Sharing Lives.' In: Barz & Cooley (Eds.), 2008.

⁴⁶ In Stock & Chiener, 2008, pp. 113-120, four differences between ethnomusicology and ethnomusicology-at-home are mentioned; not one of them is outright methodological.

⁴⁷ Including studies that can be considered as 'anthropology-at-home'. Both more and more seem to be seen as one field, as is expressed in current books on ethnography (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, or Atkinson, Coffey et al. (Eds.), 2001) where examples come from studies in both western and non-western countries.

⁴⁸ Melanie Lowe, 'Colliding Feminisms. Britney Spears, "Tweens", and the Politics of Reception.' *Popular Music and Society* 26/2 (2003).

⁴⁹ Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians. Music Making in an English Town*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007 (1989).

⁵⁰ Id., p. 343.

Qualitative social research in general, and ethnography in particular, may be described as an attempt to gather insight into the life worlds of people from the point of view of those people.⁵² The many strands within qualitative social research are dubbed ‘interpretive approaches’ for that reason⁵³, encompassing research paradigms, research strategies and research methodologies such as ethnography, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, narrative research, biographical research, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and grounded theory⁵⁴. Many of these interpretive approaches are used to study life worlds in Western societies.

Because they are interpretive rather than positivistic approaches⁵⁵, much attention is paid in general to the methodological aspects of the interpretational process, often foregrounding discussions (rather than giving clear answers, admittedly) on the problems of insiderness, distanciation, and ‘objectivity’; the reason why these approaches may bring methodological insights to ethnomusicology-at-home. This turn in seeking inspiration for the methodology of ethnomusicology-at-home from neighboring fields of qualitative social research rather than from ethnomusicology is in line with a turn in anthropology recently described by Meyer and Schareika, who state that ethnographers should engage in ‘neo-classical field research’ and take a “...methodological step ahead in field research by re-importing [qualitative] sociology in ethnology”⁵⁶.

4.3 Grounded theory

The first way into the methodological discussion of ethnomusicology-at-home is the characterization of the present study as a de facto example of ‘grounded theorizing’. This ethnomusicological study is a form of explorative research aimed at understanding musical life in a modern Western society. As such it may be considered an instance of the ‘discovery’ of a low-level theory about a certain field firmly grounded in empirical data – an instance, therefore, of a grounded theory approach⁵⁷ where “... ethnography grounds theory in the richness of social life”⁵⁸. This study is in a way a rare specimen, as

⁵¹ Other examples may be e.g. Claudio E. Benzecry, *The Opera Fanatic. Ethnography of an Obsession*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011, and Mendivil, 2008.

⁵² Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff & Ines Steinke, ‘Was ist qualitative Forschung? Einleitung und Überblick.’ In: Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff & Ines Steinke (Eds.), *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch*. [‘Qualitative research. A handbook.’] Rheinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2000, p. 14; Gomm, 2004, p. 7; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3.

⁵³ Gomm, 2004, p. 7.

⁵⁴ See e.g. the content table of Flick, Von Kardorff et al. (Eds.), 2000, for a glimpse of the heterogeneity in current qualitative social research. A short history of qualitative research can be found in Flick, 2009, pp. 17-21; a very short history in Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 1-2.

⁵⁵ See Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 5 ff. for a discussion of the positivist stance modeled on physical science research and its gradual replacement by more interpretive approaches in e.g. naturalist, constructivist and activist/critical ethnography.

⁵⁶ Meyer & Schareika, 2009a, p. 81.

⁵⁷ Charmaz, 2006, p. 4.

⁵⁸ David A. Snow, Calvin Morrill & Leon Anderson, ‘Elaborating Analytic Ethnography. Linking Fieldwork and Theory.’ *Ethnography* 4/2 (2003), p. 182.

grounded theory is hardly taken up explicitly in ethnomusicology.⁵⁹ Grounded theory is a topic in a number of other sub-branches of musicology in general, namely in literature on music therapy, music education and music psychology; probably reflecting that in the non-musicological mother disciplines of those studies (health, education and psychology respectively) grounded theory is, at least in parts of those disciplines, accepted as a viable approach to research.

Grounded theory is, in the words of its founding fathers Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research”⁶⁰, aimed at “arriving at a theory suited to its supposed uses”⁶¹. The theories arrived at are ‘middle-range theories’, “abstract renderings of specific social phenomena that were grounded in data”⁶². I see grounded theory primarily as an approach to the research process, a “container into which different content can be poured”, a set of “guidelines [to] describe the steps of the research process and [to] provide a path through it”⁶³, or a set of strategies providing social researchers with a “useful toolkit”⁶⁴. As such it is a (loose)⁶⁵ bundling of concrete methods of data collection (theoretical sampling), data analysis (coding), and theory construction⁶⁶, but allowing considerable freedom in for example the choice of data, the exact theoretical backgrounds of the study and so forth.

The basis of the grounded theory approach is what is generally known as ‘abductive reasoning’. Abduction is a form of reasoning directed at “formulating hypotheses or theories by making creative connections”⁶⁷. Crucial in grounded theory is the idea that theory is emerging – or rather: is constructed by the researcher – while the data are analyzed, and that therefore there is no separation between the data collection and the data analysis phases; because there is no a priori theory, researchers are unable to make a priori decisions on the sample needed. As a result, data collection in the present study was based on the constantly developing theory (more on this in sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3), and while I developed the theory I went back constantly to the new and earlier collected data in order to check if the theory still covered the data.

⁵⁹ A thorough search in the main musicological database, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale RILM (www.rilm.org), executed in July 2011, showed that grounded theory is hardly mentioned in the ethnomusicological literature.

⁶⁰ Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2.

⁶¹ Id., p. 3.

⁶² Charmaz, 2006, p. 7.

⁶³ Id., p. 9.

⁶⁴ Charmaz, 2011, p. 360.

⁶⁵ In contrast with for example Juliet Corbin & Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research. Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 3rd ed. London: Sage, 2008, which is considered to offer a rather stricter version of grounded theory.

⁶⁶ Cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 10, where they describe ‘grounded theorizing’ as “a very general perspective on analysis and theory production”. See also id., p. 159, note 2.

⁶⁷ “... het vormen van hypothesen of theorieën door het leggen van creatieve verbindingen”. Ilja Maso & Adri Smaling, *Kwalitatief onderzoek: praktijk en theorie*. [‘Qualitative research. Practice and theory.’] Amsterdam: Boom, 1998, p. 30. See also Jo Reichertz, ‘Abduktion, Deduktion und Induktion in der qualitativen Forschung.’ [‘Abduction, deduction and induction in qualitative research.’] In Flick, Von Kardorff et al. (Eds.), 2000.

The absence of an a priori theory in the development of a grounded theory does not imply that the researcher is a theoretical *tabula rasa*. Every researcher brings his theoretical preconceptions to the research, and the point is not so much to leave them out of the research process – which is probably impossible anyway – but rather to take a stance of ‘theoretical agnosticism’ and require that existing theoretical concepts earn their way into the analysis⁶⁸. As Ian Dey remarked: “there is a difference between an open mind and an empty head”⁶⁹. Existing concepts may be used as ‘sensitizing concepts’, giving “the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances”⁷⁰. In this study, for example, I used Reckwitz’ formulation of a theory of practice as well as concepts such as ‘musicking’, ‘uses’, ‘functions’ and ‘discourse’ as background notions for the data sampling and initial data analysis stages (for more on this, see section 4.5.3).

Data gathering in grounded theory is intimately connected to the idea of theoretical sampling. As written above, the data sample cannot be determined beforehand, but rather the sample develops while the theory is being developed. An important mechanism in theoretical sampling is the idea to look for contrasting cases; simply put, on the basis of the first data, initial theoretical ideas are formulated; the next step then may be to look for new data which are, in respect to the formulated theoretical ideas, as contrasting as possible to the data collected earlier. On the basis of the new data, the theory is developed further and checked against the earlier data; then again new contrasting data are generated. This process ideally goes on until a phase of theoretical saturation is reached, in which new data do not contribute anymore to the further development of the theory; in this study I used theoretical saturation’s alternative of ‘sufficient suggestion’.⁷¹ It was a variant of this form of theoretical sampling I applied in this study; for more information on the process of data gathering in this study, see section 4.5.2.

Theory unfolds while analyzing the data. The analysis is started by the process of coding the data. Coding basically is a procedure in which empirical material is given codes which remain close to the data but at the same time condense them in a slightly more abstract form – “[c]oding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data”⁷². The coding process is a process developing in various stages, described slightly different by different authors⁷³ but in general developing from the more concrete level of the data to the more abstract level of the theory. In this study I base myself on Charmaz’ distinction

⁶⁸ Charmaz, 2006, pp. 165-166.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Charmaz, 2006, p. 48.

⁷⁰ Blumer, 1969, p. 148.

⁷¹ On theoretical saturation see Charmaz 2006, pp. 96-122; the criterion of ‘sufficient suggestion’ as a more workable alternative for theoretical saturation is suggested on p. 114.

⁷² Id., p. 43.

⁷³ The coding process is described concisely in Glaser & Strauss’ remarks on the Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 105-113. On that basis, Corbin & Strauss (2008) developed a view on coding including open coding and axial coding with a matching ‘coding paradigm’. Boeije (2010) discerns three stages of coding: open, axial and selective. A separate form of coding is the Glaser-derived theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 63-66).

of two phases in the coding process⁷⁴: initial coding, aimed at exploring the possibilities of theoretical explanations of the data, and focused coding where earlier codes are abstracted into analytical categories and related to each other in what eventually is going to form a middle range theory of the field under study (for the process of data analysis in this study, see section 4.5.3).

4.4 Working with data from the narrative-biographical interview

4.4.1 In defense of the interview as an ethnographic source of data

The main methodological question in this study, being a form of ethnomusicology-at-home and ethnographic in character, is, as expressed above, the question ‘how to make the familiar strange’. Ethnography uses three main data categories: participant observation, interviews and documents. Participant observation, specifically, relies on the ability of the researcher to use himself as a research instrument; in making the journey from outsider to insider through participating-while-observing, knowledge and understanding is generated. In ethnomusicology-at-home, I argued, this journey from outsider to insider through carrying out participant observation is not to be taken for granted. Although it is far from impossible to generate knowledge and understanding through participant observation in one’s own society⁷⁵, alternatives for the generation of knowledge and understanding through a more systematic ‘othering’ or ‘distantiation’ should be looked at.

In this study, I will use the interview as an alternative for participant observation for gaining knowledge and understanding about the uses and functions of music. I will study how 30 ‘members’ of the western ‘culture’ I live in express their ideas on the uses and functions of music in their everyday lives, thus studying their shared and disputed ways of talking about what they do with music and what music does with them.⁷⁶

I base myself on two arguments in making this choice, one more pragmatic, the other more methodological. The pragmatic argument is that (participant) observation of a variety of uses and functions of music in the everyday lives of a wide variety of individuals – the project of this study – is a virtual impossibility for one researcher in a limited amount of time. Apart from time, ethics is a concern when carrying out participant observation in one’s proper surroundings⁷⁷: how to achieve ‘informed consent’ from

⁷⁴ Charmaz, 2006, pp. 42-60.

⁷⁵ Nettl, 1995, is a rewarding example; and Meyer & Schareika, 2009a, offers with the concept of ‘neo-classical field research’ a possibly fruitful stimulus to reconsider the character of ethnographic method in ethnomusicology-at-home.

⁷⁶ Cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2006, p. 98; and Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, p. 23, where they state that “interviews ... call forth highly specific cultural repertoires” [“Interviews ... rufen hochspezifische kulturelle Repertoires hervor”]. I use the word ‘members’ here deliberately as a reference to ethnomethodology in which the concept has a central place – the ethnomethodological perspective functions in his study as a background source of inspiration.

⁷⁷ Showing that Shelemay’s idea that “ethnographies of ‘Western music’ provide a lively field in which power relations are largely symmetrical, putting to rest ethical issues of longstanding concern” (Shelemay,

those observed.⁷⁸ Hence the choice for interviewing, which “may allow one to generate information that (...) would be very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain otherwise – both about events described and about perspectives and discursive strategies”⁷⁹.

The more methodological argument is that where (participant) observation delivers data to be analyzed – in particular field notes or observation protocols – which are already interpretations of the researcher, interview talk yields interpretations from the participants themselves. That is not to say that the researcher’s interpretive work is absent, because the analysis of the interviews is completely based upon such interpretations, and of course the researcher does influence the interview setting and in that respect contributes to the interpretive work of the interviewee actively; rather the argument is that working with interviews gives more possibilities for an initial ‘estrangement’ of the well-known.

“Any decision about whether to use interviews alone or in combination with other sources of data, must be made in the context of the purpose of one’s research and the circumstances in which it is to be carried out”⁸⁰, Hammersley and Atkinson state; and given the purpose – knowledge and understanding of the uses and functions of music – and the context – at home – of this study, the interview in this study will be the main data source. The study of interviews may thus contribute to answer, in the words of renowned ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger, “one of the questions shared by ethnomusicologists: ‘How do we talk to each other about sounds and their performance?’”^{81 82}

There are, however, two arguments against basing ethnographic research largely on interviews. The first one is that, especially from the perspective of practice theory, studying interviews focuses not on actual social situations but rather on *talk about* social situations. This can be countered by arguing that the interview may also be seen as a social situation in itself, but then the second argument makes its entrance: an interview may be a social situation, but it is not a ‘natural’ but rather a ‘contrived’ situation and therefore of less value. In the following two sections I will discuss those two arguments,

2001, p. 23) may be right but that new ethical issues may arise; and that, obviously, those issues also are issues outside one’s proper surroundings.

⁷⁸ Compare e.g. Michael Angrosino, *Doing Ethnographical and Observational Research*. London: Sage, 2007, pp. 84-90; and Steinar Kvale, *Doing Interviews*. London: Sage, 2007, p. 27.

⁷⁹ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 102. Cf. Stock, 2008, pp. 200-201, on ethnomusicology in the modern city, where he states: “... the nature of the city as a research site (and of professional work in the modern world) may mean that the resulting ethnographies are quite distinct in style and content. (...) Interviewing and relatively formal interactions may be necessary rather than day-to-day participant observation.”

⁸⁰ Id., p. 103.

⁸¹ Anthony Seeger, ‘Do We need to Remodel Ethnomusicology?’ *Ethnomusicology* 31/3 (1987), p. 494. As a side remark it may be added that this quote does again represent ethnomusicologists’ predilection for the performance as the major musical setting; cf. section 3.3.

⁸² The interview therewith eventually becomes in this study a specific form of participant observation (cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 108) – participant in the sense that the interviewer co-constructs the situation, and observation in the sense that the interview gives the opportunity to observe how people express their perspectives of shared and disputed ways of doing. In contrast with many instances of participant observation in general, and in denial of the idea that an interview is essentially ‘talk-in-interaction’, the observation in this study however restricts itself to talk – non-verbal communication as appearing in the interviews is left out of consideration in this study.

using a recent article by Meyer and Schareika on the methodology of ethnography⁸³ as a starting point for the discussion.

4.4.1.1 The interview as a registration of ‘ways of talking’

Meyer and Schareika argue in their article for a stricter division between registration and interpretation in ethnography. They see participant observation in its ‘classical’ form⁸⁴, interviews and documents as generating already interpreted (‘reconstructive’) data, whereas they argue that ethnographic research should focus not on the reconstruction but on the registration of data.⁸⁵ On that basis they make a plea for a strict observation of “...that, which the researcher can register, so concrete observable individuals in time and space and that, what they do and say”⁸⁶. In the wake of that remark, they shift participant observation in the direction of non-participant observation⁸⁷ (in the sense that “[h]e [the researcher] merely sits, stands or lies there, in the ideal case as a neutral body”⁸⁸) and rule out interviews and documents as data sources.

I agree that, given the importance of methodological techniques of distanciation specifically in ethnomusicology-at-home, the researcher should be on the lookout for an in first instance more registrative methodology⁸⁹. I do, however, not agree with the dismissal of interviews and documents as possibly valuable data in that respect. I base that on my formulation of Reckwitz’ ‘practice’ as ‘shared and disputed ways of doing *and talking*’. The argument would be that in order to gain knowledge and understanding about the codes of culture, one studies their expression in practices – in ways of doing *and* in ways of talking.⁹⁰ Although in practice theory it seems that a relative stress is laid on the ‘doing’, the ‘talking’ should not be ruled out as a way of gaining knowledge and understanding, through practices, of culture. This is not only suggested in Reckwitz’ ambiguity in this matter (see section 2.3.1.3), but may also be illustrated by Meyer and Schareika’s plea to register what observable individuals do *and say*, and in their description elsewhere of what they call ‘participant audition’ as a distinctive ethnographic way of data collection⁹¹.

⁸³ Meyer & Schareika, 2009a.

⁸⁴ “[k]lassische Feldforschung”; Id., 2009a, p. 82.

⁸⁵ Meyer & Schareika, 2009a, pp. 92-93.

⁸⁶ “...das, was der Forscher registrieren kann, also konkret beobachtbare Individuen in Zeit und Raum und das, was sie tun und sagen”. Id., p. 93.

⁸⁷ They reserve the epithet ‘neo-classical field research’ [“Neo-klassische Feldforschung”]; Id., p. 79. Cf. for ‘non-participant observation’ e.g. Flick, 2009, p. 222.

⁸⁸ Christian Meyer & Nikolaus Schareika, ‘Participant Audition. Audio-Recording as Ethnographic Method.’ Working Papers Nr. 101. Mainz: Department of Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg Universität, 2009b, p. 15.

⁸⁹ Although, as I stated above, I do not categorically want to rule out the possibility of generating knowledge and understanding through the reconstructive means of participant observation.

⁹⁰ This idea is supported by Reckwitz’ warning not to see the difference between ‘doing’ and ‘talking’ as a separation between ‘hard practices’ and ‘just talking’, with the former dominating the latter. Reckwitz, 2006, p. 44.

⁹¹ Meyer & Schareika, 2009b.

4.4.1.2 The interview as a social situation

In Meyer and Schareika's line of thought there seems to be a second hesitation concerning the value of interviews as data sources. Not only do they imply that studying talking – or at least “explanations”⁹², which they (unjustly) seem to see as the type of data interviews generate⁹³ – fits more in a ‘reconstructive’ than in a ‘registrative’ methodology. They also convey the idea that the focus of the ethnographer should be on “natural discourse”⁹⁴, excluding the interview from the ‘natural’ domain; they speak about “the native commentary on social life – which, when not directed to the ethnographer, is part of social practice itself”⁹⁵, implying that interview situations are not part of social practice; and in a footnote explicitly state that “... the interview situation is an artificial situation brought about by the ethnographer”⁹⁶.

Ways of talking are embedded indeed in concrete and ‘naturally occurring’ social situations where individuals not only ‘move their bodies’ but also, as it were, ‘move their lips’. But ways of talking are also conveyed in interviews and laid down in documents. I am aware that interviews are looked at with some suspicion in ethnography⁹⁷ because they are sometimes considered as artificial or ‘contrived’ rather than natural situations. Interviews seem to convey information *about* behavior in ‘naturally occurring’ social situations (sometimes with a questionable relationship to the actual behavior of the interviewees in those situations) – ‘explanations’, as Meyer and Schareika might suggest – rather than being proper social situations *in themselves*; and as ethnography aims at giving a close account of what is ‘really going on’, the direct observation of concrete and naturally occurring social situations⁹⁸ in ethnography has gained prominence⁹⁹.

It is, however, not necessary to make a rigid distinction between natural and artificial situations¹⁰⁰. Talk is in itself a form of action¹⁰¹, an element of practice, and gives access to the cultural codes expressed in practices. Talk occurs in nearly all social situations, and the interview, I would argue, is a specific – and in the daily life of our ‘interview

⁹² “Erklärungen”; Meyer & Schareika, 2009a, p. 92.

⁹³ See section 4.5 for a refutation of that idea when it concerns the narrative-biographical interview.

⁹⁴ “... natürlichen Diskurs”; Id., p. 98.

⁹⁵ “... die einheimische Kommentierung des sozialen Geschehens – die, *wenn nicht an den Ethnologen gerichtet*, selbst Teil der sozialen Praxis ist”; Id., p. 87; italics added.

⁹⁶ “... bildet die Interviewsituation eine vom Ethnologen künstlich hergestellte Situation.” Id., p. 94, footnote 12. In Meyer & Schareika, 2009b, p. 14 the remark that “[n]ative accounts of social action are (...) important data sources for anthropological research, but they are of restricted value when they are *addressed* to the anthropologist in an interview situation” (italics in original).

⁹⁷ See Paul Atkinson & Amanda Coffey, ‘Revisiting the Relationship Between Participant Observation and Interviewing.’ In: Jaber F. Gubrium & James A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research. Context & Method*. London: Sage, 2001; or e.g. Amann & Hirschauer, 1997, pp. 22-23.

⁹⁸ Such situations must pass the ‘dead social scientist test’ (Susan A. Speer, ‘Natural’ and ‘Contrived’ Data. A Sustainable Distinction? *Discourse Studies* 4 (2002), p. 517, citing Jonathan Potter) – social situations should have taken place also when the researcher had not been there.

⁹⁹ Cf. e.g. Streeck & Mehus, 2005, who define microethnography as “the microscopic analysis of *naturally occurring* human activities and interactions” (p. 381; italics added).

¹⁰⁰ See Speer, 2002.

¹⁰¹ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 170.

society'¹⁰² deeply embedded – sort of social situation where ‘talk-in-interaction’¹⁰³ is eminent. Interviewees express their thoughts in front of an audience, consisting at least of the interviewer; but, given the fact that the interview in our ‘interview society’ carries a host of other connotations with it, the audience may be also more general for interviewees, which adds another bit of ‘naturalness’ to the interview situation.¹⁰⁴ Specifically the narrative interview is a form of interviewing which focuses on eliciting talk emanating ‘naturally’ from the interviewee himself rather than as reactions to a continuous stream of stimuli from the researcher; it focuses on narrations rather than on argumentations or ‘explanations’, as we will see in the following section.

4.4.2 The narrative-biographical interview

The form of interview chosen for this study is the narrative-biographical interview. Narrative-biographical interviews are narrative in the sense that they do not use the question-and-answer framework but rather try to elicit narratives from the interviewees; the interview becomes a “practice of storytelling”¹⁰⁵, showing the interviewee’s perspective¹⁰⁶. The interviews are biographical in the sense that the main narrative asked for by the interviewer is the (musical) biography of the interviewee.

Although the study uses narrative-biographical interviews as its data source, this study itself is narrative nor biographical in focus. The study is not an instance of narrative research in the sense that it delivers an “... analysis of the topics, content, style, context and telling of narratives”¹⁰⁷. Neither is it an instance of biographical research focusing on

¹⁰² Paul Atkinson & David Silverman, ‘Kundera’s Immortality. The Interview Society and the Invention of the Self.’ *Qualitative Inquiry* 3 (2007).

¹⁰³ An expression much used in Conversation Analysis; see e.g. George Psathas, *Conversation Analysis. The Study of Talk-in-Interaction*. London: Sage, 1995. In Conversation Analysis, however, interviews actually are often excluded as a reliable form of talk-in-interaction, precisely because researchers are focusing on “everyday, naturally occurring activities in their concrete details” (id., p.2).

¹⁰⁴ The study therefore combines ‘factist’ and ‘specimen’ perspectives of the interview (cf. Ten Have, 2004, p. 8. For the combined perspective of factist and specimen: see Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 99). From a factist perspective, the interview is considered as a resource in which respondents talk about the world ‘out there’, and therefore as a source of information about that world (cf. the remarks on objectivism/realism in section 1.1). From a specimen perspective, this study sees the interview not only as a source of information but – at least equally important – as a topic to be studied in its own right (Ten Have, 2008, p. 4). It sees the interviews not only as talk *about* social situations in which in practices cultural codes are expressed, but also as a social situation *by itself* expressing cultural codes in ‘ways of talking’. A third perspective next to the factist and specimen perspectives might be the ‘case-perspective’, in which the interview does not tell about ‘facts’ outside of the interview or gives insight in ‘talk-in-interaction’, but rather gives insight into the features of the studied individual. See Gabriele Rosenthal, *Interpretative Sozialforschung. Eine Einführung*. [‘Interpretive social research. An introduction.’] Weinheim: Juventa, 2008,; and for a critique Atkinson & Silverman 2007, who describe that this perspective eventually may come to see the interview as a locus of confession leading to the revelation of a unique individual self. The differentiation between factist and case orientations matches the differentiation between theme and case orientation in Boeije, 2010, p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Sage, 2008, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Rosenthal, 2008, p. 125, 137.

¹⁰⁷ Martin Cortazzi, ‘Narrative Analysis in Ethnography.’ In: Atkinson, Coffey et al. (Eds.), 2001, p. 384. Cf. Susan E. Chase, ‘Narrative Inquiry. Still a Field in the Making.’ In: Denzin & Lincoln (Eds.), 2011.

the ((re)construction of the) life histories of the interviewees¹⁰⁸, the “‘structural processes’ of the life course”¹⁰⁹. Rather, the present study uses the narrative-biographical interview as a powerful methodological instrument to elicit ‘talk-in-interaction’ in an interview situation in which the position of the interviewer/researcher is kept as distanced as possible methodologically.

This last point is crucial. The fact that I choose the narrative-biographical interview as the main data source of this study is because that form of interview has the possibility to focus on the talk of the interviewee while keeping the interviewer at a distance, which enables an ‘estrangement of the known’ crucial to ethnomusicology-at-home. That, however, is the case only when the narrative-biographical interview is considered as a rigorous method of interviewing. I specifically do not agree with a view on the narrative biographical interview as ultimately ‘open’ interviews¹¹⁰, which turn into ‘friendly conversations’ rather than interviews¹¹¹, into “spirited debates as members of the research team became at once musicians, audience members, or, occasionally, critics”¹¹², or even into “a process in which two or more persons creatively and openly share experiences with one another in a mutual search for greater self-understanding”¹¹³, eventually leading to “a sea swell of meaning making in which researchers connect their own experiences to those of others and provide stories that open up conversations about how we live and cope”¹¹⁴.

Acknowledging the fact that the interview is a locus of co-construction, I rather take the stance that the interviewer must try to keep his co-constructive activities within bounds (aiming more for the role of ‘complete observer’ than of ‘complete participant’¹¹⁵). It means that “we have to orient ourselves firstly to the relevancy system of the everyday actor and put our own relevances in the first phases of the research situation at the background”¹¹⁶. Of course it also means that the interviewer must justify reflexively the amount of co-constructiveness that may have been part of the interview, and that he must stress that the eventual analysis of the interview is the researcher’s work, and not an objective rendering of reality in naturalist terms¹¹⁷.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Peter Alheit & Bettina Dausien, ‘Biographie’ in der Sozialwissenschaften.’ [‘Biography in the social sciences.’] In: Bernhard Fetz (Ed.), *Die Biographie – Zur Grundlegung ihrer Theorie*. [‘The biography. On founding its theory.’] Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. In some instance, narrative and biographical research are seen as mostly overlapping, e.g. Chase, 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Gerhard Riemann, ‘An Introduction to ‘Doing Biographical Research’.’ *Historical Social Research* 31 (2006), p. 7; cf. Rosenthal, 2008, pp. 161-198 on biographical research and ‘case reconstruction’.

¹¹⁰ For an overview of open forms of interviewing, see e.g. Kvale, 2007, pp. 67-77.

¹¹¹ Finnegan 1989, p. 344; cf. for a more general position Riessman, 2008, p. 23 ff.

¹¹² Shelemay, 2001, p. 8.

¹¹³ Norman K. Denzin, as cited in Atkinson & Silverman, 1997, p. 311.

¹¹⁴ Carolyn Ellis & Leigh Berger, ‘Their Story/My Story/Our Story. Including the Researcher’s Experience in Interview Research.’ In: Gubrium & Holstein (Eds.), 2001, p. 853.

¹¹⁵ Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 102.

¹¹⁶ “... dass wir uns zunächst am Relevanzsystem der Alltagshandelnden orientieren und unsere eigenen Relevanzen in den ersten Phasen der Erhebungssituation zurückstellen”. Rosenthal, 2008, p. 53.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Hammersley & Atkinson, p. 5 ff.

In this study I use the narrative biographical interview as theorized in the wake of German sociologist Fritz Schütze's work on the narrative interview¹¹⁸. The idea behind a narrative interview is that statements about the (experience of) reality come closest to this (experience of) reality if interviewees can tell their own story about this reality, preferably with as little interference from the interviewer as possible. The objective of the narrative interview is to get the interviewee into a 'storytelling mode'. The effect of this is that on the one hand the interviewee is led by the subject of what he has to say and on the other hand by that which Fritz Schütze calls the 'compulsions of storytelling'¹¹⁹: the person who starts telling a story will finish it, in a story recognizable details are expected, and at the same time you do not expect endless digressions about futilities¹²⁰.

The foundation of the idea of the storytelling mode is the idea that the interviewee is led less by the interviewer in that mode and more by the dynamics of storytelling itself; and that those dynamics are deeply human and come, as a re-telling of personal experience, very close to the experience itself¹²¹. It also means that in the interview the interviewer consciously searches for the moments of storytelling and tries to avoid other modes of talk, such as messages, descriptions and argumentations (Meyer and Schareika's 'explanations'), because – especially in the latter – the interviewee no longer is led by the story telling mode itself but rather engages in a more 'theoretical'-based argument

¹¹⁸ See a.o. Fritz Schütze, 'Zur Hervorlockung und Analyse von Erzählungen thematisch relevanter Geschichten im Rahmen soziologischer Feldforschung – dargestellt an einem Projekt zur Erforschung von kommunalen Machtstrukturen.' ['On the elicitation and analysis of narratives of thematically relevant stories in the framework of sociological field research – presented through a project on studying communal power structures.'] In: Arbeitsgruppe Bielefelder Soziologen, *Kommunikative Sozialforschung: Alltagswissen und Alltagshandeln, Gemeindemachtforschung, Polizei, Politische Erwachsenenbildung*. ['Communicative social research. Every day knowledge and every day action, community power studies, police, political adult education.'] München: Fink, 1976; Fritz Schütze, 'Biographieforschung und narratives Interview.' ['Biographical research and narrative interview.'] *Neue Praxis* 3 (1983); Fritz Schütze, 'Kognitive Figuren des autobiographischen Stegreiferzählens.' ['Cognitive figures in improvised storytelling.'] In: Martin Kohli & Günther Robert (Eds.), *Biografie und soziale Wirklichkeit. Neue Beiträge und Forschungsperspektiven*. ['Biography and social reality. New contributions and research perspectives.'] Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984; Fritz Schütze, 'Ethnographie und Sozialwissenschaftliche Methoden der Feldforschung. Eine mögliche methodische Orientierung in der Ausbildung und Praxis der sozialen Arbeit?' ['Ethnography and social research methods in field research. A possible methodological orientation in education and practice of social work.'] In: Norbert Groddeck & Michael Schumann (Eds.), *Modernisierung Sozialer Arbeit durch Methodenentwicklung und -reflexion*. ['Modernization of social work through method development and reflection.'] Freiburg: Lambertus Verlag, 1994. For concise explanations see e.g. Flick, 2009, pp. 177-185, or Riemann 2006. The following description derives mainly from the lengthier overview in Rosenthal, 2008, pp. 125-160.

¹¹⁹ "Zugzwänge des Erzählens"; Schütze, 1976, pp. 224-225.

¹²⁰ Cf. the 'ten features of narrative' in Jerome S. Bruner, 'Past and Present as Narrative Constructions.' In: Jürgen Straub (Ed.), *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

¹²¹ Cf. Hennion, 2001, p. 6, who states that in his interviews "[s]peaking is not describing from outside but reflexively reproducing feelings". A critical note against this perspective is the idea that narratives not so much represent experience itself but rather form experience. Narratives create "a world of 'reality' constructed according to narrative principles" (Bruner, 2005, p. 40). For a more literary-historical exploration of the idea that stories are not referring to reality but to a construction of reality aimed at ordering the chaos of ordinary life, see Philipp Blom, *Verhalen waarin wij geloven*. ['Stories we believe in.'] Amsterdam: Volkskrant Boekenfonds, 2012.

expressed for an audience (e.g. the interviewer or the general community).¹²² Those arguments are explicit reflections on actions, but are less apt to capture the more tacit elements of behavior¹²³.

The narrative interview has its own structure. After the phase in which rapport is build, the interview starts with a very open ‘generic narrative question’ which invites the interviewee into telling a story. In the interviews I conducted for this study the generic narrative question was a paraphrase of the following:

Can you tell me your life story while focusing on the role of music in your life? Both listening to music and playing music are relevant for me. You may start with your first memories of music and after that talk about what you want for as long as you want. Everything is interesting to me. I will interrupt you as little as possible and only ask questions after your story is finished.

The interviewee then tells his story – in this case his musical biography. He does this without interruptions from the interviewer. The interviewer asks no further questions, but lets the interviewee tell his story. Gaps in the story are not covered up by questions from the interviewer to get the story going again. Only when the interviewee himself indicates that his story is finished (which sometimes is, in musical terms, a deceptive cadence – the interviewee says the end of his story has been reached, but after a brief pause starts adding to it again of his own accord) does this first, narrative phase end and the second phase begin.

In this phase, the questioning-phase, the initiative lies more with the interviewer, but restraint is still important. The questioning-phase is divided into two parts. In the internal questioning-phase the interviewer tries, solely guided by what the interviewee has said and by asking questions, to raise a few points in the story which were not elaborated upon or to let the interviewee himself close the gaps in his narrative. Then follows the external questioning-phase, in which the interviewer can raise issues which are not a direct result of the interviewee’s stories, but which are relevant to the researcher.¹²⁴

¹²² See Ralf Bohnsack, *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung. Einführung in qualitative Methoden*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2008, pp. 92-96

¹²³ Cf. the differentiation between the more explicit idea of ‘action’ and the more implicit one of ‘operation’ in Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005, p. 292.

¹²⁴ In a sense I used the interviews basically as expert interviews – the interviewees can be seen as experts of their own lives. Cf. Michael Meuser & Ulrike Nagel, ‘ExpertInneninterviews – vielfach erprobt, wenig bedacht. Ein Beitrag zur qualitativen Methodendiskussion.’ [‘Expert interviews – often tried, little reflected. A contribution to the discussion on qualitative methodology.’] In: Alexander Bogner, Beate Littich & Wolfgang Menz (Eds.), *Das Experteninterview. Theorie, Methode, Anwendung*. [‘The expert interview. Theory, method, application.’] 2. Auflage. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2005, p. 453, where they state: “Other than with the case oriented interpretation the interpretation of expert interviews orient itself on thematic units, on similar content in passages scattered over the text, rather than on the sequentiality of expressions in every respective interview.” [“Anders als bei der einzelfallinteressierten Interpretation orientiert sich der Auswertung von ExpertInneninterviews an thematischen Einheiten, an inhaltlich zusammengehörigen, über die Texte verstreute Passagen – nicht an der Sequenzialität von Äußerungen je Interview.”]

4.5 Methodological aspects of the study

4.5.1 *Recapitulation*

The methodological aspects of this study circulate around the theme of ‘estrangement’, for which reason I opted for a grounded theory approach using narrative-biographical interviews. In this section, further repercussions of this choice for the present study will be illustrated. I will highlight the characteristics of the interviews on which this study is based and on the – theoretically sampled – population of interviewees (section 4.5.2). I then will consider data analysis and theory construction (4.5.3), and will close this section with remarks on ethics (4.5.4) and on reflexivity (4.5.5).

4.5.2 *The interviews and the interviewees*

The interviews which serve as the data for this study were held in the period January 2010 – October 2011. A total of 34 interviews were conducted with 30 interviewees; four interviewees were interviewed twice. Interviews were conducted at the homes of the interviewees with two exceptions: one interviewee was, on his request, interviewed in his music studio because his main music collection was stored in the studio, and the first of two interviews with one of the other interviewees was, again on her request, conducted at my office due to the impossibility to conduct the interview at her home at that specific day and time. 14 of the 34 interviews were conducted in the morning, 10 in the afternoon, and 10 in the evening.

In most of the interviews, only the interviewee and myself were present. In some cases, partners or children of interviewees were present briefly in the interview room (usually the sitting room) during the interview, in most cases only interrupting the interview incidentally. In five cases, their presence led to real involvement in the interview, ranging from a partner interfering with occasional answers to questions by the interviewee or with uninduced remarks in the background, via a shorter period in which the partner of the interviewee was present and the topic of music was discussed between three persons (the interviewee, her partner, and myself), to the presence of the manager of a musician during the complete interview in which the interview had the character of a double interview. Given the focus of this study on the interview as a locus of ‘talk in interaction’, none of those instances made it necessary to exclude the interview from analysis, although in some cases the presence of a third person did influence the course and character of the interview to a certain extent.

I conducted all interviews keeping in mind the three stages of the narrative biographical interview. Given the fact that this study does not aim for a case analysis of interviewees but rather attempts a more thematic analysis of talking about music, the difference between the second and the third phase were of less relevance to me. The main point of

the interviews was to get people in story telling mode¹²⁵; the second and third phases of the interview were used as means to stimulate further narration in that respect. The only interviewer-induced topic I constantly introduced in all interviews in the third phase was the topic of primary- and secondary-school music education, given my special interest in that domain.

A special feature of the interviews I conducted was that I finished the interview by asking for a ‘guided tour’ through the music collection of my interviewees. This phase of the interview again sparked off spontaneous talk about music. This last phase added an important element to the information gathered in the interviews. In the biographical phase of the interviews, the interviewees had the tendency to focus on themselves as an integrated person and therefore stressed unity in and logical development of their musical taste. In the guided tour, a much more random and varied image of the interviewees as musical persons presented itself.¹²⁶

In three cases, I did not succeed in getting interviewees to enter into biographical story telling mode. In one case, the interviewee apparently felt that his musical life was too uninteresting – he was one of the two interviewees which I selected specifically because of their lack of affinity with music. In a second case the interviewee did not structure his story in the form of a life story but rather as a wide range of comments on his present (musical) life. In a third case, the interview turned into a double interview where both interviewees reacted continuously and freely on one another and the biographical thread of the story was only a thin one¹²⁷. In the first case, I therefore conducted the interview (after some internal struggling with this reformulation of my role as interviewer) as a loose form of a semi-structured interview based on intuitively formulated life phases; in the second and third case, I did not intervene. All three interviews have been included in the analysis.

All interviews were recorded with a portable MP3-recorder. This resulted in a sum total of 50 hours 38 minutes of audio material¹²⁸, an average of 1 hour and 41 minutes per

¹²⁵ A clear example of how forceful the storytelling mode was at work during the interviews stems from the first interview. At some point the interviewee told about his experiences at secondary school but mistakenly he referred to his primary school. I corrected him, which acted as rather a shock for him: suddenly he seemed to realize that he was not talking to a generalized audience but to a specific interviewer who could interrupt him. It took him some time to retake his story and enter the storytelling mode again. From this incident I learned that I had to be careful with interrupting the stories of my interviewees, something I refrained from as much as possible in the rest of the interview series.

¹²⁶ This may be a reason to look at the results of questionnaire or interview research on musical taste with some care, and links to Meyer & Schareika’s (2009a) cautions against the unreflected use of the more ‘factist’, ‘explanatory’ elements of interviews.

¹²⁷ Those experiences may remind us that research through the narration of life stories is far from culturally neutral or universal. A well-known example is the study of Janet Hoskins in Eastern Indonesia, where questions for life histories did not generate the data about personal experiences she hoped for, but questions on the histories of things in possession of the interviewees did. Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects. How Things Tell the Stories of People’s Lives*. London: Routledge, 1998.

¹²⁸ In the second interview with the first interviewee, the initial 30 or so minutes of the interview were accidentally not recorded because of a wrong setting on the recording device. As soon as I discovered this I corrected it, and we together summarized (and recorded) the content of the 30 minutes not recorded.

interviewee; the longest interview took 2 hours and 45 minutes, the (by far) shortest slightly over half an hour¹²⁹. The length of the interviews was: 30-60 minutes: 1; 60-90 mins.: 10; 90-120 mins.: 10; 120-150 mins.: 6; more than 150 mins.: 3.

The population of the interviewees was chosen in order to support the construction of a middle range theory. This was done according to the principles of theoretical sampling (see section 4.3.3). My way in to the field of research was deliberately random. I decided to conduct four initial interviews with four radically different interviewees, and that I would, after a first analysis of those interviews, decide how to carry on sampling. The first four interviewees were therefore picked trying to attain variation over the following, intuitively formulated, general as well as musical criteria: age – gender – level of education – residence (city/rural area) – musical genre of preference – degree of musical activity – importance of music in life.

After an analysis of the interviews with the first four interviewees, it turned out that the criteria most relevant for the variations in the stories as told appeared to be rather the musical than the general criteria, with the exception of age and level of education. Therefore, in the following interviews variation in the interview population was sought explicitly based on the following criteria:

- type of music preference: broad interest – specific interest in one or a limited number of genres – low or no interest in music;
- preference of genre: variation over musical genres of preference¹³⁰;
- music performing activities: professional – amateur – none;
- age;
- level of education.

The following 26 interviewees were chosen in order to reach as great a variation as possible in the possible combinations of the above mentioned criteria, whilst keeping an eye on variation over the less relevant general criteria of gender and residence, and also taking into account a certain variation in cultural background¹³¹. During the choosing of ‘the next interviewee’, I continuously looked for contrasts compared to the interviews

¹²⁹ This is much shorter than the interviews reported on in Rineke Smilde, *Musicians as Lifelong Learners. Discovery through Biography*. Delft: Eburon, 2009, which also uses narrative interviews as its core data. The reason for the difference probably is the fact that where Smilde interviewed professional musicians in whose lives music is central, I interviewed ‘ordinary’ people for many of whom music was important but not central in their lives.

¹³⁰ As an indication for genres I used a version of the list as found in the Short Test On Musical Preferences-Revised, STOMP-R; <http://www.sjdm.org/dmidi/Short%20Test%20Of%20Music%20Preferences.html>, consulted 30-10-2012, adapted to the Dutch situation in 2010. Cf. Evert Bisschop Boele. *Musicscape Groningen – Live!* Groningen: Hanzehogeschool Groningen, 2010, p. 15-16. See also: Peter J. Rentfrow & Samuel D. Gosling, ‘The Do Re Mi’s of Everyday Life. The Structure and Personality Correlates of Music Preferences.’ *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84/6 (2003).

¹³¹ Of the interviewees, 11 were female and 19 were male. 22 lived in the city of Groningen, 8 in the more rural areas. Of the 30 interviewees, 5 would count as having a ‘foreign background’ (‘allochtoon’) according to official Dutch statistical definitions (2 western and 3 non-western; 2 first-generation, 3 second-generation); see <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/methoden/begrippen/default.htm?Languageswitch=on&ConceptID=37> for the definitions.

already conducted. An overview of the characteristics of the 30 interviewees can be found in the table in Appendix I.

All interviewees had to comply with two general criteria. At the time of the interview they had to be living in the province of Groningen, and they had to be unknown to me. I formulated the latter criterion in order to prevent personal ties between me and the interviewee which might influence the storytelling. I found most of my interviewees through colleagues and friends who served as contact persons. Usually I would look for an interviewee who corresponded with a certain number of characteristics, and then would ask one or more targeted possible contact persons from my surroundings specifically if they could refer me to someone with those characteristics. If the answer was positive, normally I would not approach the possible interviewee myself but would ask my contact person to make the initial contact and ask whether they would be willing to be interviewed by me¹³². If their answer was positive, I would receive the email address and/or telephone number from my contact person and then would contact the interviewee myself, explaining my request for an interview very briefly and asking for date and time proposals. After the initial contact, only one possible interviewee did not respond to my contact person anymore, which I took as a refusal to be interviewed.

The six interviews with the first four interviewees were transcribed verbatim.¹³³ All other interviews were laid down in extensive interview proceedings, in which the interviews were summarized sentence by sentence so that no content would be lost. After every interview, I wrote a portrait of the interviewee on the basis of the interview and sent that to the interviewee for approval, asking the interviewee to suggest corrections, additions or sections to be removed from the portrait. The definitive versions of the portraits, approved by the interviewees, are attached in Appendix II. When the portrait was approved, I would send the interviewee a letter to thank him for his cooperation, including a national gift voucher as a sign of my gratitude.

4.5.3 Data analysis and theory construction

Analysis of the interviews started as soon as I started conducting the interviews. In the first place because one cannot help reflecting on them while conducting those interviews, which leads to an intuitive, scattershot and often creative form of analysis; but also because I started writing about the interviews immediately. Those writings would take the form of memos connected to the research process, presentations, papers and articles I would work on while conducting the research, and a public weblog, 'Evert's World of

¹³² In the limited number of cases where I directly contacted the possible interviewee myself, contact turned out to be much harder established than when a contact person intermediated for me, reason why I usually would use a contact person.

¹³³ In the transcriptions of (parts of) the interviews and in the quotes used in this study, I leave out repetition of words, searching for words, interjections like 'ehm' or 'ah' and the like. I kept intact the specific vocabulary of the interviewees, and in specific places in a very limited way corrected grammar in order to enhance intelligibility and to prevent 'framing' certain interviewees as less literate.

Music’¹³⁴, a form of ‘public thinking’ in which I would reflect on my personal musical life in connection to many of the topics I encountered during my research.

The more formal phase of data analysis¹³⁵ started with an analysis of the material of the interview transcripts of the first interviewee. I started with a process of initial coding, coding line-by-line, staying close to the transcripts, focusing on music as acted out in social situations and using the ideas of ‘musicking’, ‘uses’, ‘functions’ and ‘discourse’ as sensitizing concepts. I ended up with a list of 147 different codes. After some worrying (the amount of codes would grow intolerably fast if I would continue initial coding for another three full-text interviews, let alone for 30) I grouped the codes in four code families, which I saw as different ‘levels’ in the interviews:

- uses: codes referring to quotations on the elements of actual social situations talked about in the interviews;
- functions: codes referring to quotations on what the uses of music brought the interviewees;
- change over time: codes referring to quotations on how musical behavior changed in time (often described by the interviewees in terms of “development”);
- the narration: codes referring to quotations in which the interviewee reflected on his own narration.

I assigned the codes I had formulated to the four code families, merged codes which felt as overlapping, and made sub-families for the level of uses, considering they were for the most part very concrete, down-to-earth, factual codes. With the new battery of codes (approximately 100) I coded the material of the second, third and fourth interviewees, reworking the set of codes continuously and occasionally going back to earlier interviews to revise codings if I felt that was necessary. I thus entered a phase of thematic analysis.

After having coded the four interview transcripts, my set of codes contained about 80 different codes. I then, as an intermediate step, continued to code the remaining 26 interviewee portraits for the level of uses only. In the process I revised the code list (renaming, merging codes, splitting codes, shifting codes to different families et cetera). After this coding operation I ended up with a set of 147 codes, of which 120 referred to specific uses (more than 80%).

As a next step I concentrated on the functions codes. Starting off with a set of 20 codes referring to ‘function’, I coded the remaining 26 extended interview proceedings, sometimes also adding codes outside the functions set (specifically in the uses set, thus adding more richness to the uses codes which were up to this phase derived partly from the interviewee portraits rather than from the actual interview transcripts or proceedings). Occasionally I turned to the audio recordings of the interviews when lack of clarity occurred in the interpretation of the transcripts/proceedings. I then checked all the quotes

¹³⁴ www.evertsworldofmusic.blogspot.nl.

¹³⁵ In the formal analysis of the interviews I used Atlas.Ti as computer-aided qualitative data analysis software. See Susanne Friese, *Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti*. London: Sage, 2012.

per code, re-coding when necessary. While doing this round of recoding the functions-set, I gradually coded some very telling quotes as in vivo-codes¹³⁶ and recoded the uses-set when necessary. I eventually ended up with a list of 15 codes referring to functions, some sub-divided. A set of 17 possible in vivo codes were also the result of this phase, as was a set of quotes headed under the code 'contrasting'.

In carrying out this process, I gradually slipped from the phase of initial coding into a phase of more focused coding. I decided to leave the levels of time and narration out mostly and to concentrate on the uses and functions codes. From lists of the codes referring to uses and functions I gradually worked towards a more theoretical model, ordering the respective codes, constantly working my way from the codes back to the interviews and back to the codes again, now occasionally drawing on literature around emergent themes such as 'exchange' or 'identity'. This analysis of the 30 very varied interviews eventually led to a theory sufficiently suggested by the interview data. The result of this intensive coding process will be presented in the chapters 6 to 8.

4.5.4 Ethics and reflexivity

Ethical considerations for this study fall in three categories: deontological considerations about the rights of the interviewees, consequential considerations about the effects of the research for the interviewees,¹³⁷ and moral considerations concerning the researcher's integrity¹³⁸.

Considering the rights of the interviewees, the three key issues are informed consent, confidentiality, and justice¹³⁹. Informed consent was obtained from each interviewee by explaining in writing, before they would accept the invitation to be interviewed, the general aim of the research, the general form of the interview, the fact that the interviews would be recorded, and the rights of the interviewee. I mentioned the fact that the interviews would be stored, transcribed, and reworked into a listener's portrait which I would ask them to approve. I stressed the fact that material would not be accessible to third parties unless the interviewees would give their consent. I offered each interviewee copies of the recorded interviews as well as the transcriptions/proceedings I made.

Considering confidentiality, I explicitly mentioned that I might use quotes from the interviews or refer to content from the interviews in publications, and that if I would use elements of their specific interview for publication, I would contact them for their consent again. I offered the interviewee the possibility to indicate that his interview could be anonymized. Although only one interviewee specifically asked for this, eventually I decided to anonymize all interview data in all publications resulting from this study, giving all interviewees a pseudonym and altering or omitting information that would

¹³⁶ Verbatim expressions from the interviews serving as codes. See Charmaz, 2006, pp. 55-57.

¹³⁷ See Elizabeth Murphy & Robert Dingwall, 'The Ethics of Ethnography.' In: Atkinson, Coffey et al. (Eds.), 2001, p. 339.

¹³⁸ See Kvale, 2007, pp. 29-30.

¹³⁹ Murphy & Dingwall, 2001, pp. 342-347; Kvale, 2007, pp. 27-28.

make specific interviewees to recognizable. On top of that, I decided to indicate the interviewees with ‘I1’, ‘I2’ et cetera when quoted in the study, rather than with their pseudonyms¹⁴⁰, in order to prevent the impression that the study is a biographical study – the point of the study is a thematic analysis of talk about music rather than a reconstruction of individual biographies (see also section 4.4.2).¹⁴¹ Finally I indicated that interviewees could decide to withdraw from the research project at any moment, in which case I would destroy all their data. No interviewees withdrew themselves from the project.

Considering justice, the careful selection of a wide variety of interviewees through theoretical sampling enabled me to consider each interviewee in its own right as contributing to the overall study, and in that respect as equal – no matter how ‘musical’ or ‘non-musical’ the interviewee appeared to be, and no matter what his stylistic preferences or more general background characteristics were. The knowledge that I would gain a more general overview of uses and functions of music in my own society only through the study of a wide variety of interviewees, my own background as an ethnomusicologist used to being interested in ‘the other’, and the use of sensitizing concepts such as ‘musicking’, ‘uses’ and ‘functions’ which are not tied intrinsically to a certain selection of the interviewees but were broadly applicable, all helped to consider all interviewees as equally interesting.

When it comes to the effects of the research for the interviewees, two key issues are non-maleficence and beneficence¹⁴². Some of the aspects mentioned above help to prevent malefic effects. Anonymizing the interviewees helps to make references to their interviews less traceable to the individual interviewees. The fact that this study focuses not on the interviewees as cases, but on their ‘talk in interaction’ during the interview, also helps to minimize malefic effects. The procedure of approving the interviewee’s portrait by the interviewee helped to sieve out personal information given by the interviewees because of the intimate setting of the interview but which they regretted afterwards. The fact that I chose interviewees unknown to me and that the interviews were restricted to one or two occasions further contributed to the prevention of malifience. A general form of beneficence – the principle that the research contributes to “positive and identifiable benefits”¹⁴³ – springs from the aims of this study: to contribute to an enhanced understanding of the needs of the individuals in their audiences by musicians.

¹⁴⁰ Of course the Ix-indications can, for those who are interested in that specific perspective on the material, be matched with individual biographies by way of the appendices I and II. In appendix II, one of the portraits is on the specific request of the interviewee in question, pop musician Lou Leeuw, not anonymized.

¹⁴¹ The only exception is Belinda’s story in section 8.3.3, because the subject there is Belinda’s biography in its cultural context.

¹⁴² Murphy & Dingwall, 2001, pp. 340-342.

¹⁴³ Murphy & Dingwall, 2001, p. 339. Cf. the idea of ‘macro-ethics’ in Kvale, 2007, pp. 30-31.

Finally, concerning the researcher's integrity, I support the idea that a certain professional distance and independence of research must be attained¹⁴⁴. Many of the elements mentioned above foster this idea of professional distance and, specifically, an interview setting which preserves the character of this professional distance. In that respect, the interviews were intimate in setting and content but were characterized by a clear differentiation in roles between interviewer and interviewee at the same time. The choice for narrative biographical interviews based in the work of Fritz Schütze (see section 4.4.2) contributed to that effect, as well as the fact that in the interviews I respected the limits the interviewees themselves indicated explicitly or implicitly; never did I push interviewees to elaborate further on subjects which they mentioned but did not dwell upon¹⁴⁵. The fact that the interviews were not meant to be material for case analyses of the interviewees contributed greatly to this form of distanciation.

4.5.5 *Quality aspects of the study*

For the justification of the quality of this qualitative study, I used Steinke's seven core criteria for qualitative research¹⁴⁶, regrouped in six criteria. Those criteria are: intersubjective apprehension of the study/indication of the research process; empirical grounding; limitation; coherence; relevance; and reflected subjectivity.

An intersubjective apprehension of this study is fostered by the description of the specific research process (data sampling, analysis) in this chapter; by the application of semi-standard methods of data sampling and analysis; and by discussion of intermediate results of the study in the research group I was part of as well as in public presentations on several occasions. Empirical grounding is strengthened by applying a grounded theory approach (see section 4.3), including a coding process based on initial coding sticking close to the data, and by including many direct quotes from the interviews in the chapters 6-8.¹⁴⁷

When it comes to the limitation of the validity of the research outcomes, this study's claims are modest. Outcomes reflect the data of the 30 interviewees; they may offer a plausible first step towards a more general account of uses and functions in Groningen, the Netherlands, or even western societies more general, but the conclusions in chapter 9 referring to such wider applicability are tentative only and fit in the modest 'plausibility' claim as expressed in chapter 1. Coherence of the findings presented in this study is

¹⁴⁴ Kvale, 2007, p. 29-30.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. for an alternative attitude e.g. Rosenthal, 2008, pp. 152-155.

¹⁴⁶ Ines Steinke, 'Gütekriterien qualitativer Forschung.' ['Quality criteria of qualitative research.'] In: Flick, Von Kardorff et al. (Eds.), 2000, pp. 323-331. See pp. 319-321 for an overview of possible positions towards the assessment of the quality of qualitative research; and e.g. Uwe Flick, *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 2007, for an approach based on research strategies rather than on criteria.

¹⁴⁷ Next to that I planned using a form of communicative validation by presenting the findings of the analysis to the interviewees and discuss them with them. The session, for which I invited all 30 interviewees, took place on June 11, 2013. Because eventually only three persons were present, I consider the input of the meeting (which was positive) as not representative enough to be validating the research.

furthered by expressing them in schematic models as well as by indicating possible inconsistencies or questions for further research. Relevance is strengthened by mentioning the wider aims of this study in chapter 1 as well as by indicating possible areas of application of the findings in chapter 9.

Reflected subjectivity finally is encountered in this study in those places where reflexivity is consciously put into practice. Following Steinke¹⁴⁸, four general points are of importance:

- observation of the self while carrying out the research: at all points during the research process, reflection on the relation between the self and the research carried out was part of the process. Those reflections were not only of a constant implicit nature, many of them were made explicit in either the process of memoing, in entries in my personal public weblog written during the research period, and in presentations and discussions throughout the research process;
- reflection on personal presuppositions: personal presuppositions were taken into account by intensive and systematic reflection on the theoretical and methodological backgrounds of this study connected to my own background as an ethnomusicologist. Explicit mention of them can be found in chapter 1, the final chapter 9, and in various places throughout the study;
- existence of a relation of trust between interviewer and interviewee: both the access to the interviewees and the ensurance of informed consent as described above, as well as the combination of intimacy and professional distance while interviewing contributed to a relation of mutual trust between me and the interviewees;
- reflections while entering the field: again, reflections on entering the field of research were part of the memoing process as well as in the personal weblog.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter I presented the methodological aspects of this study. I started with stating that this study is an example of ethnomusicology-at-home, which requires a certain methodological estrangement, a 'making the familiar strange'. As methodological reflections are somewhat scanty in the field of ethnomusicology-at-home, I turned to qualitative sociology, and specifically to grounded theory, for inspiration. Grounded theory is a loose bundling of concrete methods of data collection, data analysis, and theory construction. It bases itself on abductive reasoning; I therefore developed theory while studying empirical material, using a strategy of theoretical data sampling. I used the theoretical backgrounds of the study to furnish sensitizing concepts for the analysis.

I chose in this study to use narrative interviews as my main data source. This is rather uncommon in ethnomusicology, where participant observation tends to be seen as the predominant data generator. I justified my choice for the narrative interview on pragmatic

¹⁴⁸ Steinke, 2009, p. 331.

arguments considering time as well as ethics, and on more specifically methodological arguments: use of the interview is justifiable because this study is research into practices which are characterized as ‘ways of doing *and talking*’ and the interview elicits precisely talking; and the narrative interview specifically is a form of interview which does not elicit ‘contrived’ ‘explanations’ about social life but rather a form of talking which comes close to ‘natural’ ‘talk-in-interaction’.

I base myself on Schütze’s theorizing of the narrative interview, in which interviewees, through the ‘compulsions of storytelling’, enter a narrative mode which distantiates them from the interviewer and brings them close to their proper experience of the told. I used a narrative interview divided into four sections: a narrative first section, then a questioning second (interviewee-based) and third (interviewer-based) section, and a final fourth section in which interviewees gave me a ‘guided tour’ through their music collection.

Concerning research ethics, I gained informed consent from interviewees, guaranteed confidentiality, and did justice to every individual interviewee. I took care that the results of the research were non-maleficent to the interviewees and beneficent from a wider perspective; and I carefully guarded my integrity by way of keeping a professional distance and independence from the interviewees. Finally, I took care of the quality of this study by paying attention to intersubjective apprehension of the study/indication of the research process, empirical grounding, limitation, coherence, relevance, and reflected subjectivity.

**PART II. USES AND FUNCTIONS OF
MUSIC IN GRONINGEN AD 2010**

5. Sketching the wider context

5.1 Introduction

This study, then, is a study of a varied sample of 30 individuals living in the Dutch province of Groningen speaking about their musical life in lengthy narrative interviews carried out in the period 2010-2011. In order to give a picture of the context in which these individuals expressed their thoughts about their musical lives, three things will be discussed in this chapter. In 5.2, I will give a short overall description of the province of Groningen. In 5.3, I will describe its musical infrastructure: its buildings, institutions and organizations, its places to buy musical goods, and the live music performances on offer. In 5.4 finally, I will sketch what is known about the actual musical behavior of the inhabitants of Groningen operating within the context treated in 5.2 and 5.3.

This chapter is not meant to be exhaustive. Information on the musical infrastructure of and musical behavior in Groningen is scattered among many sources; and an unequal amount of attention goes to the more ‘formal’, publicly recognized and often publicly funded elements of this infrastructure, and to quantitative knowledge about infrastructure and behavior¹. The main function here is to give an outline of the contours of what is generally known about musical life in the province of Groningen at present, in order to give a background against which the descriptions further on in this study can be read.

This chapter relies completely on existing literature and therefore relies heavily on existing distinctions in for example formal/informal music venues or active/receptive music behavior. In section 3.5.1 I made some remarks on the importance of avoiding such taken-for-granted distinctions in this study; it is only in this chapter that I will use them uncommented in order to give a correct representation of the existing literature.

5.2 A short sketch of the province of Groningen

The province of Groningen is situated in the north-east of the Netherlands, bordering Germany in the east, the Dutch provinces of Drenthe and Friesland in the south and the west respectively, and the Wadden Sea in the north. It is one of the twelve Dutch provinces, with its 2960 square kilometers taking up about 7% of the Dutch territory.

¹ This of course without saying that qualitative material is completely unavailable. For example, many descriptions of Groningen’s musical life are available, often historic but occasionally more sociological or anthropological in character and focusing on genres (e.g. Koen van Krimpen, *Nothing going on in the city. 40 jaar popmuziek in Groningen*. [‘Nothing going on in the city. 40 years of pop music in Groningen.’] Groningen: Passage, 2003), institutions (e.g. Beno Hofman, *Stedelijke muziekschool 1858-2008. 150 jaar in een notendop*. [‘Municipal music school 1858-2008. 150 years in a nutshell.’] Groningen: Stedelijke muziekschool, 2008), buildings (e.g. Remco in ’t Hof & Rob Zijlstra, *The saddest place. Jazzcafe De Spieghel 1979-1994*. Groningen: Passage, 1994), ensembles (e.g. Hein Bekenkamp, *Gruno’s Post Harmonie Groningen 1911-2011. 100 jaar postmuziek in Gruno’s veste*. [‘Gruno’s postal service brass orchestra 1911-2011. 100 years of postal service music in Gruno’s fortress.’] Groningen: GPH, 2011), individual musicians (e.g. Beno Hofman, *Julia Culp. Wereldberoemde Groninger zangeres*. [‘Julia Culp. World famous singer from Groningen.’] Leeuwarden: Noordboek, 2002) or categories of musicians (e.g. McGee, 2011).

With nearly 580.000 inhabitants, it hosts nearly 3.5% of the Dutch population, making it one of the least populated areas of the Netherlands. Groningen is divided into 23 municipalities, the most populated one being the capital city, also called Groningen. The city of Groningen is home to ca. 191.000 people, roughly one third of the province's population, making it the eight-largest city of the Netherlands and the northern Netherlands' indisputable centre.²

The city of Groningen is the province's economic, administrative, educational, and cultural centre, with an attractive inner city for shoppers, tourists and cultural visitors. It hosts the main office of the national Dutch gas company Gasunie, the provincial government, a research university and a university for applied science, a theatre, a music hall, a symphony orchestra, a theatre company, several performing arts festivals, various cinemas, many cafes, a professional premier league soccer team, various swimming pools, an indoor skating rink et cetera. Indeed, the city of Groningen is referred to simply as 'City' (Dutch: 'Stad') by many people living in city and province alike and is juxtaposed to its surroundings, which are perceived to be mainly agricultural. The province nevertheless hosts not only small villages but also five smaller towns ranging from 15.000-30.000 inhabitants.³

For many, the landscape of Groningen is characterizable as a landscape of (relative) emptiness, peace and quiet, with many meadows and cornfields (90% of the land area is in agricultural use or is nature reserve, which is only slightly above the Dutch average but significantly more than in the more densely populated west of the country).⁴ The province shares a sea climate with the rest of the Netherlands, with temperatures averaging 2.5° C in January and 17° C in July, and ca 850 mm rainfall per year.⁵ The province is home to some lakes, some major canals with wharves, and the new Eems harbor ('Eemshaven'), which is now rapidly growing, attracting industry from for example the energy sector – the province of Groningen sits on top of an enormous natural gas reserve which has led to an extensive gas industry, and the city of Groningen acts as an international energy hub, thus serving the country with a major gas-related income which is one of the important foundations for Dutch wealth.⁶

In Groningen's early history the sea takes up a central place. Inhabitation of the area initially was only possible in the higher areas, the rest was flooded regularly. The first inhabitants soon started building mounds where they lived on, as well as dikes to keep the

² Facts from www.provinciegroningen.nl/servicelinks-provincie-groningen/over-de-provincie/kerngegevens/bevolkingsaantallen/ and www.provinciegroningen.nl/servicelinks-provincie-groningen/over-de-provincie/kerngegevens/oppervlakte/, both consulted May 22, 2012.

³ Facts from the website of Gemeente op Maat 2010 ['Municipalities measured 2010'], www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/dossiers/nederland-regionaal/publicaties/gemeente-op-maat/default.htm, consulted September 12, 2012.

⁴ Facts from www.provinciegroningen.nl/servicelinks-provincie-groningen/over-de-provincie/kerngegevens/oppervlakte/, consulted May 22, 2012.

⁵ Facts from www.klimaatatlas.nl/klimaatatlas.php, consulted May 22, 2012.

⁶ Cf. Maarten van Rossum & Otto Swertz, 'De Nederlandse aardgaswinning. ['Dutch natural gas mining.'] In: CBS, *De Nederlandse economie 2010*. ['The Dutch economy 2010.'] Den Haag: CBS, 2011.

sea out and canals to regulate the flow of water. Having initially been a rather decentralized area, in the course of history the city of Groningen developed a strong central position, sometimes at the cost of the surrounding areas. In the 19th and 20th century, socialism and, later, communism, was a strong force in the province, due to the amount of poverty among seasonal farm workers as well as workers in the south-eastern moor areas.⁷

General increase in welfare in the Netherlands in the 20th century as well as the discovery of the natural gas reserves helped to make Groningen a less deprived area; the city of Groningen is doing rather well, and the wealthy village of Haren was even elected the best place to live in within the Netherlands in 2011 and 2012 by one of the national weekly magazines⁸. However, it is still the case that some of the poorest Dutch areas lie in the province of Groningen, with below-average incomes⁹ and educational levels¹⁰ and above-average unemployment rates¹¹. Parts of the province have a more rapidly aging population than the Netherlands on average¹², which is a source of concern at present, as is the expected general shrinkage of population in many (though not all) municipalities, especially in the north and east of the province of Groningen¹³.

5.3 A short sketch of the musical infrastructure of the province of Groningen

5.3.1 Music institutions and music venues in the province of Groningen

In this section, a general overview of institutions and venues of Groningen's musical infrastructure will be given, status 2012. It will start with a focus on the 'formal' or 'regular', publicly funded infrastructure but will pay attention to the more elusive 'informal' aspects of the musical infrastructure near the end.

⁷ On the general history of the province see the lemma 'Groningen: provincie.' In: Paul Brood, Arend H. Huussen jr. & Jan van der Kooi (Eds.), *Nieuwe Groninger Encyclopedie*. ['New encyclopedia of Groningen.'] Groningen: REGIO-PROjekt uitgevers, 1999; and more extensive Jan Mein, *Kalendarium van de geschiedenis van de stad en de provincie Groningen. Van jaar tot jaar 400-2000*. ['Calendarium of the history of the city and province of Groningen. From year to year 400-2000.'] Groningen: RECO, 2005.

⁸ S.a., 'De beste gemeenten 2012.' ['The Best Municipalities 2012.'] *Elsevier* 68/26 (2012).

⁹ See CBS/SCP, *Armoedesignalement 2011*. ['Description poverty 2011.'] Den Haag: SCP/CBS, 2011, pp. 30-32, 70-71.

¹⁰ CBS, *Jaarboek onderwijs in cijfers 2011*. ['Yearbook education in figures 2011.'] Den Haag: CBS, 2011, p. 26.

¹¹ In 2011, the province of Groningen had the highest unemployment rate of all 12 provinces of the Netherlands. CBS: 'Werkloosheid naar regio.' ['Unemployment per region.'] Den Haag: CBS, 2012b]. www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/arbeid-sociale-zekerheid/publicaties/arbeidsmarkt-vogelvlucht/structuur-arbeidsmarkt/2006-arbeidsmarkt-vv-werkl-regionaal-art.htm. See also Jan Dirk Gardenier, Eelco Westerhof & Hans van Rijn, *NAV 2011 "light". Vraag en aanbod op de arbeidsmarkt in Noord-Nederland*. ['NAV 2011 "light". Demand and supply at the labor market in the North of the Netherlands.'] Groningen: CAB, 2012. http://www.cabgroningen.nl/uploads/tx_bwpublishations/NAV_2011_-_2012_.pdf, consulted April 16, 2013.

¹² Joop Garssen, *Demografie van de vergrijzing*. ['Demographics of ageing.'] Den Haag: CBS, 2011, pp. 11-14.

¹³ See the map on http://kknv.vanmeernaarbeter.nl/sites/kknv.vanmeernaarbeter.nl/files/krimpkaart_nederland.png, consulted June 4, 2013.

The province of Groningen, with the city of Groningen at its centre, hosts a great number of institutions and venues playing a role in the musical life of its inhabitants. Some of these are funded on a national level on advise of the national Culture Council ('Raad voor Cultuur') as part of the so-called 'basic infrastructure' BIS, normally for a period of four years. Directly funded in the period 2009-2012 by the ministry as part of the BIS are the North Netherlands Orchestra NNO, pop festival Northern Battle ('Noorderslag') and the production facility Grand Theatre which hosts innovative productions including music and interdisciplinary productions¹⁴. Other parts of the BIS are funded, also for 4 years, through the national Cultural Participation Fund FCP ('Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie'); some of those institutes, although not based in Groningen, also work in Groningen, such as the national youth arts festival Art Mob ('Kunstbende') or the national pop/rock competition Grand Prix of the Netherlands ('Grote Prijs van Nederland')¹⁵. Apart from national funding which is granted for a term of four years, more incidental national funding of Groningen activities through FCP or the Performing Arts Fund FPK ('Fonds Podiumkunsten') takes place¹⁶.

Educational institutes on secondary vocational as well as higher education level are also government funded; for Groningen the secondary vocational institute ROC Noorderpoort trains students as artists in music or music theatre as well as in stage- and events-technicians¹⁷, and the Prince Claus Conservatoire of the university of applied sciences Hanzehogeschool Groningen trains professional musicians, composers, conductors and music teachers¹⁸.

Shifting our gaze from the national to the provincial level, a number of organizations are provincially funded for a 4-year period. Institutions are for example amateur art education institutes (also offering music education) such as IVAK and Kunststation C ('Art Station C'), amateur arts expertise centre Arts Centre Groningen ('Kunstencentrum Groningen'), societies such as Urban House, Grand Theatre, the society Groningen Organ Country

¹⁴ Source: Ministerie van OCW, 'Subsidieplan 2009-2012 toekenningen na motie Hamer, 12 november 2009.' ['Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences: Funding Plan 2009-2012. Allowances After Resolution Hamer.'], consulted June 29, 2012 on www.cultuursubsidie.nl/subsidieverstrekkingen/ministerie-ocw/downloads. It is expected that the basic infrastructure, due to severe budget cuts, will become much smaller, possibly only maintaining the funding of the North-Netherlands Orchestra and referring other institutions to less secure funding sources such as the national Performing Arts Fund FPK ('Fonds Podiumkunsten') and the Cultural Participation Fund FCP ('Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie'). See Raad voor Cultuur, *Slagen in cultuur. Advies culturele basisinfrastructuur 2013-2016*. ['Succeeding in Culture. Advice cultural basic infrastructure 2013-2016.'] Den Haag: Raad voor Cultuur, 2012.

¹⁵ Information from www.cultuurparticipatie.nl/activiteiten/instellingen_basisinfrastructuur, consulted June 29, 2012.

¹⁶ E.g., some FPK grants are awarded to music organizations in Groningen, such as performing arts festival Noorderzon, organization for modern composed music PRIME, the Summer Jazz Bicycle Tour ['Zomer Jazz Fiets Tour'] or the Americana-organization 'Roots on the Road'. www.fondspodiumkunsten.nl/toekenningen/, consulted September 12, 2012. The Cultural Participation Fund FCP funded Groningen music organizations such as the Centre for Early Music & Dance ['Centrum voor Oude Muziek & Dans'] or Urban House Groningen. www.cultuurparticipatie.nl/2009-2012/Gehonoreerde_projecten, consulted September 12, 2012.

¹⁷ Information from www.roc.nl/default.php?fr=sector&subs=opl®ioid=7§orid=52, consulted June 29, 2012.

¹⁸ Information from www.kiesjestudie.nl/studierichtingC07-Muziek.html, consulted June 29, 2012.

(‘Groningen Orgelland’), festivals such as Northern Lights (‘Noorderzon’), Eurosonic/Noorderslag and the Peter de Grote festival, and the Haydn Youth String Orchestra HJSO. Next to that, the province gives incidental funding to for example stimulate amateur arts (including music performances)¹⁹.

Turning to funding on the local level, various municipalities subsidize music organizations and venues. The scale on which this happens is dependent on the size of the municipality concerned. The city of Groningen funds a local basic infra structure. A couple of organizations form its core, amongst which the concert hall Oosterpoort and the theatres Stadsschouwburg and Martiniplaza and the municipal music school. Then there are some ‘specialist facilities’, such as rock venues Vera and Simplon, the Haydn Youth String Orchestra, the chimes of the Martini Tower, and Grand Theatre. Festivals as Noorderzon, Noorderslag/Eurosonic and the Liberation festival (‘Bevrijdingsfestival’, the yearly festival on national Liberation Day May 5) are also subsidized for 4 years. Under various other headings the city subsidizes a.o. the Jungle Warriors (a jazz/world/fusion group), pop music organization Music and Fun working in one specific neighborhood, and the urban culture festival New Attraction.

The city of Groningen also invests through various specific programmes in the music world, often together with the province through the channels of their joint Arts Council. An important channel is the incidental funding of organizations and individuals working in city or province, either as professionals or as amateurs. In the year 2011, 137 activities were funded in that way, of which 63 in music²⁰. Other funding budgets are geared towards specific goals, such as the organ budget, the e-culture budget, the budget Arts & Economics (‘Kunst & Economie’), the budget New from Groningen (‘Groningse Nieuwe’) and the budget The Neighborhood as Workshop (‘De Wijk als Werkplaats’); some of the grants in those specific budgets were awarded within the music sector, for example for a community music project of composer Merlijn Twaalfhoven^{21,22}.

The other municipalities each have their own arts policy including arts funding. For example, Veendam, Hoogezand, Stadskanaal en Delfzijl – four larger towns in the province – all have their own theatres, programming music performances as part of their

¹⁹ Provincie Groningen. *Het verhaal van Groningen. Cultuurnota 2013-2016*. [‘The Story of Groningen. Culture Policy Document 2013-2016.’] Groningen: Provincie Groningen, 2012.

²⁰ Kunstraad Groningen, *Jaarverslag 2011*. [‘Year report 2011.’] Groningen: Kunstraad Groningen, 2012, p. 9. On p. 5, however, a total number of 122 funded activities is mentioned.

²¹ *Id.*, pp. 10-12.

²² In Dutch arts education policy, it is a general rule of thumb that policy is kept as decentralized as possible. That means that the national government is responsible for the funding of national art institutes, the educational system including the arts, and those artists and organizations that operate on an (inter)national level. The provinces are mainly responsible for the geographical distribution and regulation of arts on the provincial level. Municipalities are responsible for maintaining and programming accommodations, and often for local amateur art organizations (see S.a., *Cultuurbeleid in Nederland*. [‘Culture Policy in the Netherlands.’] Den Haag/Amsterdam: Ministerie van OCW/Boekmanstudies, 2007, p. 40). In practice, though, this means that many formal institutions are subsidized from various sides. For example, the pop festival Eurosonic/Noorderslag is funded with national, provincial and municipal means (as well as attracting European money, private funding and own income).

programme. Smaller scale venues exist all over the province²³. To give an idea of the arts policy of a municipality: the municipality of Delfzijl (lying in the extreme north-east of the province and counting about 26.000 inhabitants) states in its recent policy document that it considers some of its institutions as basic, amongst them the local theatre De Molenberg and the IVAK (institute offering music education, support of amateur art and support of regular education). A Cultural Commission (Culturele Raad) is in charge of organizing incidental activities. For the performing arts the municipality also mentions churches as well as community centers as important facilities. In an addendum it identifies 58 cultural organizations working in Delfzijl, amongst which an organ committee, a concert organizer, eight orchestras (five brass, one accordion, one mouth harp, one big band) and 24 choirs (amongst which church choirs, classical choirs, and also shanty, operetta, pop, senior and gospel choirs). It is not clear how many of these organizations are regularly or incidentally funded by the municipality.²⁴

In general, as long as some sort of public funding is involved, some sort of public documentation is often available. But when elements of the musical infrastructure have a less public and a more private character, information is harder to obtain. For example, the number of amateur art societies in the ‘non-formal’ or ‘non-regular’²⁵ sector on the national level is unknown – an estimation of 25,000 is mentioned as probably being on the low side.²⁶ This includes the for Groningen important and widespread brass orchestras and also pop and rock groups. There is a growing awareness of this bias towards the formal music infrastructure in Dutch literature on arts policy, reason why for example recently an attempt was made to investigate the non-formal, small group musical context of an average middle-sized Dutch town of about 70.000 inhabitants. The attempt found 70 informal art groups of which 46 specifically musical – and suspects that this amount may actually be the tip of the iceberg²⁷.

²³ A first glance on the variety of locations was obtained via toerisme.groningen.nl/zien-doen-beleven/uitgaan/podiumkunsten-2, consulted June 29, 2012.

²⁴ Gemeente Delfzijl, *Cultuur aan de Kust. Kadernota kunst & cultuur 2010 en verder*. [‘Culture at the Coast. Framework Paper Arts & Culture 2010 and Onwards.’] Delfzijl: Gemeente Delfzijl, 2009.

²⁵ Cf. Martine van der Blij, *De kunstmatige kloof. Een empirisch-theoretisch onderzoek naar het bestaan van een duale structuur van het podiumkunstenveld in Nederland*. [‘The Artificial Chasm. An Empirical-Theoretical Investigation Into the Existence of a Dual Structure of the Performing Arts Field in the Netherlands.’] Amsterdam: Boekmanstichting, 1995.

²⁶ Andries van den Broek (Ed.), *Mogelijkheden tot kunstbeoefening in de vrije tijd*. [‘Possibilities for practising art in leisure time.’] Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2010, p. 12.

²⁷ Esther van den Berg, ‘Kunstbeoefening in informeel verband. Een verkennend onderzoek in Alphen aan den Rijn.’ [‘Arts practice in informal settings. An explorative study in Alphen aan den Rijn.’] In Van den Broek, 2010; and Esther van den Berg, ‘Makkers in de kunst. Kunstbeoefening in informele groepen.’ [‘Pals in arts. Arts practice in informal groups.’] In: Esther van den Berg, Pepijn van Houwelingen & Joep de Hart, *Informeel groepen. Verkenningen van eigentijdse bronnen van culturele cohesie*. [‘Informal groups. Explorations of contemporary sources of social cohesion.’] Den Haag: SCP, 2011. The fact that only part of a probably much bigger informal sector was found may have to do with the chosen methods of research. Although the research was qualitative in character, it relied very much on a snowballing method of data collection which started from interviews with informants coming from the more formal sector of the arts community and which stressed information gathered through publications, the internet and interviews over the telephone. If more stress had been laid on direct (maybe even participant) observation over a longer period of time, I suspect a more complete picture could have been obtained.

To translate this to the situation in the province of Groningen, some additional remarks on musical life in Delfzijl as portrayed earlier may be worthwhile. The digital municipal guide of Delfzijl shows that the addendum in the policy document cited is not complete – it misses for example the local pop festival Beatpop Meedhuizen, the summer beach stage Tequila Sunrise which is also a music stage, and societies which may play a role in music life such as the carnival society or the royal festivities society.²⁸ In both sources, no explicit mention is made of private music teachers or practicing musicians. There is also no mention of active smaller groups of performing amateur musicians such as pop and rock bands, folk groups, singer-songwriters or DJs. And the very active Delfzijl-based Javanese-Surinamese society Gotong Rojong²⁹, which includes a gamelan ensemble and a dance group performing classical Javanese dance ‘sriempie’ as well as the jarang kepeng ritual, remains completely out of sight.

Summarizing, the Province of Groningen houses a considerable number of music institutions and music venues, with an emphasis on the city of Groningen but a respectable spread over the province. A fair picture can be sketched of the ‘regular’, often publicly funded, infrastructure, but this is complemented by an extensive and less thoroughly pictured ‘non-regular’ infrastructure of smaller and often more informal communities and venues.

5.3.2 Commodities on Groningen’s musical market place

In Groningen, music is widely available as a commodity on the ‘market’. Tickets are available for those music performances mentioned in the section above which charge an entrance fee. Shops where music carriers such as CDs can be bought, new and second hand, are widely spread over the province. A conservative estimate of shops advertising themselves as music retailers in that sense comes to 30, of which nearly 20 in the city of Groningen³⁰ – but this excludes many of those retailers selling CDs as only one of their products, like e.g. the bigger department stores. Of course, CDs can also be hired in one of the 57 libraries in the province of Groningen³¹. When it comes to shops selling musical instruments and sheet music a first estimate is slightly over 20 shops throughout the province, some general, some specialized in specific instruments (flutes, saxophones, guitars), some only selling sheet music, some specialized in building and/or repairing rather than in reselling³². Music lessons can be taken at eight municipal music schools or

²⁸ delfzijl.smartmap.nl/#welkom, consulted June 29, 2012.

²⁹ Information from www.gotongrojong.nl, consulted July 4, 2012.

³⁰ Based on a search in the digital telephone directory www.detelefoongids.nl/bg/, consulted July 3, 2012, on search term ‘cd’, search location ‘Groningen’ and search range ‘< 25 km’, excluding double mentions and mentions outside the province.

³¹ See Biblionet Groningen, *Jaarverslag 2011*. [‘Year Report 2011.’] Groningen, Biblionet, 2012, p. 7. Next to the libraries, so-called ‘biblio-buses’ stop at 110 different bus-stops throughout the province in 2011.

³² Based on a search in the digital telephone directory www.detelefoongids.nl/bg/, consulted July 3, 2012, on search term ‘muziekinstrumenten’ [‘musical instruments’], search location ‘Groningen’ and search range ‘< 25 km’, excluding double mentions and mentions outside the province.

amateur arts centers in the province³³, or with private teachers or private music schools – the number is hard to estimate but runs probably in the several hundreds in the province³⁴. Modern customers do not have to confine themselves to the shops and institutions mentioned above; many purchases of commodities nowadays can be done through the internet³⁵.

Music to listen to or to watch is of course accessible through radio, television and the internet. The amount of music available on ether radio is inestimable; when using paid access to radio and television services, the amount of stations ranges from 27 to 365 television stations and 22 to 204 radio stations; some of the television stations and many of the radio stations are dedicated to music³⁶. As for internet, in 2011 94% of the Dutch households had access to the internet, the European number 1 position³⁷; there is no reason to suspect that the internet access rate in Groningen is much lower than average.

Summarizing one may say that musical commodities such as performance tickets, music carriers, instruments and sheet music are widely available in a network of shops throughout the province and through internet. Services such as music lessons or mediated music consumption are also widely available.

5.3.3 The supply of music performances in the province of Groningen

In this section I will give an overview of the supply of live music performances in the province of Groningen. The definition of a live music performance seems trivial but is not straightforward actually. In our times of multimedia it sometimes is unclear where the boundaries of live music performances lie – is a dance part where a DJ is (re)mixing dance tracks considered to be a live music performance? And a party where a DJ is playing eighties records? In most of the literature on the supply of music performances those questions are not asked, which may make the following description slightly diffuse.

Sources on the supply of music performances are not manifold, and most of them focus only on part of the musical infrastructure: the so-called ‘regular’ or ‘formal’ music sector³⁸. This sector can be described as the sector that is extensively registered and studied³⁹, probably because they are funded by local, regional or national government and

³³ Kunstconnectie, ‘Leden Kunstconnectie.’ [‘Members Kunstconnectie’; leaflet]. Utrecht: Kunstconnectie, 2012.

³⁴ Searching the digital telephone directory www.detelefoongids.nl/bg/, consulted July 3, 2012, on search term ‘muziekles’, search location ‘Groningen’ and search range ‘< 25 km’, excluding double mentions and mentions outside the province, delivered about 50 names of private music teachers/music schools. The institutional customer relation management system of the Groningen Prince Claus Conservatoire however produced at the same date a list of 161 private music teachers in the province of Groningen – and it is quite clear that this database does not include all music teachers active in the province.

³⁵ See section 1.4.3.3 for more information.

³⁶ www.digitalevisie.nl/access/dspVergelijk.asp?sort=3c&pag=&pcCijfer=9753&pcLetter=av&HuisNr=32&jr=2&filter=, consulted July 3, 2012.

³⁷ CBS, *ICT, kennis en economie 2012*. [‘ICT, Knowledge and Economy.’] Den Haag: CBS, 2012a, p. 104.

³⁸ Van der Blij, 1995, pp. 13-14.

³⁹ Id., p. 13.

therefore are the subject of policy-making (which often requires quantitative information), as well as of accountability measures (which often requires demonstration of quantitative information too)⁴⁰. Important elements of the regular music sector form the major theatres, rock venues and festivals which are subsidized and often host (semi-) professional performances. In contrast to the regular music sector stands the non-regular music sector, less registered and studied, often (but not always) hosting (semi-) amateur performances and having as its venues for example smaller theatres, churches, schools, care institutes, community centers, cafés, bars and private homes.⁴¹

In their latest trend report on culture and the arts from 2009⁴², SCP sketches the performing arts (of which music is part) on offer by making use of various sources from the regular music sector, such as figures from the Society of Theatres and Concert Hall Boards ('Vereniging van Schouwburgen en Concertgebouwdirecties') VSCD and from the Society of Dutch Pop Stages and Festivals ('Vereniging Nederlandse Poppodia en Festivals') VNPF, stating that all figures seem to indicate a steady growth of the offer of performing art performances but acknowledging that the figures only give a partial image of the actual situation⁴³.

Another source for the supply side of music performances is the *Atlas voor Nederlandse Gemeenten* ('Atlas for Dutch Municipalities'). The most recent edition with a pronounced attention for culture is the 2011 edition. The performing arts on offer (theatre, encompassing drama, ballet, dance, cabaret, musical; classical music, including opera; and pop music, including jazz, entertainment music⁴⁴ and world music) here again is based on figures coming from major players in the regular sector: from the VSCD, VNPF, the Dutch Music Centre ('Muziekcentrum Nederland') MCN and from the institutes associated with the Dutch Theatre Institute ('Theaterinstituut Nederland') TIN.⁴⁵ The Atlas nominates the city of Groningen – ranked as the national number eight when it comes to its population figure – as second in rank when it comes to pop concerts, and fifth for classical performances.⁴⁶

Some sources try to give an insight to the complete offer of music performances in the Netherlands, regular and non-regular. Martine van der Blij was the first to do so, showing that 100 performing arts performances were given in the regular sector and 269 in the

⁴⁰ Evert Bisschop Boele, 'Muziek is Muziek.' ['Music is Music.'] *Boekman, tijdschrift voor kunst, cultuur en beleid* 86 (2011).

⁴¹ See Van der Blij, 1995, p. 23; cf. Adviesbureau Cultuurtoerisme, *Amateurkunst & Publiek*. ['Amateur Arts & Audience.'] Utrecht: Kunstfactor, 2011, p. 21.

⁴² Andries van den Broek, Jos de Haan & Frank Huysmans. *Cultuurbewonderaars en cultuurbeoefenaars. Trends in cultuurparticipatie en mediagebruik*. ['Culture Admirers and Culture Practitioners. Trends in Culture Participation and Media Use.'] Den Haag: SCP, 2009, pp. 37-38.

⁴³ VSCD claims that their information covers 60% of the total performing arts performances given in the Netherlands (Van den Broek, De Haan et al., 2009, p. 37). This may be an exaggeration of the importance of the 'formal' music suppliers, as will be argued at the end of this section.

⁴⁴ An indicative translation of the Dutch concept 'lichte muziek', literally 'light music'.

⁴⁵ Gerard Marlet & Clemens van Woerkens, *Atlas voor gemeenten 2011*. ['Atlas for municipalities 2011.'] Nijmegen: VOC, 2011, p. 250.

⁴⁶ Id., p. 236.

non-regular sector in October 1993 in the city of Groningen. 44 of the 100 performances in the regular sector were music performances, 209 of the 269 performances in the non-regular sector were music performances.⁴⁷ On a national level, Culture Tourism Consultancy ('Adviesbureau Cultuurtoerisme') investigated the size of the audiences coming to amateur performing art performances. In doing so, it stated that 80% of the visits to amateur performances take place in the non-regular sector, a powerful indication of the importance of the non-regular sector in musical life.

In order to update Van der Blij's figures stemming from 1993, I investigated the live music performances on offer in the province of Groningen in two 'average' weeks in April 2010. I rigorously inventoried all music performances in the regular and non-regular sector during two average weeks⁴⁸ in two municipalities: in the city of Groningen and in Appingedam, a small community in the north-east of the province. The inventory encompassed a stocktaking of announcements of music performances in the regular regional newspaper and in free local newspapers, in various freely distributed music and general cultural agendas, on leaflets and posters all over town, on the internet, and on location in e.g. the windows of all kinds of possible concert locations. This resulted in the following characterization of the supply of music in town and province of Groningen:

Inhabitants of the province of Groningen can choose from a large offer of live music. The centre of gravity of the supply is the city of Groningen, but the surrounding area certainly has a substantial offer, in the bigger places (in our case Appingedam and Delfzijl) but also in many smaller villages.

An analysis of the concerts on offer in the city of Groningen gives us the picture of a musically active town. In an average period of two weeks nearly 300 concerts were found, together covering nearly the complete spectrum of genres. The amount of concerts in the Pop/Rock cluster was the largest, but the audience for the Classical Music, Jazz and World Music clusters are also served well. There are differences between clusters: in the cluster of Classical Music venues are able to accommodate more listeners than in the other clusters. Locations offering more than ten concerts in the period investigated are distributed evenly over the public and the commercial sector.

Striking is the number of free concerts: nearly two thirds of the total amount. That image also changes from cluster to cluster: the Classical Music cluster has the highest percentage of non-free concerts, and if one has to pay the tickets are the most expensive in his cluster – although the two most expensive tickets were Pop/Rock tickets. In the Pop/Rock cluster many more concerts are free (possibly because a considerable number of bands play in cafes which normally do not ask an entrance fee); but if an entrance fee is asked, it is on average not much lower

⁴⁷ Van der Blij, 1995, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁸ Weeks with no specific music festivals, no special festive days, no holidays et cetera.

than the fees in the cluster of Classical Music. In the Jazz cluster, 90 percent of the supply is free, a result of the many free concerts at the Prince Claus Conservatoire and the many free jam sessions (also frequented by students and alumni from that same conservatoire).

In the city one can listen to music from every cluster on nearly every day. Emphasis lies on evening concerts but a considerable number of concerts take place in the afternoon. And the culmination point of the musical week is on Friday and Saturday, flanked by an already active Thursday and Sunday – but Jazz lovers are offered the most choices in the beginning of the week.⁴⁹

Summarizing the offer of live music performances in Groningen, one may say that the province – with the city of Groningen as its indisputable centre – offers an extensive amount of live music performances in various genres, ranging from professional performances on large stages to informal and more intimate performances in a wide variety of small scale venues.

5.4 What individuals in Groningen do with music – a first impression

Turning our attention from the musical infrastructure to the actual musical behavior of individuals living in the province of Groningen, we may ask two questions: what do individuals in Groningen listen to (‘reception’), and how active are individuals living in Groningen as musicians (‘active participation’)?⁵⁰ The reception of music may again be sub-divided into reception of mediated music (radio, television, CDs, MP3-players, internet et cetera) and reception of music performances.

Separate facts, figures and/or in-depth integral descriptions of musical life – reception and active participation – in the Groningen province are hardly available⁵¹. Integral facts and

⁴⁹ Bisschop Boele, 2010, pp. 37-41. A restudy for the situation in Utrecht, another Dutch city, has been performed by Utrecht University; results will be published in Philomeen Lelieveldt, *Musicscape Utrecht – Live!* Utrecht: Utrecht University, forthcoming.

⁵⁰ The epithets ‘reception’ and ‘active participation’ come from Van den Broek, De Haan et al., 2009, p. 17. But see section 6.3 for a much more in-depth description of musical behavior.

⁵¹ Possible sources are Arts Council Groningen (‘Kunstraad Groningen’), policy papers from the province and from various municipalities (the most important in that respect being the city of Groningen) which entail information on the arts sector, and scattered information on musical life given by some of the local and provincial institutions such as provincial and municipal centers for arts education and/or music education. The most important recent sources are: Provincie Groningen, 2012; Gemeente Groningen, *Cultuurstad Groningen. Gewoon bijzonder!* [‘City of culture Groningen. Simply extraordinary!’; Culture policy document 2009-2012.] Groningen: Gemeente Groningen, 2009; Idem, *Ruimte voor vernieuwing, vernieuwing voor ruimte. Uitgangspunten Kadernota Cultuur Groningen cultuurnotaperiode 2013-2016.* [‘Space for innovation, innovation for space. Starting points culture policy document Groningen period 2013-2016.’] Groningen: Gemeente Groningen, 2011; Kunstraad Groningen, *Kunst en cultuur in de provincie Groningen. Advies over de plannen van de culturele instellingen in de provincie Groningen in het licht van de provinciale cultuurnota 2013-2016.* [‘Arts and culture in the province of Groningen. Advice on the plans of the cultural institutes in the province of Groningen in light of the provincial culture policy document 2013-2016.’] Groningen: Kunstraad Groningen, 2011; Idem, *Cultuurbeleid in Groningen - kiezen voor kwaliteit. Advies voor de Cultuurnota van de gemeente Groningen voor de beleidsperiode 2009 – 2012.* [‘Culture policy in Groningen – choosing for quality. Advice for the culture policy document of the

figures on active participation and reception of culture and the arts (including music), cultural heritage and the media⁵² at a national level are gathered by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research SCP and made available through periodic publication of trend reports on culture and the arts, the latest one stemming from 2009⁵³.

5.4.1 Active music making

Facts and figures on active music making are, again, given by SCP, in an overview of active art participation. They limit themselves to active art participation “... in spare time, so not in general education or higher art and not professionally”⁵⁴. SCP shows that 21% of the respondents indicated to be active in music making, which makes music, together with the various visual arts, the most popular art form to participate actively in (dance and drama together are participated in by only 6% of the respondents)⁵⁵. Singing and playing an instrument each accounted for half of the positive answers. SCP makes a distinction in four forms of active music making: individually at home, in informal settings, in societies such as orchestras, choirs or wind bands, and taking lessons. Of the active music makers, 39% takes lessons and 34% is active in a music society. Women, younger persons and higher educated people are relatively overrepresented.⁵⁶

Another research report by the Dutch national institute for amateur arts Kunstfactor⁵⁷ shows slightly different figures: a lower active participation in music (16% of the respondents), a higher participation in dance and theatre (together 16%).⁵⁸ The overrepresentation of younger persons is less pronounced.⁵⁹ Interestingly, the report also gives an insight into the geographical distribution of active music making; it shows that the population of the northern region of the Netherlands (the region including the province of Groningen) is slightly more active musically than the average Dutch population, and that the discipline of music compared to the other arts disciplines is

municipality of Groningen 2009-2012.’] Groningen: Kunstraad Groningen, 2008; Idem. *Nieuwe kansen voor de amateurkunst. Advies aan de gemeente Groningen*. [‘New chances for amateur arts. Advice to the municipality of Groningen.’] Groningen: Kunstraad Groningen, 2010. An overview of the cultural policy documents of the municipality of Groningen can be found in Quirijn van den Hoogen, ‘Performing Arts and the City. Dutch Municipal Cultural Policy in the Brave New World of *Evidence-Based Policy*.’ PhD-Dissertation. Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2010.

⁵² The tripartition of culture/arts – cultural heritage – media is one often found in policy making in the Netherlands, and is mirroring the subdivision of the General Directorate of Culture of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; see e.g. the ministry website www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ocw/organisatie/organogram/dg-cultuur-en-media, consulted May 24, 2012.

⁵³ Van den Broek, De Haan et al., 2009.

⁵⁴ “...dus niet in het algemeen vormend of kunstvakonderwijs en niet beroepsmatig.” Van den Broek, De Haan et al, 2009, p. 66.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Id., pp. 71-74.

⁵⁷ Kunstfactor. *Amateurkunst: Feiten en trends. Monitor amateurkunst in Nederland*. [‘Amateur arts: Facts and trends. Monitor amateur arts in the Netherlands.’]. Utrecht: Kunstfactor, 2011.

⁵⁸ Id., p. 3.

⁵⁹ Id., p. 7.

relatively more important in the northern and eastern regions of the Netherlands than in the other regions.⁶⁰

Summarizing, about 20% of the Groningen population is actively making music, with an overrepresentation of women, younger persons and higher educated people; roughly one third of them does this within a society, and roughly one third of them takes (formal) music lessons.

5.4.2 Reception of music performances

Facts about the demand for and visits to music performances are also given by SCP, mainly derived from two large scale repetitive surveys: the Amenities and Services Utilization Survey ('Aanvullend Voorzieningen Onderzoek') AVO on the use of all kinds of amenities and services, including cultural ones, and the Time Use Survey ('Tijdbestedingsonderzoek') TBO, an interview/diary survey on time use.⁶¹ Given the large scale and inclusive questioning it can be presumed that the resulting figures give an indication of the actual reception of music performances including the regular as well as the non-regular sector.⁶²

SCP's trend report from 2009 shows that VSCD/VNPF-figures as well as the national statistic StatLine figures from Statistics Netherlands CBS indicate an increase of visits to performing arts performances. The performing arts are generally visited mostly on an incidental rather than on a regular basis by respondents. There is a rising trend (48% of the respondents was a performance visitor in 1995, 53% in 2007), mainly due to a rise in visits to cabaret and pop performances. Female respondents were more frequent visitors than male respondents, and growth was smallest in the age group 20-34. The educational level of the respondents made an enormous difference in visit frequency. Respondents with a higher educational level visited performances thrice as much as respondents with only primary education. Immigrant respondents visit performances less frequently than autochthonous respondents.⁶³

When it comes to visits to music performances, SCP gives no integral music figures, but separate figures under the headings 'classical music' (including opera), 'pop music' (including jazz, musical and dance) and 'performances at parties'⁶⁴. Classical music performances were visited by 14% of the respondents in 2007, a figure that is relatively constant over the years. 3% were frequent visitors, 11% non-frequent visitors (less than 4

⁶⁰ Id., p. 15.

⁶¹ Van den Broek, De Haan et al., 2009, pp. 17-18.

⁶² But compare Van der Blij, 1995, p. 19 for an amusing account of how the phrasing of a question can influence respondents' answers, something that cannot be excluded as a possible effect of large scale questionnaire or standardized interview research.

⁶³ Van den Broek, De Haan et al., 2009, pp. 39-42.

⁶⁴ Id., pp. 49-54. The heading 'performances at parties' (which includes all performances, not only music performances; and which in fact is the most widespread form for the reception of performing arts) was introduced because SCP suspected that immigrant respondents would not see music made at parties as a 'performance' and therefore would not register that in answer to the questions in its questionnaire.

times/year); on average those 14% visited 2.3 performances per year. In general the visitors are older than visitors to other performing arts, and are concentrated in the Netherlands' four biggest cities. Immigrants are hardly represented.

34% of the respondents visited a pop music performances, of which 28% are frequent visitors and 6% incidental visitors. On average the 34% of respondents visited 2.2 performances/year. Visits show an upward trend, and visits nor growth are restricted to the young. Immigrants' visiting figures are below average. When it comes to music performances at parties, 43% of the respondents replied in the positive; 37% are incidental and 6% frequent visitors of performances at parties. On average those 43% visited 2 performances per year. Migrants are less under-represented than in classical music or pop music performances.

Atlas voor Gemeenten 2011 estimates the average visits of inhabitants of the city of Groningen to the theatre (no separate figures for music are given). On the basis of the above mentioned AVO it is estimated that the inhabitants of the city of Groningen on average visit 4,5 performances yearly, slightly higher than the average in the 50 largest Dutch municipalities in general.⁶⁵ Mention is made that the frequency of visits to performances can be explained from personal characteristics (especially from educational level) as well as from supply characteristics. Inhabitants between 30 and 50 years old visit performances less, as do members from non-western migrant groups.⁶⁶

Adviesbureau Cultuurtoerisme investigated the size of the audiences coming to amateur performing art performances. Although there is not a complete overlap of amateur performances with the non-regular sector – actually 20% of amateur performances takes place at venues in the regular sector⁶⁷ – it is very clear that amateur music performances form a substantial part of the musical infrastructure, attracting approximately 16 million visitors nationally in 2010 (excluding church services, festivals and street performances).⁶⁸

Summarizing, nearly half of the population in Groningen probably hears live music performances at parties, one third of the population goes to live pop and rock music, and about 10% of the population visits classical music performances. A large part of these performances will be amateur performances.

5.4.3 Reception of mediated music

An overview of media usage amongst the Dutch population shows that listening to radio and (traditional) sound carriers is declining gradually, probably since approximately 1950, as is since 1995 the time spent on watching television. Online computer usage and

⁶⁵ Marlet & Van Woerkens, 2011, p.109.

⁶⁶ Id., p. 246.

⁶⁷ Adviesbureau Cultuurtoerisme, 2011, p. 55.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

the use of newer digital media has known a rapid growth since 2005, especially with younger people. When it comes to specific music reception via the media, only partial data are available, suggesting that listening to classical music on radio and television is slowly declining and listening to classical music carriers in personal possession (CDs, LPs et cetera) is more or less stable. Figures also show that radio, television and music carriers have a far greater reach than visiting performances.⁶⁹

For television, recent research shows that on average, Dutch individuals of over six years of age spend two and a half hours watching television on a daily basis; 1,6% of that time is categorized as watching music programmes.⁷⁰ No separate figures for the province of Groningen exist.

Radio usage is much more linked to music. On average Dutch individuals of over 9 years of age listened three and a quarter hours daily to the radio in the period of March-April 2012. Seven of the top 10 radio channels qua market share are dedicated music channels, including the numbers one and three.⁷¹ However, there seem to be regional differences – specific figures for the same period for the province of Groningen show that there also seven out of the first ten radio channels are dedicated music channels but that the ranking is quite different. The provincial general radio channel is by far the most widely listened to.⁷²

When it comes to using computers (laptops and desktops) and newer digital media (e.g. tablets, smartphones) no exact figures are known. However, a survey from 2011⁷³ shows that people more and more own more than one digital device, and use these digital devices also for music reception, mainly at home. On tablets and smartphones, the ten most widely downloaded apps are news apps (six, often connected to national or regional papers), radio apps (two, both connected to radio stations dedicated to music), one television app and one internet app (the app from YouTube, firmly on the top of the list of all apps and probably also – if not mainly – used for music listening/viewing). Listening to the radio via digital media⁷⁴ and listening to ‘own’ music downloaded to the smartphone or via apps such as Spotify are frequently mentioned. Slightly curious but

⁶⁹ Van den Broek, De Haan et al., 2009, pp. 87-117. See also Nathalie Sonck & Jos de Haan, *De virtuele kunstkar. Cultuurdeelname via oude en nieuwe media*. [‘The virtual arts carriage. Culture participation through old and new media.’] Den Haag: SCP, 2012; Marjon Schols, Marion Duimel & Jos de Haan, *Hoe cultureel is de digitale generatie? Het internetgebruik voor culturele doeleinden onder schoolgaande tieners*. [‘How cultural is the digital generation? Use of internet for cultural ends amongst school-visiting teenagers.’] Den Haag: SCP, 2011; and Frank Huysmans & Jos de Haan. *Alle kanalen staan open. De digitalisering van mediagebruik*. [‘All channels are open. Digitalization of media usage.’] Den Haag: SCP, 2010, pp. 132-148, on the rising usage of media to find information about culture.

⁷⁰ Stichting KijkOnderzoek. *Jaarrapport 2011*. [‘Yearly Report 2011.’] Amstelveen: Stichting KijkOnderzoek, 2012.

⁷¹ Nationaal LuisterOnderzoek, ‘Persbericht Radio Luistercijfers maart-april 2012.’ [‘Press release radio listening figures, March-April 2012.’] Hilversum: Intomart/GfK, 2012.

⁷² Information on www.luistercijfers.nl/luistercijfers-nederland-regionaal/3819-luistercijfers-provincie-groningen-periode-maart-april-2012, consulted May 24, 2012.

⁷³ Intomart/GfK, *Trends in digitale media*. [‘Trends in digital media.’] Hilversum: Intomart/GfK, 2011.

⁷⁴ It is unknown how much of the channels listened to are dedicated music channels.

worthwhile is the mentioning in the survey of music listening in the car; car-radio⁷⁵ and CDs are most widely used, mp3-players and smartphones also play a role; and only 8% of the respondents state that they never listen to music in the car. Finally, it should be mentioned that the internet plays a role in making purchases more and more; 55% of all internet users can be characterized as ‘frequent internet shoppers’, 26% of the frequent internet shoppers buy films and/or music through the internet⁷⁶.

Summarizing, it is clear that the media may play an important role in music reception in the Netherlands; and that home and the car are important places for mediated music reception.

5.5 Summary

A short summary of this chapter on the context in which individuals in the province in Groningen are musically active may read as follows. Groningen, one of the twelve Dutch provinces, is relatively sparsely populated, with an uneven distribution of the population over the province: one big city (Groningen, 190,000 inhabitants) and a largely rural surrounding area with many smaller villages and some larger towns ranging from 15,000 to 30,000 inhabitants. The musical infrastructure, when it comes to the ‘formal’ infrastructure which is often publicly funded on the national, provincial or local level, is largely tied to the city of Groningen and some other bigger towns, offering several concert halls (some tied to specific genres such as rock/pop) and theatres. Various musical ensembles such as the North-Netherlands Orchestra are part of this formal infrastructure, as are several larger and smaller festivals such as the pop/rock festival Noorderslag/Eurosonic, the performing arts festival Noorderzon or festivals as the classical Peter the Great Festival or the Summer Jazz Bicycle Tour.

Shifting the gaze to the less formal level, the province has an abundant musical life in its many ensembles (pop and rock bands, amateur choirs, amateur brass orchestras, operetta and musical societies et cetera) and in individuals musically active through taking lessons at one of the many public or private music schools or independent music teachers. In one way or another, probably about 20% of the population is involved in active music making. Music is performed in a wide variety of venues, some dedicated to music or the performing arts in general, others regularly or incidentally used as music stage (e.g. cafés, churches, schools and community centers). The city of Groningen again is the centre of all this, but the surrounding areas have an interesting offer as well. At least 50% of the population attends music performances with some regularity.

When it comes to listening to mediated music, the supply on offer is enormous, and although no figures are available, it is not an overstatement to suggest that virtually all individuals in some way or another – and often by their own choice – are confronted with music on a daily basis. Radio and television are widely accessible and widely viewed and

⁷⁵ Again, no indication how much is listened to dedicated music channels.

⁷⁶ CBS, 2012a, p. 118; p. 120.

listened to, and in the last decade digital media and the internet have even widened the options for music listeners, making the complete world of music accessible. Music carriers such as CDs are widely available through shops and, again, through the internet.

6. Uses of music: what people do with music

EBB: “*Could you do without?*”

I14: “*Ehm, maybe without music, but I need to have some sounds around me. Also when I am in bed, when I wake up I always put on the radio immediately, even if there is only talking; I can’t bear silence really.*”¹

I17: “*I visit my sister-in-law occasionally for her birthday, there are three, four people present or the room is filled with people, always music is playing, always so... My first inclination is to turn off the music. Because I love silence very much.*”²

6.1 Uses in general

In this chapter, I picture the uses of music based on the interviews with the thirty individuals interviewed for this study. This chapter describes what people do with music in concrete musical social situations; or, to quote Alan Merriam again (see section 3.2), it describes the “customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities”³. In Reckwitzian terms (see chapter 2), this chapter focuses not so much on practices, as ‘ways of doing’, but rather on the less abstract level of concrete acts in specific social situations where music in any capacity is involved. I do not offer, at this stage of the study, an interpretation of the uses of music in terms of more abstract practices or the bundling of such practices in subject forms, subject cultures or subject orders, but rather stay at the mundane level of individuals acting in social situations connected to music in everyday life.

Although I do not focus on practices in this chapter, I borrow Reckwitz’ holistic view of practices in practice theory as an inspiration for the analysis of musical social situations. A practice, according to Reckwitz, is “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood”⁴. I use a reordering of the elements of practices in this description as an ordering device to look at concrete social situations in which individuals ‘handle’ (in its broadest sense) music (see figure 1, next page):

- central are *persons* (ego and others) and their (observable) *behavior* (Reckwitz’ ‘bodies’ and ‘subjects’);

¹ EBB: “Zou u zonder kunnen?”

I14: “Eh, zonder muziek misschien wel, maar ik moet wel wat om me heen hebben. Dat heb ik dus in bed ook, als ik wakker ben dan zet ik altijd gelijk de radio aan, al praten ze maar; ik kan niet zo goed tegen de stilte.”

² “Ik kom weleens bij mijn schoonzusje op haar verjaardag, dan zijn we met drie, vier mensen of met een kamer vol, dan staat altijd de muziek aan, altijd zo... De eerste neiging die ik heb: om die muziek uit te zetten. Want ik houd ook heel erg van stilte.”

³ Merriam, 1964, p. 210. The word ‘practice’ does not refer to practices as used in Reckwitz’ theory of practice.

⁴ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250.

- those persons handle material resources – *things*, and use all kinds of *immaterial resources* (Reckwitz’ ‘things’)⁵;
- at a specific *place* and in a specific *period*.⁶

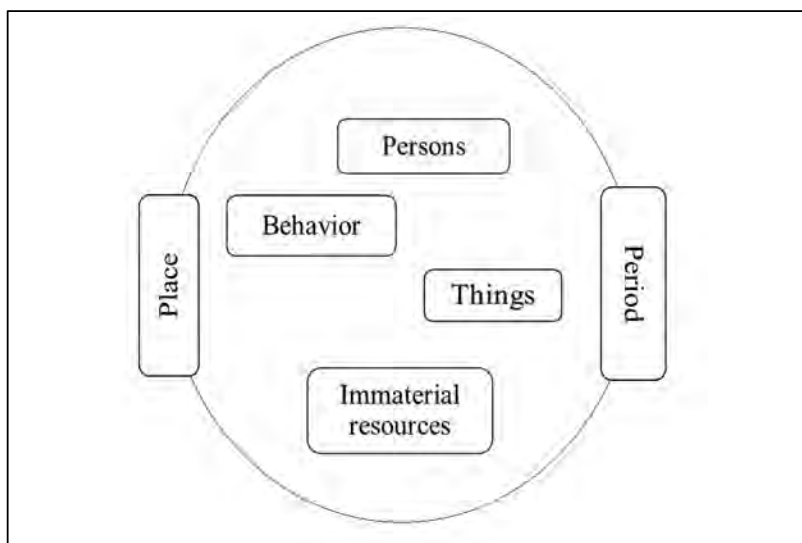


Fig. 1: The elements of a musical social situation

This chapter may be characterized as an attempt at a somewhat dense but consciously rather ‘thin’ description⁷. The description is based on a content analysis of the interviews; in general my perspective here is factist⁸, assuming that interviewees, in talking, talk about an external reality. However, I occasionally shift to a somewhat more discourse-analytic, specimen-based perspective, assuming that the interview is not only a form of talking about an external reality but also a form of social reality in which it may be rewarding to look at *how* people talk about ‘reality’ outside the interview situation, rather than at *what* they exactly say about it. I do that especially when I order the various elements in the separate sections below in summarizing figures indicating relations between concepts; these relational figures try to capture not so much reality itself as well as the perspective(s) of the interviewees on reality.

In a sense, my way of looking at social situations might be understood through the metaphor of the play – at a certain time and place, one or more individuals act out their behavior towards themselves and others, from the background of a variety of immaterial

⁵ I distinguish between material resources (things) and immaterial resources with on the background the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of resources as ‘[a] means of supplying a deficiency or need; something that is a source of help, information, strength, etc’.
(<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/163768?rskey=ZTNlmQ&result=1#contentWrapper>, consulted January 8, 2013).

⁶ Compared to the ‘who, what, when, where and why’ of North, Hargreaves et al. (2004, p. 46), ‘who’ refers to persons and behavior, ‘what’ to things and immaterial resources, ‘when’ to period, and ‘where’ to place; ‘why’ refers to the functions rather than the uses of music.

⁷ Cf. Geertz, 1973, pp. 6-7.

⁸ Ten Have, 2004, p. 8; cf. section 4.4.1.2, footnote 104.

resources, using a wide variety of stage-props.⁹ In the following sections I will show consecutively what is said about the elements of concrete musical social situations in the interviews, thus picturing an image of the endlessly varied ways of, and the endlessly varied contexts in which, people perform the ‘customary exercise of music’ as talked about in the interview.

6.2 Persons

Each interviewee was asked to recount his personal musical biography. Therefore, each interviewee generally talks about his own musical life, putting himself center stage – sometimes a bit awkwardly:

I2: *“I thought music did not play a role in my life at all, and that I knew nothing about it. (...) I therefore immediately said to my friend [who asked her to be interviewed]: ‘How can I be of use to him?’”*¹⁰

But this main character is surrounded by many other characters – some intimate, some far off; some known by name and nature, some rather shady abstract figurants; some acting in face-to-face situations, others never entering the stage physically but sometimes playing significant roles as distanced others. The following, alphabetically ordered, not-exhaustive list of 23 different characters playing a role in the interviews gives an idea of the variation (see table 1):

Audience members	Customers	Generation	Parents
Band members	Extended family	members	Partner
Celebrities	members	Grandchildren	Peers
Children	Family	Maid	Pupils
Colleagues	Friends and	Manager-	Scene members
Conductor	acquaintances	producer	Siblings
Connoisseurs		Musicians	Teacher

Table 1: Persons mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

Those characters may be ordered in a set of concentric circles, with the interviewee in the middle. Generally, there is a core of persons around the main character, consisting of first-degree family. When talking about their youth, interviewees mention siblings and parents as important ‘others’.

I8: *“If you ask for my first music memory, I always think of the Dire Straits. In fact I am still a fan, at least I think it’s delightful music. I think I always sang with my father the songs from that blue CD, Walk of Life: Money for Nothing, Brothers in Arms, all that music. What I remember is that I just liked the music and that I*

⁹ Evidently, the metaphor is only partly adequate, if only because “the stage presents things that are make-believe; presumably life presents things that are real and sometimes not well rehearsed”. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1959, p. xi.

¹⁰ “Ik dacht dat muziek totaal geen rol speelde in mijn leven, en dat ik er helemaal niks van wist. (...) Ik zei ook meteen spontaan tegen [mijn vriendin]: ‘Wat kan hij nou aan mij hebben?’” Quote from the beginning of the second interview with I2, where she reflects on the first interview.

actually liked it because my father also liked it, and at the time I not really had a say in it.”¹¹

As the interviewees grow up, the focus shifts. If interviewees live in partnerships their partner(s) and possibly children become part of this circle. Often other kinds of family members are talked about as belonging to this innermost circle: a stepfather, an adopted brother, grandparents living in the same house, in later stages of life sometimes grandchildren.

Around this innermost family circle one finds a circle of what could be called the extended family (aunts, uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, nephews, nieces etc.) and family friends and acquaintances – personal friends, friends of parents visiting the house in the interviewees’ youths, close neighbors, church members. In some cases from longer ago domestic servants fall into this circle. The circles of core and extended family and friends together form a set of persons with whom the interviewee shares life in general rather than just music – they are ‘life persons’.

In a next circle one finds a host of people the interviewees know face-to-face from all kinds of different settings, but figuring in the interviewees’ stories mainly in music-related ways. Part of this circle are for example peers from school or neighborhood or, later, colleagues from work and sometimes customers known through work.

I18: *“I can remember that we knew someone who was slightly older then, he had had slightly more time to collect, he went off from home with a removal box filled with LPs, that was very impressive (...). We visited each other, we maybe had one or two LPs (...), and they were played successively at friends’ places, you had some kind of slightly rickety (...) hand gramophone (...); that’s what it started with.”*¹²

This circle may include teachers or (when the interviewee was a teacher in later life) pupils. Members of bands, choirs, orchestras or ensembles in which the interviewees take part, and possible conductors of such ensembles are also part of this circle. Managers, producers, members of audiences one is part of or plays for, and musicians one knows all fall within this circle as well, as do music connoisseurs: people regarded by the interviewee as first hand, very knowledgeable sources of information regarding one or more musical areas, for example record shop owners.

I11: *“I already listened a lot to metal, and then I got more into hardcore punk through a friend of a friend who wanted to start a band, and the drummer I learnt*

¹¹ “Mijn eerste muziekherinnering, als je me daarnaar vraagt, dan denk ik altijd aan de Dire Straits. Eigenlijk ben ik er nog steeds fan van, tenminste, ik vind het heerlijke muziek. Volgens mij zong ik altijd met mijn vader die nummers van die blauwe cd, Walk of Life: Money for Nothing, Brothers in Arms, die muziek allemaal. Wat ik daar voor herinnering aan heb is dat ik het gewoon mooie muziek vond en dat ik het eigenlijk gewoon wel leuk vond omdat mijn vader het ook leuk vond, en ik had zelf destijds nog niet echt inbreng.”

¹² “Ik kan mij herinneren dat we toen iemand kenden die ietsje ouder was, die dus iets meer tijd had gehad om te verzamelen, en die ging van huis en die had een hele verhuisdoos vol met lp’s, dat was heel indrukwekkend. (...) We gingen bij elkaar langs, we hadden misschien een of twee lp’s (...), en die werden successievelijk bij vriendjes wat gedraaid, dan had je een of andere wat gammele (...) handgrammofoon (...); daar begon het mee.”

to know then (...), he introduced me into hardcore punk a bit. I didn't like it at all, what I had heard of it, (...) but he was a really good connoisseur, he made me listen to all kinds of beautiful things, and I really thought that was fantastic."¹³

Finally this circle also includes acquaintances who are members of perceived generations¹⁴ or scenes¹⁵ the interviewee considers himself to be part of.

All people in the aforementioned circles are known face-to-face by the interviewee. There is yet a wider circle of people virtually entering the stage in the interviews: people who are not known face-to-face but nevertheless are mentioned as important for some reason in the interviewees' stories about their musical lives. Some of them are more abstract members from certain categories mentioned above: for example abstract members of peer groups, of audiences, of the interviewees' generation, or of scenes the interviewee feels he is part of. Other examples are connoisseurs informing the interviewee through media, musicians coming to the interviewee through the media, or celebrities serving as role models or negative examples.

I1: *"I have a subscription to Aardschok¹⁶ (...), every month there is a top 10 in there (...). I know by now which reviewers more or less like the same music as I do, so if one of the reviewers marks it with a 9 [out of 10], I walk upstairs and check a website or a blog, to see if it is already somewhere.*"¹⁷

Constellations of persons change continuously in life, from moment to moment as well as from a more biographical perspective. Some categories enter only at a certain stage in life (children for example), some may become more important gradually (friends), some may lose importance (parents, school mates); and certain individuals fall – simultaneously or consecutively – in various categories: fellow audience members turn out to be connoisseurs, for example, or celebrities may become friends:

I30: *"In the meantime Sandra has also become my friend. (...) [When I wake up] I put on the computer, music. Most of the times it is directly hearing Andrea a bit, Sandra a bit. (...) Andrea and Sandra – I think their music is simply fantastic and they are simply two terrific girls, it is simply.... (...) Sandra even broke my mother's heart. (...) They had terrific conversations, a lot of love and spontaneity*

¹³ "Ik luisterde al heel veel naar metal, en toen ben ik meer in de hardcore punk geraakt via een vriend van een vriend die een bandje wou beginnen, en die drummer die ik toen leerde kennen (...) die heeft me een beetje geïntroduceerd in de hardcore punk. Dat vond ik altijd niks, van wat ik ooit gehoord had, (...) maar hij was echt een hele goeie kenner, hij liet me allerlei mooie dingen horen, en dat vond ik wel echt te gek."

¹⁴ For a general explanation of the idea of generations see e.g. Henk Becker, *Generaties en hun kansen*. ['Generations and their chances.'] Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1992.

¹⁵ For a general explanation of the idea of scenes see e.g. Andy Bennett, 'Consolidating the Music Scenes Perspective.' *Poetics* 32 (2004).

¹⁶ 'Earthquake'; Dutch rock and metal magazine.

¹⁷ "Ik ben geabonneerd op de Aardschok (...), elke maand staat er een top 10 in (...). Ik weet inmiddels welke recensenten ongeveer van dezelfde muziek houden als ik, dus als een van die recensenten een 9 geeft dan loop ik even naar boven en dan kijk ik eventjes op een website of een blog, of die al ergens staat."

came from both sides, yes... (...) She has become another daughter of my mother, there is such a bond."¹⁸

The stories of the interviewees thus are populated with a host of persons who, either face-to-face or mediated, play a role in their musical lives (see figure 2 for an overview).

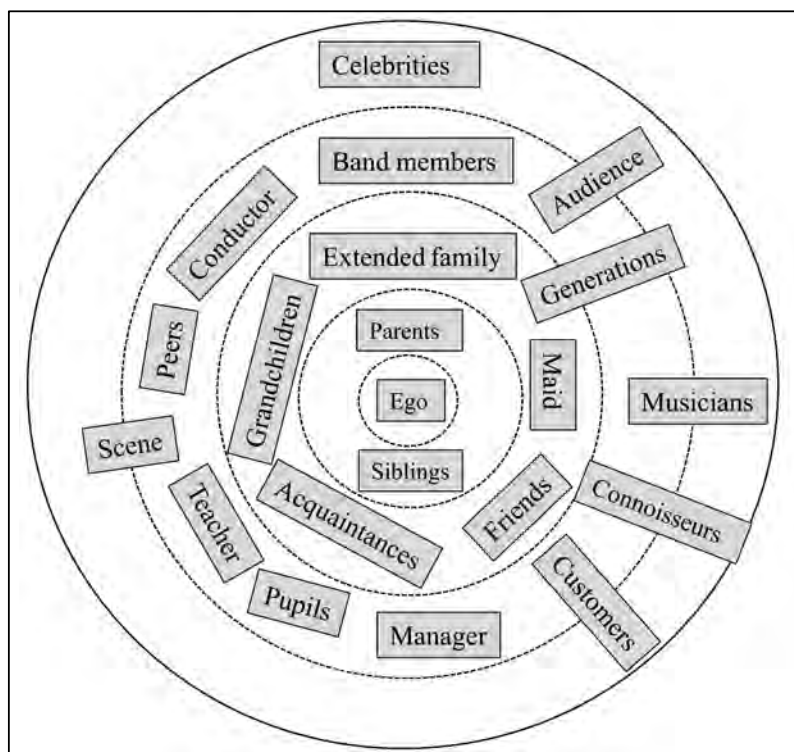


Fig. 2: Persons as seen from the interviewee

6.3 Behavior

All those people populating the stage of everyday musical life perform behavior. Much of this behavior is, in one way or the other, related to music – it is musical behavior, ‘musicking’. With behavior I here mean only observable behavior, in that respect being firmly congruent with Reckwitz’ centrality of ‘moving bodies’ in his description of practices. Because I focus on observable behavior, I avoid a too easy use of the word ‘listening’ in the following description. I see the actual listening to music as a not readily observable, rather ‘internal’ process; it takes place ‘within’ Reckwitz’ ‘moving bodies’¹⁹.

¹⁸ “In de tussentijd is Sandra ook mijn vriendin geworden. (...) [Bij het opstaan] gaat de computer aan, muziek. Meestal is het gelijk even Andrea horen, Sandra horen. (...) Andrea en Sandra – hun muziek vind ik gewoon fantastisch en het zijn gewoon twee geweldige meiden, dat is gewoon... (...) Zelfs Sandra heeft het hart gebroken van mijn moeder. (...) Ze hebben hele geweldige gesprekken gehad, er kwam heel veel liefde, spontaniteit gewoon van beide kanten, ja... (...) Het is nog een dochter van mijn moeder geworden, zo’n band is er gewoon.”

¹⁹ Unless one assumes that for example brain scans are able to visualize listening processes, thereby making them observable (e.g. as literally moving bodies on the neural microlevel); an assumption that should not be taken for granted too easily, given the fact that it is not straightforward that listening processes seat (only)

Therefore, a somewhat sharper look in terms of observable behavior is needed to activities normally catalogued as ‘listening’: listening is done while visiting concerts, while playing CDs, while performing – and in some forms of musical behavior (cataloging, building an amplifier, exchanging, talking) it plays no direct role.

The following set of 35 alphabetically ordered concepts denoting musical behavior is derived from the interviews (see table 2):

Broadcasting	DJ-ing	Playing games ³²	Singing
Building an amplifier	Doing ²⁴	Playing	Talking
Building an instrument	Exchanging ²⁵	instruments	Teaching
Cataloging ²⁰	Leading ²⁶	Playing	Visiting concerts
Collecting ²¹	Meeting like-minded	instruments	Visiting dance
Composing	Organizing ²⁷	together	performances
Contesting ²²	Page-turning ²⁸	Rapping	Watching audiences
Contrafacting ²³	Performing ²⁹	Reading staff	Watching musicians
Crying	Playbacking ³⁰	notation	Writing teaching
Dancing	Playing AV ³¹	Recording ³³	materials

Table 2: Forms of musical behavior mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

The list in table 2 is not meant to be a complete list of terms used in the interviews, and it is very likely that the list would be expanded greatly when more interviews would be taken. It may serve, however, as an exemplary demonstration of the variety of musical behavior about which the interviewees speak.

in the brain, nor is it straightforward that the visualization as delivered in scans are direct one-to-one images of a physical reality ‘in the head’.

²⁰ Cataloging: e.g. keeping a list of CDs, or an inventory of concerts played or attended; sometimes those lists are shared through the internet, e.g. through Discogs (www.discogs.com).

²¹ Collecting: e.g. collecting CDs or LPs from a certain artist or genre.

²² Contesting: performing within a music contest.

²³ Contrafacting: making new lyrics to existing music. I use the word here in its meaning as connected to the medieval western music practice of the *contrafactum*, rather than in the practice of the *contrafact* in jazz.

²⁴ Doing: an inadequate translation of the Dutch “doen aan muziek”; other options for translation apart from ‘doing music’ being ‘taking part in music’, maybe even ‘being in music’. ‘Doing’ is a broad general term used by interviewees to indicate playing instruments/leading/composing etc, distinguishing those forms of behavior from playing medialized music/visiting concerts etc. See further section 8.2.

²⁵ Exchanging: the “means by which useful things move from one person to another” (John Davis, *Exchange*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, p. 1). Sub-concepts of exchange, many of them mentioned in the interviews conducted for this study, are buying, selling, giving, receiving, swapping, hiring, lending, keeping, recording/downloading, stealing, inheriting, getting rid of etc.

²⁶ Leading: leading a music ensemble in any way, including conducting.

²⁷ Organizing: organizing a concert, a listening session, etc.; including ‘producing’.

²⁸ Page-turning: turning the pages of a score for a performer.

²⁹ Performing: playing an instrument (together) or singing for an audience.

³⁰ Playbacking: including e.g. playing the air-guitar.

³¹ Playing AV: playing music present through radio, television, cassette decks, gramophones, CD players, DVD players, video recorders, mobile phones, computers et cetera.

³² Playing games: playing musical games; e.g. musical games at a children’s birthday party, or contesting in multi-media games such as Guitar Hero.

³³ Recording: recording music played by oneself or by others, as well as re-recording music – e.g. taping radio transmissions on cassette, making a copy of a CD to give away as a present, etc.

Looking at this list, it becomes quite clear that musical behavior is not necessarily tied to the performance of music in the strict sense. Neither is musical behavior necessarily tied to listening to music. It is, however, quite clear that a number of the items on the list above may be described as more connected to the actual ‘sound of music’ than others, thus being perceived by many of the interviewees as more ‘central’ forms of musical behavior. Many of them are for example connected to the idea of the performance: the overarching epithet of ‘doing’ music is filled with a plethora of different forms of behavior, such as composing, contrafacting, leading ensembles, playing instruments (alone or together), singing, reading staff notation, playing or singing in performances or contests, DJ-ing, playbacking. It is equally clear that a number of the items on the list is described by the interviewees as connected to the idea of listening to music; either concentrated listening as may occur when playing audio-visual music carriers, visiting concerts, dancing or visiting dance performances, or more dispersed or peripheral forms of listening which may occur for example while playing games, watching audiences, or watching musicians³⁴.

It is also quite clear that there are forms of behavior which are very much centered on the sound of music but not necessarily focused on either performing or listening – teaching/writing teaching materials and recording may be considered as ‘central’ forms of musical behavior in their own right. Other forms of musicking seem less connected to the actual sounding of the music, and are therefore prone to be perceived as a set of more ‘decentral’ forms of musical behavior. Examples may be such forms of musicking as collecting and cataloging music; exchanging music; building instruments and amplifiers; organizing or meeting like-minded; and talking about music. In section 8.2, a further analysis of the interviewees’ ways of talking about musical behavior will take place.

6.4 Things³⁵

In musical social situations, ‘things’ – material resources; the stage props used in the play of musicking – play an important role. Reckwitz’ ‘moving bodies, handling things’ is a concise expression of the notion that “[in] everyday practice (...) actual social agents skillfully use cultural resources (language, *things*, images) to deal with their needs”³⁶, and that these things are loaded with meanings and their use is connected to its cultural

³⁴ In this formulation, no strict relation is intended between the forms of concentrated and dispersed listening as described here – in the interviewees’ stories, for example, much dispersed listening goes on while playing AV, while much concentrated listening happens while playing musical games.

³⁵ ‘Things’ are basically physical objects (Igor Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things. Commoditization as Process.’ In: Arjun Appadurai (Ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 64), although the non-physical world can be ‘thingified’ – and even ‘commodified’ – in the sense that it may become exchangeable too, for example in the sense of labor force (e.g. musicianship) or intellectual ownership (of e.g. a composition or recording). Non-physical ‘things’ are, as ‘immaterial resources’, dealt with in section 6.5.

³⁶ Don Slater, *Consumer Culture & Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997, p. 148; italics added. ‘Practice’ here is not used in the Reckwitzian manner, ‘everyday practice’ denotes what I term social situations.

context³⁷. Things are also important because they are used in various forms of exchange. A very important form of exchange is commodity exchange³⁸, especially in our late-modern ‘consumer culture’ where consumption³⁹ “can be used to culturally challenge as well as cultural reproduce social order”⁴⁰.

The list of things mentioned in the interviews is virtually endless. The following categories of things are most commonly mentioned as tied intrinsically to musical social situations:

- notations: scores, lead sheets et cetera. Notations are mentioned by practicing musicians, not only as helpful but also as part of two powerful dichotomies: theory – practice, and playing from (staff) notation – playing by heart. In those dichotomies, staff notation is perceived as part of ‘formal’ musicianship, and sometimes as adverse to a more ‘natural’ musicianship:

I6: *“That [seeing a pianist] was very impressive. When (...) my parents noted that, I was allowed to go to staff notation reading class, I was the age of 5 at the time. In staff notation reading class, one learned, yes, I think staff notation, I don’t know anything about it anymore, I know I didn’t like it a bit (...) because it was about much more abstract things than the music I would like to play. (...) We did get a recorder there, I really liked that (...). It lasted only a little while, the staff notation reading class, after that I was allowed to go to recorder lessons.”*⁴¹

- press: books and magazines on music, journals et cetera. They are, especially when interviewees are fans⁴² of certain musicians or music styles, used as information sources:

I23: *“I read, I think from about my sixteenth, music magazines. I started to read music magazine Oor⁴³. There was different music in it, different stories about music. (...) They thought the music I sometimes liked was very wrong, and... Comparing. I also can remember, that was rather funny, I had read very often about Captain Beefheart. And that should be fantastic, a certain record, that was fantastic. So at a certain moment, I*

³⁷ Id., p. 148.

³⁸ A commodity is “a thing that has use value and that can be exchanged in a discrete transaction for a counterpart, the very fact of exchange indicating that the counterpart has, in the immediate context, an equivalent value” (Kopytoff, 1986, p. 68). Cf. Roy & Dowd, 2010, esp. pp. 184-186.

³⁹ This is not to suggest that the interviews convey an overwhelming sense of ‘consumerism’, stressing the commodity-side of exchange; even when interviewees speak about ‘owning’ a music collection and about ‘collecting’, the commodity feeling is hardly ever very outspoken.

⁴⁰ Slater, 1997, p. 148.

⁴¹ “Dat vond ik heel erg indrukwekkend. Toen (...) mijn ouders dat merkten toen mocht ik op notenklasje, toen was ik vijf. Notenklasje, daar leerde je, ja, ik denk noten, ik weet er niets meer van, ik weet dat ik er geen zak aan vond (...) omdat het ging over veel abstractere dingen dan de muziek die ik graag zou willen maken. (...) Daar kregen we wel een blokfluit, dat vond ik wel heel leuk. (...) Het heeft maar heel kort geduurd, het notenklasje, daarna mocht ik op blokfluitles.”

⁴² For more general information on fandom, see e.g. C. Lee Harrington & Denise D. Bielby, ‘A Life Course Perspective on Fandom.’ *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 13 (2010), and Andy Bennett, ‘Punk’s Not Dead. The Continuing Significance of Punk Rock for an Older Generation of Fans.’ *Sociology* 40 (2006).

⁴³ Lit. ‘Ear’.

had some money and I went to the record store, I said such-and-such, I said: 'I would like to listen to it', I sat listening in a music booth, I thought: 'Is the record player on the right speed?' [laughs]”⁴⁴

- audio-visuals: all ‘music carriers’ (CDs, DVDs, records et cetera) as well as the recording and playing devices for those music carriers. I will describe this category of things more deeply in section 6.4.1;
- instruments: musical instruments and all the paraphernalia that come with it, including amplification gear for musicians. I will describe instruments in more depth in section 6.4.2.

6.4.1 Audio-visuals

Audio-visuals usually come in sets of sound carriers and their playing/recording devices. A not-exhaustive list based on the interviews can be found in table 3 below:

Sound carrier	Playing/recording device
Memory card, USB-stick etc.	MP3 ⁴⁵ -player, mobile phone
CD	CD-player/recorder; Walkman
DVD	DVD-player/recorder
Record	Record player
Cassette	Cassette deck (player/recorder); walkman
Video cassette	Videocassette player/recorder
Tape reel	Reel to reel tape deck (player/recorder)
Analog or digital signal	Radio, television, computer, tablet, mobile phone
	Car varieties of many of the above

Table 3: Sound carriers and recording/playing devices mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

For the interviewees, music carriers and (to a lesser extent) their recording/playing devices are connected intrinsically to the area of exchange behavior. In the interviews they are owned, bought, sold, given away or received as a present, inherited, swapped, hired, lent (out), downloaded illegally, stolen, thrown away et cetera. Owning music carriers leads to the idea of a ‘music collection’ which is considered to be an expression of the personality of the interviewee as well as of his history.

I3: *“On YouTube, (...) those Favorites, (...) I like to see what I added in the past and what means nothing to me anymore now.”⁴⁶*

⁴⁴ “Ik las, ik denk vanaf mijn zestiende ongeveer, ook wel muziekbladen. Muziekblad Oor ben ik gaan lezen. Daar stond andere muziek in, andere verhalen over muziek (...). De muziek die ik soms leuk vond vonden zij heel fout, en... Vergelijken. Ik kan me ook herinneren, dat is wel heel grappig, ik had heel vaak iets gelezen over Captain Beefheart. En dat was dan geweldig, een bepaalde plaat, dat was geweldig. Dus op een bepaald moment, ik had wat geld en ik naar de platenzaak, ik zeg van dat-en-dat, ik zeg van: ‘Ik wil het wel even luisteren’, ik zat in zo’n muziekhokje te luisteren, ik dacht van: ‘Staat dat wel op het goede toerental?’ [lacht]”

⁴⁵ And other digital file formats, including M4A, FLAC, WAV, WMA et cetera.

⁴⁶ “Op YouTube, (...) die Favorieten (...). Ik vind het wel leuk om te zien wat ik ooit heb toegevoegd en wat me nou eigenlijk weinig meer zegt.”

I17: *"It [the CD collection] is a bit concentrated on, on completely my thing. It is not very broad, but that is not necessary for me. I also don't have much acquaintances. I have a couple of good friends and a very nice sister, and that is enough for me. (...) I direct my energy to one thing, or to a little music, but that then means everything to me."*⁴⁷

In some cases this leads to much energy being dedicated to seemingly musical 'fringe behavior' as the cataloging of music.

EBB: *"How many CDs have you got, roughly?"*

I17: *"800, or so? (...) I am now busy with Discogs, I like that, because you also are able with your collection to ... All editions from a certain work can be found there. So you can also take a look: 'Oh, I've got that edition.' You see, that's something I like. (...) But alright, that's more for the holidays, or when the weather is bad, and for a moment when (...) I do not have any (...) kick for other lists, then I will work again on that. I have put about 400 in it now, but to record all that, (...) that is a lot of work. But okay, I like it, keeping lists."*⁴⁸

Interesting is what happens when collections merge (or not merge) because partners start living together. Questions arise such as: do we organize the collections together, and if so, alphabetically, on year of issue, on genre?⁴⁹

I1: *"This is our joint music collection, so there is no corner just for me or a corner just for my wife. (...) Because I only had very few CDs I arranged them mostly by association. So I had Def Leppard next to the Eagles because I thought it should be so, and I had Guns N' Roses next to the Eagles because the Eagles' drummer once sang a song along on a Guns N' Roses record and the singer of Guns N' Roses once sang on one of his solo albums, so I put that all together. For a time I ordered them on year of issue, I liked that too. But it turned out I was the only one who thought it interesting in which year a record was issued, and my associative way of putting them together also was not the real thing, so when my CD-cabinet became too small [my wife] made the offer, like: 'On your birthday you will get a new CD cabinet so you can store them all again, but only on one incontrovertible, non-negotiable condition: they should be in the cabinet alphabetically', (...) so that she can find them too."*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ "Het is toch een beetje toegespitst op, op helemaal mijn ding. Het is niet heel breed, maar dat hoeft voor mij ook niet. Ik heb ook niet heel veel kennissen. Ik heb een paar goeie vriendinnen en een heel fijn zusje, en dan is dat ook voldoende voor mij. (...) Ik geef mijn energie aan één ding, of aan weinig muziek, maar dan is dat ook alles voor mij".

⁴⁸ EBB: "Hoeveel cd's heb je bij elkaar, naar schatting?"

I17: "800, zo iets? (...) Ik ben nu met die Discogs bezig, dat is leuk, want dan kun je dus je verzameling ook ... alle uitgaven van een bepaald werk hebben ze daar op staan. Dus je kunt ook kijken: 'Oh, ik heb die uitgave.' Kijk dat vind ik dan wel weer grappig. (...) Maar goed, dat is meer vakantietijd, en als het slecht weer is, en ik heb even (...) geen andere lijstjes-kick, dan ga ik daar wel weer eens mee verder. Er staan nu 400 in, maar om dat allemaal vast te leggen, (...) dat is best veel werk. Maar goed, ik vind het leuk, lijstjes bijhouden."

⁴⁹ Those negotiations may, when analyzed in-depth, well be shown to mirror many aspects of intimate relationships in general.

⁵⁰ "Dit is onze gezamenlijke muziekverzameling, dus er is ook niet een hoekje wat alleen voor mij is of een hoekje dat alleen voor [mijn vrouw] is. (...) Omdat ik maar heel weinig cd's had [had] ik ze meestal op

Music collections vary enormously in size: from a collection with only a few CDs unused on the attic to a collection of over 5000 CDs and about 2500 records, or, in another case, a collection of which 13.000 digital reggae songs were part of. Interestingly, no interviewee dedicated his music collection to one genre or a set of related genres uniquely⁵¹. Music collections usually were very varied in that respect, owing to the fact that music collections represented not only present tastes but also the listening biography of the interviewees⁵², as well as to the fact that nearly all interviewees can, to greater or lesser extent, be characterized as musical ‘omnivores’⁵³ rather than as completely tied to one specific genre or set of genres:

I12: *“You see, I am very broad. I hardly ever play Elvis here, unless I want to watch DVDs. But I wake up with Radio 538⁵⁴ (...) and because I have children who are also into their own music, I like that very much too: I think Jason Mraz is good, Bruno Mars I think is fantastic, Pink now, oh, I think she’s so good, the lyrics too.”*⁵⁵

I20: *“I met a friend (...), he really was a reggae fanatic. There the love for reggae really got a hold on me. (...) Yes, it actually stayed on, this reggae. I had a girlfriend then, well, she really liked it too. (...) I got to know another pal, he had something with classical music. So he got me into contact again with Bach. (...) Johann Sebastian has become a vary valued pal, in that sense. I think it is beautiful music. (...) I also have some rougher music, for example I own a CD of*

associatie had staan. (...) Dus ik had Def Leppard en de Eagles naast elkaar staan omdat ik dat zo vond, en ik had Guns N’ Roses en de Eagles naast elkaar staan omdat de drummer van de Eagles een keer een nummer heeft meegezongen op een Guns N’ Roses plaat en de zanger van Guns N’ Roses een keer op een van zijn soloplaten heeft meegezongen, dus dat zette ik allemaal bij elkaar. Ik heb ze een tijdje op jaartal geordend, dat vond ik ook leuk. Maar ja ik was de enige die het interessant bleek te vinden in welk jaar een plaat uitgekomen was en mijn associatief neerzetten dat bleek het ook niet te zijn, dus toen mijn cd box of -kast te klein werd toen heeft [mijn vrouw] het voorstel gedaan van: ‘Op je verjaardag krijg je nieuwe cd boxen zodat je ze allemaal weer kwijt kunt op een spijkerharde, niet-onderhandelbare voorwaarde namelijk dat ze op alfabet in die kast [komen]’, (...), zodat zij ze ook kan vinden.”

⁵¹ A useful discussion of the concept of ‘genre’ can be found in Jennifer C. Lena & Richard A. Peterson, ‘Classification as Culture. Types and Trajectories of Music Genres.’ *American Sociological Review* 73 (2008), spec. pp. 698-700. See for a list of genres the Short Test on Musical Preferences – Revised STOMP-R (www.sjdm.org/dmidi/Short_Test_Of_Music_Preferences.html, consulted January 16, 2013), and Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; for a reformulation for the Dutch current situation Bisschop Boele, 2010, pp. 18-20.

⁵² About the relationship between music behavior and connecting to the past, see further in section 7.3.6.1.

⁵³ See Richard A. Peterson, ‘Understanding Audience Segmentation. From Elite and Mass to Omnivore and Univore.’ *Poetics* 21 (1992).

⁵⁴ “538 (...) is a Dutch commercial radio station aimed at young people. It has a broad format which includes Top 40, dance, R&B and recent hits.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538_\(radio_station\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/538_(radio_station)), consulted January 16, 2013.

⁵⁵ “Ik ben namelijk heel breed. Ik heb hier eigenlijk nooit Elvis op staan, tenzij ik dvd’s wil bekijken. Maar ik sta op met 538 (...) en omdat ik kinderen heb die ook weer met hun eigen muziek bezig zijn, dat vind ik ook heel mooi: Jason Mraz vind ik goed, Bruno Mars vind ik geweldig, Pink nu, oh die vind ik zo goed, de teksten ook.”

Metallica, I can value that too, but mainly because I think it is played very skillfully.”⁵⁶

Interviewees are musical omnivores, regardless of their socio-economic background⁵⁷ or whether or not interviewees characterize themselves as fan of a certain genre or set of genres. The music collections of the interviewees characterized as jazz-lover, reggae-lover or classical music-lover had an eclectic character just as the collections of those interviewees considering themselves to be broadly musical interested had; and not only were the collections varied, when asked interviewees stated that their listening behavior also was more varied than could be assumed on the basis of their self-characterization as specific genre fans. In that sense, the collections reflected the ready availability of any kind of music in late-modern western society.

Keeping and getting rid of music carriers and recording/playing devices is an interesting topic specifically when records are concerned. Many people hang on to their record collection right through the CD and internet era, often in spite of the fact that the records can't be played anymore because the record player is broken (but not thrown away, because it is waiting – sometimes for years already – for repair or replacement) or not even present any more.

EBB: “*And records, you don't play them now?*”

I5: “*Well, actually not anymore, no. We took over a lot of records at some point from someone, out of the library, they are all upstairs, and that is... You think: 'Oh, actually there are many beautiful things.' But you don't do it anymore; that record player, eventually, also didn't do it anymore.*”

Partner I5: “*The essence is the record player. We have to have one again.*”

I5: “*Yes. And then you would maybe play them again. Actually I don't know.*”⁵⁸

The records, however, stay there; as a kind of personal emotional archive, because the record sleeves are considered works of art, or for one interviewee even as a work of reference to look up song titles:

I10: “*You never play it [the record collection] anymore.*”

⁵⁶ “Ik heb een vriend ontmoet (...), die was echt reggae-fanaat al, toen. Daar is de liefde voor de reggae echt doorgezet. (...) Ja, dat is eigenlijk gebleven, die reggae. Ik had toen een vriendin, nou, die vond het ook allemaal wel prachtig. (...) Ik had weer een andere kameraad leren kennen, die had weer veel met klassieke muziek. Dus die heeft me ook weer opnieuw in contact gebracht met Bach. (...) Johann Sebastian is een zeer gewaardeerde kameraad van me geworden, in die zin. Ik vind het prachtige muziek. (...) Ik heb ook wel wat ruigere muziek, ik heb bijvoorbeeld ook een cd van Metallica, dat kan ik dan ook wel weer waarderen, maar dan voornamelijk omdat ik het heel kap gespeeld vind.”

⁵⁷ Thus questioning the validity of the idea that musical omnivorism is a trait of high status groups; see for its formulation Peterson, 1992; for a useful critical discussion Richard A. Peterson, ‘Problems in Comparative Research. The Example of Omnivorousness.’ *Poetics* 33 (2005), and for a recent study Angèle Christin, ‘Omnivores Versus Snobs? Musical Tastes in the United States and France.’ Working Paper #40. Princeton: Princeton University, 2010.

⁵⁸ EBB: “En platen, die draai je nu niet?”

I5: “Nou, eigenlijk niet meer, nee. We hebben een heleboel platen toen een keer overgenomen van iemand, uit de bibliotheek, die staan allemaal boven, en dat is dan... Dan denk je: ‘Oh, er staat eigenlijk heel veel moois tussen.’ Maar je doet het niet meer; die platenspeler, uiteindelijk, die deed het ook niet meer.”

Partner I5: “De crux is de platenspeler. Er moet er gewoon weer eentje komen.”

I5: “Ja. En dan ga je, dan zou je ze misschien wel weer opzetten. Ik weet het eigenlijk niet.”

EBB: *“Yes. But you do keep it.”*

I10: *“Yes, I think it’s a waste to get rid of it. (...) No, to get rid of it... I would never bring it to a shop to sell it. No, I think that would be a waste. Yes, you have the stuff anyway. Once in a while, then (...) you hear a record on the radio – ‘Oh, who sang that again?’ Then you just walk upstairs and then... you occasionally take a look.”*⁵⁹

Cassettes may also be kept in possession, although to a lesser extent than records – they are apparently easier to get rid of. With the growth of central storage of digital music files (either on private computers, in the ‘cloud’, or through such services as Spotify⁶⁰), gradually also CD collections become redundant and are parted with. The tie between the CD collection and its owner for my interviewees emotionally seems to lie somewhere between the cassette and the record collection.

Radio and television may be characterized as ‘external material sources’, together with e.g. libraries and the internet. The combination of radio, television and libraries with recording equipment (especially the cassette recorder, less so the video recorder and the CD/DVD recorder) in the past led to the manufacturing of personalized audiovisual artifacts which often served as personalized presents with little pure economic but high personal-emotional value:

I20: *“Yes, somewhat later, when I had my birthday, I did ask my father, if he said: ‘What would you like to get for your birthday?’ ‘Well, couldn’t you put some nice concerts for me on cassette?’ So then – yes, at some point I received a row of popular classical music cassettes, I still have them (...). I can enjoy that, it all belongs to my luggage as it were.”*⁶¹

Radio, television, the internet and the library are important sources for reinforcing existing musical experiences as well as for musical ‘openness’ and for the deliberate looking for new musical experiences. And they are sources of coincidental discoveries – as the mere existence of CDs can be:

I1: *“We had a public library in the village where I come from (...) and they had a rather extensive CD collection, and I started with the A, and I took home everything with a nice front cover at some point and sometimes I didn’t care for it at all and sometimes I really liked it and that ended up on a cassette again.”*⁶²

⁵⁹ I10: “Dat draai je echt nooit meer.”

EBB: ”Ja. Maar je houdt het wel.”

I10: “Ja ik vind het zonde om weg te doen. (...) Nee, om het weg te doen... Ik zou het nooit naar een winkel brengen om te gaan verkopen. Nee, dat vind ik jammer. Ja, je hebt het spul toch. Zo af en toe, dan (...) hoor je een plaatje op de radio – ‘Oh, wie zong dat ook alweer?’ Dan loop je even naar boven en dan... Je kijkt er af en toe eens bij.”

⁶⁰ See www.spotify.com.

⁶¹ “Ja, wat later, als ik jarig was, dan vroeg ik ook wel aan mijn vader, als hij zei: ‘Wat wil je hebben voor je verjaardag?’ ‘Nou, kun je niet wat leuke concerten voor me op cassette zetten?’ Dus dan – ja, ik heb een keer zo’n rijtje met populaire klassieke muziek gehad, die heb ik nog wel liggen (...) Daar kan ik ook heerlijk van genieten, dat hoort ook allemaal bij mijn bagage zeg maar.”

⁶² “We hadden een openbare bibliotheek in het dorp waar ik vandaan kom (...) en die hadden ook een vrij uitgebreide cd-collectie, en ik ben bij de A begonnen en alles wat een leuk voorkantje had dat heb ik wel eens een keer mee naar huis genomen en soms vond ik het niks en soms vond ik het hartstikke leuk en dat kwam dan ook weer op een bandje terecht.”

To finish, it may be illuminating to roughly sketch a historical line of the development of audiovisual artifacts, as follows:

1. live music may be seen as a situation where musical sound is produced by a musician and reaches the ear of the listeners (including the musician himself) ‘uninterrupted’;
2. when music started to be recorded (first on wax cylinders, then on LPs, CDs et cetera) musical sound was transferred into (first analog, later digital) information. This information was put on a sound carrier (an LP, a CD et cetera) which was then fed into analog or digital ‘sound signal translators’ (playing devices such as a pickup/amplifier- or CD-player/amplifier-combinations) in order to reappear as sound;
3. digital recording made it possible to make the sound carriers infinitely smaller than cassettes or LPs. The sound of music could now, as digital sound files, be stored on smaller carriers such as CDs and later memory devices hidden in the playing/recording devices, as is done for example in an MP3-player, thereby making the more voluminous carriers as LPs and even CDs superfluous;
4. this now leads to a next step, facilitated by fast (wireless) internet access, in which it becomes actually redundant to store sound files on a carrier outside (CD) or within (memory card) the playing/recording device. The sound files may now be stored at a central place and at any time or place transmitted (nearly) real time to playing devices.⁶³

Some of the interviews demonstrate Reckwitz’ notion that material culture at any specific moment in time is co-productive to the specific form of specific practices as carried out in concrete social situations⁶⁴: recent developments as described above change the ways in which music is exchanged. In the second development above, which dominated the end of the nineteenth and certainly the 20th century (and therefore much of the interviews), the sound of music can be owned, bought, sold, given away, received, kept, thrown away, lent, rented because it is inherently connected to its material sound carrier. Later developments challenge this idea, because the carrier, although still there, is out of reach of the listener. One does not own the sound of music by way of owning their carriers, but rather one owns access to the (carriers of the) sound of music, e.g. via services as Spotify. As shown above, in many of the stories my interviewees tell, the giving away, receiving, buying et cetera of music plays a huge role. However, in some of the stories, already one sees that owning music carriers changes into owning access to music carriers. This may have considerable influence on the importance of or the form of exchange in the future.⁶⁵

⁶³ There is one more complicating factor which is the difference between read-only carriers versus read-and-(re)write carriers. I leave that out of the description here.

⁶⁴ See Reckwitz 2006, pp. 60-62.

⁶⁵ A signal of that is the fact that some musicians, in order to make CDs survive the times of ‘download culture’, seem to stress less the fact that the CD is a music carrier but rather that it is an item of – sometimes even personalized – design. Cf. Jasper van Vugt, ‘De broek ophouden in een downloadcultuur.’ [‘Keeping independent means in a download culture.’] *S.M.A.R.T. Magazine*, March 2011, pp. 31-32.

6.4.2 Musical instruments

Musical instruments play an important role in the stories of many of the interviewees – in the first place as artifacts (sometimes only ‘being there’ rather than being played), but often of course connected to the actual playing of music. One might order many of the (often fragmented) stories of the interviewees surrounding instruments in an overview of trajectories such as in figure 3 below⁶⁶. Trajectories start with the *impetus* to play an instrument, followed by a possible *desire* to do so and the eventual coming into *possession* of the instrument, followed by the (not) *playing* of it and eventually by a more or less steady *relationship* to the instrument.

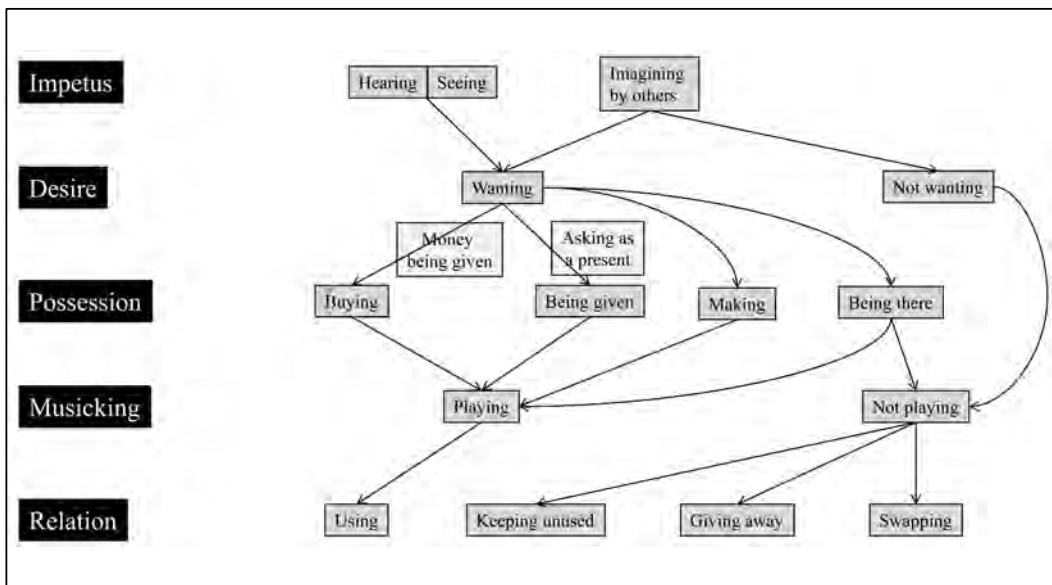


Fig. 3: Trajectories of musical instruments mentioned in the interviews

The *impetus* of wanting to learn to play comes from two sources in the interviewees’ stories. Sometimes it is self-driven, based on the hearing or seeing the instrument in question being played:

I1: “*Actually all music that kept its place at my cassette tapes was music which had something to with the guitar (...). So at my 18th I asked my father, then I also want to have a guitar.*”⁶⁷

Sometimes it may be other-driven: others – for example parents – imagine that the interviewee is playing. The latter may be the result of various considerations: playing an instrument belongs to the general idea of upbringing children, playing a particular instrument runs in the family, or a certain instrument is in possession already:

⁶⁶ Those trajectories at the same time indicate in a way the ‘biography’ of instruments as cultural constructions. Cf. Kopytoff, 1986, p. 66-68.

⁶⁷ “Eigenlijk alle muziek die zijn plek behield op mijn cassettebandjes dat was muziek die iets met gitaar te maken had (...). Toen heb ik dus op mijn 18e aan mijn vader gevraagd, dan wil ik ook een gitaar.”

I15: *“Musical development for the rest was a bit mediocre, because we had piano lessons as was customary but we really did not make much out of it.”*⁶⁸

I24: *“With me it came about in such a way that I started to play the clarinet at the age of seven (...), and that had to do with the fact that my father was a member of the wind band, plus a couple of cousins, plus a boy living nearby, and his father too.”*⁶⁹

I2: *“I then was ‘allowed’ to choose an instrument, forget it; there was an instrument so I continued with that. I ended up as being a second violinist.”*⁷⁰

When a positive decision (either self- or other-driven) to learn to play an instrument is taken and hence the *desire*⁷¹ to learn to play an instrument is there, the question of the *possession* of an instrument becomes important. The interviewees speak of several forms: buying one, asking one as a present, being given one as a present unasked for, making one, or having one at one’s disposition anyway (the instrument is ‘being there’ – an interesting phenomenon, sometimes instruments are literally artifacts in the sense that they are more ‘things’ than ‘playable things’ and have to be transferred into playability).

I11: *“Everybody had an organ at home. So yes, he [the father] would be a strange man if he did not have such a thing at home, that’s the reason. But my other uncle had nothing with religion. So he said: ‘I think I still have such a thing standing somewhere. Take that thing with you.’”*⁷²

I2: *“I have been a member of the Dutch Pipers Guild⁷³ and I made a bass, a tenor, an alto and a soprano recorder. And those recorders, I was really crazy about them.”*⁷⁴

EBB: *“You have a guitar here. (...) What do you play on it?”*

I16: *“Nothing (laughs). I just strum it. (...) I think it is as out of tune as can be, I don’t know how to tune it too. It is just a thing in the home.”*⁷⁵

⁶⁸ “De muzikale ontwikkeling voor de rest is eigenlijk een beetje matig want we hadden dus keurig pianoles maar we hebben daar eigenlijk nooit zo ontzettend veel van gebakken”.

⁶⁹ “Bij mij is het zo verlopen dat ik op mijn zevende begon, met klarinet spelen (...), en dat had te maken met dat mijn vader in de harmonievereniging zat, plus nog een paar neven, plus een buurjongen, en zijn vader ook.”

⁷⁰ “Toen ‘mocht’ ik een instrument kiezen, mooi niet; er was een instrument dus daar ben ik verder mee gegaan. Ik heb het gebracht tot tweede violist.”

⁷¹ ‘Desire’ may, however, not always be the right word. When formal music lessons are taken interviewees sometimes talk about playing the instrument as an obligation: having to learn to play but not really wanting it, or actually rather wanting to learn to play something else.

⁷² “Iedereen had ook een orgel in huis. Dus ja dan was hij een rare man als hij niet zo'n ding in huis had, dus zodoende. Maar mijn andere oom had helemaal niets met geloof. Dus die zei: ‘Ik geloof dat ik nog zo'n ding heb staan. Neem mee dat ding.’”

⁷³ Dutch society for the playing of self-made bamboo recorders.

⁷⁴ “Ik ben bij het Pijpersgilde geweest, en daar heb ik een bas- een tenor- een alt- en een sopraanfluit gemaakt. En die fluiten, daar was ik ontzettend gek op.”

⁷⁵ EBB: “Je hebt een gitaar staan. (...) Wat speel je er op?”

I16: “Niets (lacht). Ik tokkel er gewoon op. (...) Volgens mij is hij zo vals als wat, ik weet ook niet hoe je hem moet stemmen. Het is gewoon een ding dat thuis is.”

All those varieties of possessing an instrument may lead to *playing* (or not playing) an instrument, which leads to a number of possible specific *relationships* with the instrument: using it, keeping it unused, or entering into forms of exchange behavior, such as swapping it or giving it away⁷⁶:

I9: *“It [the organ] stood there for a couple of years, and then we moved house, and then I handed it to my father-in-law. (...) And he had a welding apparatus and no room for that, so I got the welder from him and he got the electronic organ from me [laughs].”*⁷⁷

I2: *“I gave my violin away to a street musician (...) and he has been earning a living with it for 20 years. I am very proud: my violin ended up in the right place and I was rid of it.”*⁷⁸

6.5 Immaterial resources

In the interviews, interviewees mentioned various immaterial resources – means that helped (or sometimes hindered) them in their uses of music in everyday life. In this section I focus on the immaterial resources as mentioned by the interviewees, as shown in the following, again not exhaustive, alphabetical list (see table 4, next page):

Age	Genes	Perseverance
Body	Know how	Self-image
Class	Knowledge	Status
Convictions	Law	Surroundings
Curiosity	Money ⁷⁹	Talent
Faith	Motivation	Time
Feeling for music	Obligations	Tradition
General personality		

Table 4: Immaterial resources mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

A way to order these immaterial resources, based on the stories of the interviewees, is the following. There are three sorts of immaterial resources: personal resources, social resources and conditional resources. Central in the interviewees’ stories are a set of personal resources: immaterial resources seen as tied intrinsically to the individual. The interviewee ‘possesses’ certain resources, and their influence varies over the life span of the interviewee. Basically there are three sorts of these personal resources:

⁷⁶ The obvious form to get rid of an instrument: selling it, was – although I suspect instances were present in the biographies of the interviewees – remarkably enough not mentioned in the interviews.

⁷⁷ “Het [orgel] heeft er een paar jaar gestaan, en toen gingen we verhuizen, en toen heb ik hem aan mijn schoonvader overgedaan. (...) En hij had een lastoestel en had er geen ruimte voor, toen heb ik van hem dat lastoestel gekregen en hij heeft van mij het elektronisch orgel gekregen [lacht].”

⁷⁸ “Ik heb mijn viool weggegeven aan een straatspeler (...) en die verdient al 20 jaar zijn kost ermee. Ja, ik ben heel trots: mijn viool is goed terechtgekomen en ik was er vanaf.”

⁷⁹ I am aware that money – Euro coins, for example – may seem rather material; however, money, especially in the digital era, has acquired a rather virtual existence, and as it is its symbolic value that gives it its power in exchange situations I consider it to be an immaterial resource here.

- physical resources: the body (including the ears as used for listening and the voice as used for singing), the genes:
 EBB: *“And now? You will go on until you drop dead?”*
 I29: *“Yes. I am completely healthy. Look, if at some point you get all sorts of ailments, something that happens frequently at my age (...), then maybe it will stop.”*⁸⁰
- psychological resources: convictions, curiosity, faith⁸¹, feeling for music, the general personality, motivation, perseverance, self-image, talent:
 I25: *“I was very shy but through creativity I discovered a language, in music and acting I discovered a language which I did not have as a person that much.”*⁸²
 I8: *“I have never been very enthusiastic about [organ playing]. Often I am a bit like, the moment I know the basics I quit rather quickly and it’s alright with me. I know I can do it and I don’t have to specialize in it.”*⁸³
- cognitive resources: knowledge and know how:
 I28: *“Then you learn for example how the blues originated, (...) you simply learn all kinds of things, so that was actually also my interest a little bit, how everything originated until how things are know. (...) That actually is what really stuck in my memory, how the development of the music evolved.”*⁸⁴

Sources of knowledge and know how are experience, other individuals, or books and music magazines for example. In the stories the interviewees told, it often is important that knowledge and know how are offered ‘just in time’ – offering them at the wrong moment can lead to demotivation, as was demonstrated regularly in stories about more formal music education.

A second set of immaterial resources are what I term ‘social resources’: resources acting on the interviewees as influencers – more directly social (class, obligations, status, surroundings, tradition) as well as more general societal (law).

I21: *“She [partner] had to return to Groningen. Yes, I did not know it at first, I had been there only once, but I thought, wow, a nice town. There also were these*

⁸⁰ EBB: “En nu? Je gaat door tot je er bij neervalt?”

I29: “Ja. Ik ben hartstikke gezond. Kijk als je op een gegeven moment allerlei kwaaltjes krijgt, wat toch vrij veel al voorkomt op mijn leeftijd (...), dan houdt het misschien wel op. (...)”

⁸¹ In the religious sense.

⁸² “Ik was erg verlegen maar in de creativiteit ontdekte ik een taal, in muziek en spel ontdekte ik een taal die ik als persoon niet zo had.”

⁸³ “Ik ben er nooit echt heel fanatiek in geweest. Ik ben vaak een beetje van, op het moment dat ik de basis kan dan haak ik al snel af en dan vind ik het wel prima. Dan weet ik dat ik het kan en ik hoef me er niet verder in te specialiseren.”

⁸⁴ “Dan leer je bijvoorbeeld hoe de blues is ontstaan, (...) je leert gewoon van alles, dus dat was eigenlijk ook wel een beetje mijn interesse, van hoe alles is ontstaan tot hoe het nu is. (...) Dat is eigenlijk wat me heel erg is bijgebleven, hoe de ontwikkeling is [verlopen] van de muziek.”

Africans from Mali (...), then I took lessons with them. (...) I started with djembe.”⁸⁵

I9: *“In our surroundings we were an exception. I can’t imagine that any of the people I worked with went to an operetta.*”⁸⁶

A third set of immaterial resources are conditional resources which function for the interviewees as important ‘enablers’ – time and money. Lack of one or both of them can be a serious constraint on musical development.

I28: *“My cousin does play an instrument, guitar, and through him I was actually moved a bit to do that too, I was 15 years old then. But I never had the time, always other things.*”⁸⁷

I10: *“I must honestly confess, I think it has all become rather high-priced. If you go to a concert with two people it costs you 150 Euros, if not more. I think that simply is a lot of money.*”⁸⁸

The three sets of resources are ordered visually in figure 4 (next page).

⁸⁵ “Zij [partner] moest naar Groningen terugkomen. Ja, ik wist het eerst niet, ik was er één keer geweest, maar ik vond, wauw, een leuke stad. Daar waren ook die Afrikanen, uit Mali, (...) dan heb ik les genomen van ze. (...) Ik begon met djembe.”

⁸⁶ “In onze omgeving waren wij daar een uitzondering in. Ik kan mij niet voorstellen dat iemand van de mensen waar ik mee werkte, dat die naar operette ging.”

⁸⁷ “Mijn neef bespeelt wel een instrument, gitaar, en door hem ben ik eigenlijk een beetje geraakt om het ook te gaan doen, dat was op mijn vijftiende. Maar ik had er nooit tijd voor, altijd andere dingen.”

⁸⁸ “Ik moet eerlijk bekennen, ik vind het allemaal wel vrij prijzig geworden. Als je met twee man naar een concert gaat ben je 150 euro kwijt, als het niet meer is. Ik vind het gewoon heel veel geld.”

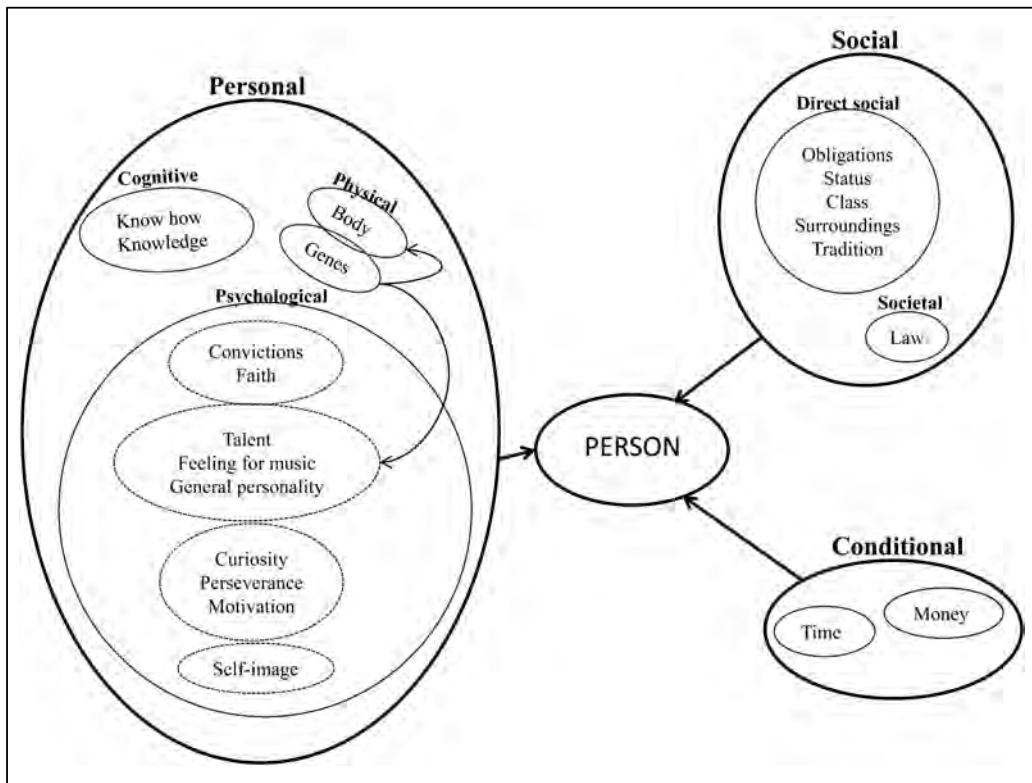


Fig. 4 Immaterial resources mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

There seems to be an implicit continuum ‘acquired – inherent’ at work in the interviewees’ stories on personal resources. Acquired resources are for example the cognitive resources (knowledge and know how) or the more socially determined psychological resources such as faith and convictions. Inherent resources are the body, but also such psychological resources as talent, feeling for music, and general personality. When it comes to inherent resources, occasionally a link is made to ‘genes’, a resource that then seems to lie at the bottom of all personal resources and is mentioned as a possible important influence on the person’s perceived musicality:

I15: *“My father comes from a very Jewish family so I always had the feeling that there was a lot of music in that family. That my grandmother also played the violin, so that music (...) was an important part of the upbringing and of the daily instruction. And (...) I also found that with the musicians that perform now, that (...) often it turns out that they have Jewish blood. So I’m interested in that, I find.”*⁸⁹

⁸⁹ “Mijn vader komt uit een hele Joodse familie dus ik heb altijd het gevoel gehad dat daar heel veel muziek in die familie (...) zat. Dat mijn grootmoeder ook viool speelde, dus dat daar muziek (...) toch wel een belangrijk onderdeel van de opvoeding en van de dagelijkse uitrusting was. En (...) aan de musici die nu optreden, merk ik ook vaak dat (...) dan ook weel vaak naar buiten komt dat ze Joods bloed hebben. Dus daar ben ik wel in geïnteresseerd merk ik.”

6.6 Place

The following not-exhaustive alphabetical list of codes refers to places which play a musical role in the stories of the interviewees (see table 5):

Attic	(Private) music schools ⁹¹	Primary school
Bike	Higher education	Public transport
Car	Holiday	Record shop
Church	Home	Region
Concert venues	Kitchen	Scene
Conservatoire	Library	Secondary school
Contest	Living room	Shop
Dance clubs	Music listening club	Work
Ethnic club ⁹⁰	Neighborhood	Work room ⁹²
Festivals	Parties	Youth clubs

Table 5: Places mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

The central place in many of the interviewees' stories is 'home' – and specifically the living room (where music is heard and often played), other places such as the kitchen, the work room or the bedroom and to a lesser extent the attic (where music may be stored are mentioned:

I5: *“Not much mediated music was played (...) but my father often rehearsed at our home with his trio or with a pianist with whom he played, and I still can remember that very well.”*⁹³

I6: *“My very first experience with music (...). I wouldn't know that, apart from the fact that I do know that when I was about three years old we had one of those small radios in the kitchen and that we listened to the Beatles. (...) My parents always turned up the volume when they came on.”*⁹⁴

'Home' is a very important place and the base for development when the interviewees are young; often home slightly extends to the neighborhood and/or the region. As interviewees get older and gain more independence, home becomes the place for independent musical action, for choosing, for bonding through music et cetera. Places outside home may be categorized under several headings:

- 'on the move': the car (very often mentioned), public transport and bike (listening privately over the headphones), holiday:

EBB: *“And the radio, is that on sometimes?”*

⁹⁰ E.g. a society for people of Javanese-Surinamese descent.

⁹¹ Public or private practices for formal instrumental/vocal tuition.

⁹² A room in a private house dedicated to work.

⁹³ “Er werd niet veel muziek gedraaid (...) maar mijn vader repeteerde vaak bij ons thuis met zijn trio of met een pianist waarmee hij speelde, en dat kan ik me wel heel erg herinneren nog.”

⁹⁴ “Mijn allereerste kennismaking met muziek (...). Dat zou ik (...) niet weten, behalve dat ik wel weet dat toen ik drie was of zo, dat we zo'n radiootje in de keuken hadden en dat we naar de Beatles luisterden. (...) Mijn ouders zetten altijd de radio harder als die er op kwamen.”

I16: “Radio? Car. (...) Then I sometimes hear music which I did not hear for some time. They play all kinds of different sorts of music there. (...)”

EBB: “(...) You also play CDs in the car, or not?”

I16: “Yes. (...) What I stored on my PC, thereof I just make a favorites [CD] for myself, and I then listen to it in the car.”⁹⁵

I20: “If we drive through that beautiful landscape [of Switzerland] and we see a fantastic panorama, we play ‘Jah Glory’ of Third World (...). Yes, for us that is great music, we can enjoy that so much as it were, it simply belongs to that [situation].”⁹⁶

- ‘away from home’: neighborhood, region, holiday:

I9: “Sissel is a Norwegian singer. We discovered her when we were in Norway with the camper. (...) Then we simply go to a music shop and talk with those people: ‘We would like a CD with Norwegian music (...) by a Norwegian artist, and when we make the movie [of the holiday.] we play that music as background.’”⁹⁷

- ‘searching for music’: music listening club, record shop, library:

I23: “Then I thought: ‘(...) I want to hear different music.’ So I asked around a bit at a record shop in Leeuwarden, they had all kinds of strange music there. (...) I picked up some names and currents. Then I thought: ‘I will try some jazz.’ I then ended up in the avant-garde jazz section, as it was called at the time, rather by accident. I liked that. I then immediately kicked aside pop and current new wave, I didn’t care for it.”⁹⁸

- ‘in the scene’: concert venues, dance clubs, festivals, contests:

I22: “In 1969 he [father] started in the Gelkingestraat, every day he played in the Gelkingestraat. (...) There were De Cascade, De Pijp [music

⁹⁵ EBB: “En de radio, heb je die wel aan staan?”

I16 “Radio? Auto. (...) Dan hoor ik nog wel eens muziek die ik al een tijdje niet meer heb gehoord. Daar draaien ze echt allerlei verschillende soorten muziek. (...)”

EBB: “(...) Draai je ook cd’s in de auto, of niet?”

I16: “Ja. (...) Wat ik op de PC heb, daar maak ik gewoon een favorieten [cd] voor mezelf van, en die luister ik dan in de auto.”

⁹⁶ “Als we dan door het prachtige landschap rijden en we zien een geweldig mooi vergezicht, dan draaien we ‘Jah Glory’ van Third World (...). Ja, dat is voor ons hele fijne muziek, daar kunnen we dan zo van genieten zeg maar, dan hoort dat daar gewoon bij.”

⁹⁷ “Sissel is een Noorse zangeres. Die hebben wij ontdekt op het moment dat wij met de camper in Noorwegen waren. (...) Dan gaan we gewoon dus daar de muziekwinkel in en dan gaan we gewoon met die mensen praten, van wij willen graag een cd waar Noorse muziek (...) op staat van een Noorse artiest, en als we dan de film [van de vakantie] maken zetten we die muziek er ook achter.”

⁹⁸ “Toen dacht ik van: ‘(...) Ik wil gewoon andere muziek horen.’ Dus toen heb ik eens wat rondgevraagd bij een platenzaakje in Leeuwarden, daar hadden ze ook allemaal hele gekke muziek (...). Ik heb wat namen opgepikt en wat stromingen. Toen dacht ik: ‘Ik ga gewoon eens wat jazz proberen.’ Toen belandde ik eigenlijk toevallig in de avant-gardistische jazzhoek, zoals dat toen heette. Dat vond ik mooi. Toen heb ik eigenlijk de popmuziek en de new wave die toen gemaakt werd direct aan de kant geschopt, ik vond het niks.”

cafes] and so on, it really was a music street, back then (...). I went along with him to De Pijp every now and then."⁹⁹

- 'organized sociability': work, church, ethnic club, youth club:

I27: *"Later, when I went along to church, there was a lot of singing too. What I really liked were for example special services, also when I was little. My father sometimes played on the trombone then. (...) A number of instruments were used then. I really thought that very beautiful."*¹⁰⁰

- 'at school': primary and secondary schools, higher education (of which conservatoires take a special place in the stories of professional musicians), and music schools:

I13: *"I liked that yes. (...) The other day I found one of those notebooks with songs again, and also with games with words. [Sings German song 'Tomatensalat'] (...) For children that was rather difficult to find the rhythm to put a different accent in that word every time. (...) Amazing that one still remembers, isn't it? I was about ten or eight years old. That is 40 years ago."*¹⁰¹

I26: *"At secondary school we had no music lessons. It was on offer though. There was 'Band': let's say, there were many people playing an instrument. (...) My sister (...) also played in the band. A lot of Aaron Copland, Orff."*¹⁰²

Often places are characterized implicitly by the interviewees as either 'places of freedom' where independent musical action takes place, or 'places of unfreedom' where musical actions under obligation take place. There are some places which may have either characteristic: places such as work, church, the ethnic club or the youth club may be filled with (musical) obligations or with possibilities for choice. This division does not refer to watertight compartments; a place of freedom for one interviewee may be a place of unfreedom for another, as the following quotes, both from professional musicians, show:

I6: *"In primary school we had a special music teacher. We really did a lot with him. We also wrote real pieces, we just composed music. (...) Real music lessons*

⁹⁹ "In 1969, toen is hij [vader] in de Gelkingestraat begonnen, elke dag speelde hij in de Gelkingestraat. (...) Daar had je De Cascade, De Pijp en zo, dat was echt een muziekstraat, vroeger (...). Ik ging ook wel eens mee naar De Pijp."

¹⁰⁰ "Later, toen ik meeging naar de kerk, werd er ook veel gezongen. Wat ik heel mooi vond was bijvoorbeeld speciale diensten, ook toen ik klein was. Mijn vader speelde dan ook wel met de trombone erbij. (...) Dan werden er meerdere instrumenten gebruikt, dat vond ik ook altijd heel mooi."

¹⁰¹ "Dat vond ik wel leuk ja. (...) Laatst vond ik zo'n schriftje terug met liedjes, en ook van die spelletjes met woorden. (...) Dat was voor kinderen best lastig om het ritme zo te vinden, om elke keer een ander accent in het woord te zetten. (...) Dat je dat nu nog weet, hè? Toen was ik ook een jaar of tien, acht. Dat is 40 jaar geleden."

¹⁰² "Op de middelbare school, daar hadden we geen muziekles. Het werd wel aangeboden. Je had 'Band', dus zeg maar: er waren mensen die een instrument speelden. (...) Mijn zus (...) speelde ook in de band. Heel veel van Aaron Copland, Orff."

at school. (...) We really made a lot of things, and played them. A lot more music than theory, as it were. That was very inspiring.”¹⁰³

123: “I really had a bad music education at school. We had to play one of those melodicas, I couldn’t do that at all. I thought it so difficult, one of those wind instruments: you had to read notes, blow, I couldn’t do it. I thought it was terrible.”¹⁰⁴

Places of unfreedom are often places like primary school, secondary school, higher education, ‘the music lesson’, or the conservatoire – places where people are in a way forced to experience music.¹⁰⁵ The freedom/unfreedom distinction connects to a distinction in places where informal respectively formal learning takes place to a certain degree, but again there is no complete overlap.¹⁰⁶

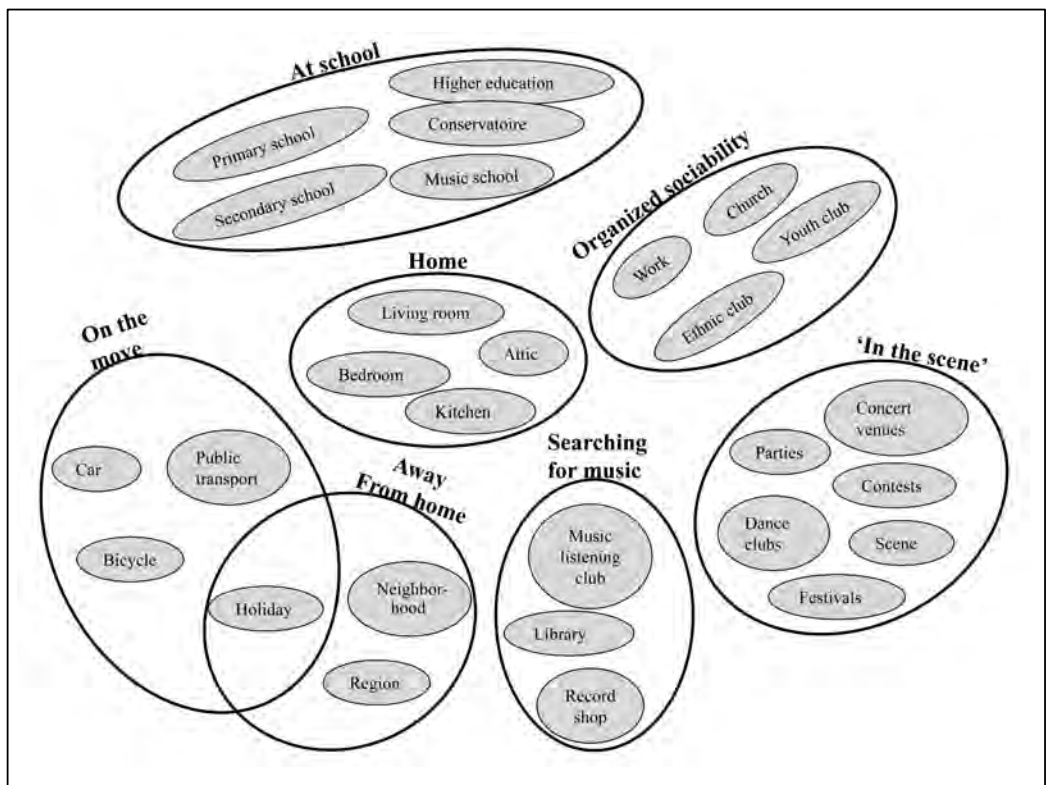


Fig. 5: Places mentioned in the interviews (not- exhaustive)

¹⁰³ “Op de basisschool hadden we een vakdocent muziek. Daar hebben we echt heel veel mee gedaan. Ook stukken geschreven, echt, gewoon gecomponeerd. (...) Echte muzikles op school. (...) Je ging veel meer dingen echt maken, en laten horen. Veel meer muziek dan theorie, zeg maar. Dat was wel heel erg inspirerend.”

¹⁰⁴ “Ik had heel slecht muziekonderwijs op school. Ik moest zo’n melodica spelen, dat kon ik helemaal niet. Dat vond ik zo moeilijk, zo’n blaasinstrument: dan moet je noten lezen, blazen, dat kon ik niet. Dat vond ik zo vreselijk.”

¹⁰⁵ Note that ‘places of unfreedom’ are so especially in childhood, and not for every child.

¹⁰⁶ For a further discussion of formal and informal learning in the stories of the first twenty of the interviewees, see Evert Bisschop Boele, ‘Leren musiceren als sociale praktijk.’ [‘Learning to play music as social practice.’] *Cultuur + Educatie* 30 (2011).

6.7 Period

Any social situation takes place at a specific time, and is embedded in a certain period. Those periods often are attributed certain specific characteristic by the interviewees. For example they refer to specific eras in which specific music was fashionable:

I8: *“We were at secondary school by then, then ‘happy hardcore’ became popular. (...) I don’t think I thought much of it, that music. But when I hear it now I think it’s fantastic.”*¹⁰⁷

Also references are made to generations, and perceived differences in personal musical behavior are sometimes explained in these terms:

I1: *“I am not from the iPod-generation yet, only singles and individual songs... I really can listen to a CD of about three quarters of an hour or something like that... I just like to listen to that, I really take the time for that.”*¹⁰⁸

6.8 Summary

Summarizing, music is used in musical social situations: any situation in which music plays – in any capacity – a certain role. Those musical social situations may be described as consisting of six elements: *persons* performing *behavior*, handling *things* and using *immaterial resources* at a specific *place* and in a specific *period*.

In the musical social situations of which the interviewees speak, a host of persons play a role. Starting with the interviewee himself, they might be ordered in a model of concentric circles: ego in the middle, then a circle with members in the core family, then a circle with extended family, friends and acquaintances, embedded in a circle with music-related face-to-face contacts, embedded again in a circle with not personally known but still musically influential persons for the interviewee. All these persons perform a wide range of musical behavior – ‘musicking’: they play CDs, visit concerts, play an instrument or sing, organize concerts, dance, keep a catalog of their music, build instruments, buy sheet music, give away a CD as a present. While doing that, they use all kinds of things – musical instruments, sheet music, books, computers, CD-players, CDs, et cetera; and they make use of immaterial resources: personal resources (physical, cognitive and psychological), social resources (for example status or tradition) as well as conditional resources such as time and money. All this musicking happens at various places: at home, but also away from home, while on the move (in the car for example), in places where they are searching for music and in music-centered places (‘the scene’), but also in organized social institutions such as work or church and in schools. And the period in which all this musicking takes place is an important contextual factor.

¹⁰⁷ “Toen waren we op de middelbare school, toen kwam die ‘happy hardcore’ in. (...) Volgens mij vond ik er toen niet heel veel aan, die muziek. Maar als ik het nu weer hoor dan vind ik het fantastisch.”

¹⁰⁸ “Ik ben nog niet van de iPod-generatie, dat je alleen singeltjes en losse nummers... Ik kan nog wel echt van een cd van drie kwartier of iets in die geest, dat vind ik gewoon leuk om naar te luisteren, daar ga ik nog even voor zitten.”

In the beginning of this chapter I described its content as a form of a consciously ‘thin’ description of the uses of music. In describing in some detail how the interviewees talk about the musical social situations which were of importance in their lives, I kept interpretation – apart from a couple of digressions which offered themselves in the interview material – to a minimum, refraining from theoretical explanation and offering categorizations of the various elements of the musical social situations which were mainly suggested in the interviews themselves. The next chapter will focus on the functions all the uses of music as described here have for the interviewees, and will have a more interpretive character. In the chapter thereafter, I will return to the uses and functions of music as described here and also in the following chapter, but I will then look at them from a more critical standpoint based on Reckwitz’ ideas of hegemonic subject cultures.

7. Functions of music: what music does with people

7.1 Introduction

I23: *“I was at a concert of the Sabri-brothers, a sufi band, in Grand Theatre. At a certain moment I saw the complete group rise up in the air in a purple-lilac glow. Yes, of course they don’t rise in the air, but I saw it nevertheless. It is apparently rather an experience, what is happening there. It is simply beautiful, it is fantastic; and you can also seek it out. If you listen very actively to music that comes really close to something like that, then... A matter of relaxation and doing it often and reading. And I have noticed too that meditating and yoga, which I practice with a certain regularity, also helps to listen in a more concentrated way.”*¹

I15: *“Often people are talking about music in a very nice way, about how it is performed, and of course we have many people at our music society who are very talented, who know an awful lot, who play at a high level, therefore you are all ears, then you hear things. I really love this. And especially at our music society, the people who come there really enjoy finding like-minded people.”*²

EBB: *“If you forget to take your CD with you in the car, [or] the car radio is broken, do you have a problem then?”*

I3: *“Yes, I think I would quickly look for another one. (...) It distracts. (...) It is especially nice for my work. (...) I have to be very much, I have to really keep a level head technically. But once I am with that customer, I have to switch off that technical button. And I have to explain it to those people in very simple and clear language. That is really hard.”*

EBB: *“So it simply is exacting work. And then in the car...”*

I3: *“Yes, exactly, divert myself.”*

EBB: *“And music comes in handy for that.”*

I3: *“Music comes in handy then, yes.”*³

¹“Ik was bij de Sabri-brothers, dat is een sufi-band, in het Grand Theatre. Ik zag op een bepaald moment de hele groep in een paars-lila gloed opstijgen. Ja, natuurlijk stijgen ze niet op, maar ik zag dat wel. Het is kennelijk toch een ervaring, wat [daar] gebeurt. Het is gewoon prachtig, het is geweldig; en dat kun je ook wel wat opzoeken. Als je heel actief muziek luistert die heel dicht in de buurt komt van zoiets, dan...

Kwestie van ook ontspannen en vaak doen en lezen. En ik heb ook wel gemerkt dat mediteren en yoga, wat ik met een bepaalde regelmaat doe, ook wel weer helpt om nog weer geconcentreerder te luisteren.”

²“Er wordt vaak heel leuk over muziek gepraat, over de manier van uitvoering, en we hebben natuurlijk heel veel mensen bij [onze muziekvereniging] die talentvol zijn, die heel veel weten, die zelf ook heel goed muziek maken, dus dan heb je je oren open, dan hoor je dingen. Vind ik heel leuk. En juist bij [onze muziekvereniging] vinden de mensen die daar komen het heel leuk dat ze soortgenoten vinden.”

³ EBB: “Als je nou je cd in de auto vergeet en de autoradio is stuk heb je dan een probleem?”

I3: “Ja, dat denk ik wel ik denk dat ik dan gewoon hard weer voor een ander heen ga. (...) Het leidt af. (...) Vooral ook voor mijn werk is het prettig. (...) Ik moet hier heel erg, met mijn kop moet ik er technisch erg bij zijn. Maar op het moment dat ik bij die klant ben dan moet ik mijn technische knop uitzetten En moet ik (...) die mensen dat uitleggen naar hele makkelijke klinkklare taal. Dat is best wel moeilijk.”

Those three quotes from the interviews taken for this study convey, each in its own way, first glimpses of what music does for people when they use it in the musical social situations as explored in the previous chapter. For I23, listening to Indian classical music is in some situations a literally ‘uplifting’ experience, an experience he actively seeks out and tries to foster. I15 talks about fellow concert visitors who meet like-minded people through music. And I3 uses music actively to divert his thoughts in between customers.

In each of those cases, music is used to serve specific functions; there is a reason for using music, people are using music *for* something. In this chapter, I will focus on the way individuals talk about the functions music serves in their daily life. I will focus on consecutively three overarching functions music has for the interviewees. Those functions, derived from a detailed analysis of the interviews, are: the affirmation of the self (section 7.2), the connection of the self to the ‘not-self’ (section 7.3), and the regulation of the self (section 7.4). The chapter will close with some concluding remarks.

7.2 The musical self – music and the affirmation of the self

I17: *“As long as it doesn’t touch me, I can do nothing with it.”*⁴

7.2.1 Introduction: liking music

I begin this description of the functions of music by referring to what I consider to be the basis for any function music fulfills in the life of my interviewees. In nearly all of the interviewees’ stories, music plays a (sometimes big, sometimes smaller, occasionally very small) role. The interviewees use music in musical social situations, and music fulfills different functions on that basis. However, the focus of the interviewees’ talk about music is not so much the uses or the functions of music. It is the fact that they like music.

For the interviewees, liking music seems to lie at the basis of using music for certain purposes. That can be illustrated by the amount of unsolicited talk in which the interviewees state which music they like and don’t like⁵:

I16: *“If I hear them [Doe Maar⁶] and I am in the car, I always turn up the volume a bit.”*⁷

I20: *“What I don’t appreciate too much is Dutch ‘hoompa-music’ and those kind of things. I am not too crazy about ‘pirates-music’⁸, it doesn’t mean anything to me. (...) I did try it but it did not appeal to me.”*⁹

EBB: “Het is dus gewoon inspannend werk. En dan in de auto even...”

I3: “Ja, precies, de kop verzetten.”

EBB: “En daar is muziek wel handig voor.”

I3: “Dan is muziek wel handig, ja.”

⁴ “Zolang het mij niets doet kan ik er niets mee.”

⁵ The code used in the analysis of the interviews referring to all this talk about ‘liking’ music was the code which referred to the most quotations of all codes used in the analysis.

⁶ Dutch-language ska-/reggae band, very popular in the 1980s.

⁷ “Als ik die [Doe Maar] hoor en ik zit in de auto, dan gaat het volumeknopje altijd even wat harder.”

They talk about loving certain specific pieces, or specific genres of music, or specific musicians:

I19: *“Unfinished Symphony”¹⁰. That is one of my all-time classics.”¹¹*

I4: *“I have a clear preference for soul and for gospel, the Oslo Gospel Choir for example.”¹²*

I26: *“At that time I got addicted to Weird Al Yankovic, who... I still feel like his biggest fan, sometimes.”¹³*

They talk about finding certain music beautiful, and other music ugly:

I22: *“I also have all records from André Hazes¹⁴. (...) I sing a couple of those songs myself. (...) I think it is so beautiful.”¹⁵*

I4: *“They also had quite a lot of old seventies music; absolutely not my thing. (...) Really awful.”¹⁶*

And they talk about ‘my music’, sometimes as opposed to ‘their music’:

I3: *“Listening to my own stereo set. My music.”¹⁷*

I18: *“It was probably also because it was different from what everybody else listened to. Everybody of course listened to pop music and Elvis Presley, that was rather common back then. Of course we wanted something else, that was jazz.”¹⁸*

7.2.2 At the core: being touched by music

People like music for many reasons. Central, however, is the idea that you like music because it ‘does’ something to you. Interviewees all talk, explicitly in 17 of the 30 interviews and implicitly in nearly all of the others, about music¹⁹ relating to the self –

⁸ ‘Hoompa-music’ and ‘pirates-music’ are terms referring to Dutch-language, schlager-like music in which sometimes ‘German bands’ (small brass orchestras) play an important role. This music is played a lot by illegal radio broadcast stations, so-called ‘(ether) pirates’.

⁹ “Waar ik niet van houd is Hollandse hoempa en dat soort dingen. Ik ben niet zo gek van piratenmuziek en zo, het zegt me niks. (...) Ik heb het wel geprobeerd maar het sprak me niet aan.”

¹⁰ Song by Massive Attack.

¹¹ “Unfinished Symphony. Dat is toch één van mijn klassiekers.”

¹² “Ik heb wel een duidelijke voorkeur voor soul en voor gospel, het Oslo Gospel Choir bijvoorbeeld.”

¹³ “In die tijd raakte ik verslaafd aan Weird Al Yankovic, die... nog steeds voel ik me als zijn grootste fan, soms.”

¹⁴ Famous singer of Dutch-language schlager music.

¹⁵ “Ik heb ook alle cd’s van André Hazes. (...) Ik zing er zelf ook een paar liedjes van. (...) Ik [vind] dat zo mooi.”

¹⁶ “Die hadden ook vrij veel van die oude jaren ‘70 [muziek]; dat was helemaal niet mijn ding. (...) Echt verschrikkelijk.”

¹⁷ “Mijn eigen stereo luisteren. Mijn muziek.”

¹⁸ “Het zat er denk ik ook wel in dat het anders was dan waar iedereen naar luisterde. Iedereen luisterde natuurlijk naar popmuziek en Elvis Presley, dat was in die tijd nogal gebruikelijk. Wij wilden natuurlijk iets anders, dat werd die jazzmuziek.”

¹⁹ I take music here, as in the whole of my dissertation, as a broad term; not only the sound of music speaks to the interviewees, also for example the lyrics of songs or the fact that a certain musician performs music may do so. Two interesting manners in which music speaks to the interviewees are ‘liking by proxy’ and ‘liking in retrospect’. ‘Liking by proxy’ is liking music (deeply, intensely) not because the music speaks to the interviewee, but because the music speaks so intensely to other individuals that the interviewee for that

music ‘speaks to the self’ or ‘touches the self’. I use the word ‘self’ here in the Meadian sense of “that which can be an object to itself” and is essentially social in character²⁰. A good circumscription is the one given by Deschênes: the self is “an identity nexus, a psychological center (...) which gives us a sense of continuity and wholeness, a ground from which one’s interpretation and (re) negotiation starts, and to which one returns. And it is that sense of self which also holds coherently together what might seem, at times, disparate identities. (...) [I]t is about one’s place within society and other’s recognition of it.”²¹

Sometimes interviewees describe the fact that music touches the self on a rather general level, as in the first quote below, sometimes their stories are connected to a specific genre of music or an instrument, or sometimes to specific moments in time. In those stories music often becomes a thing (music ‘materializes’) and takes an active role (music ‘works’), as the following quotes, and specifically the underlined passages, show:

I30: *“When I experience grief, or joy, then I play music. And then it is the case that some songs move you, or belong to you, yes, you can find your refuge in them.”*²²

I7: *“When I heard bagpipes I became completely emotional, then I could cry. But I did not know where it came from. (...) We had a record for the kids, (...) that was some kind of marching music and sometimes a bagpipe. That was my first contact with Irish music. (...) It touched a nerve in my soul which caused emotions to come up, sadness, homesickness, but also recognition. Especially with bagpipes. Today I have the same thing with those Irish flutes which produce a kind of melancholy sound, with these I can almost remember that I have lived in Ireland in an earlier life. (...) I only have this with Irish music, that it runs so deep. (...) It is a kind of homecoming. (...) It simply is my music above all other music.”*²³

reason appreciates the music (see section 7.3.3). ‘Liking in retrospect’ is connected to fond memories – in many music collections for example one finds ‘odd one out’-CDs or -LPs which are there because the music speaks to the interviewee because it is attached to emotionally powerful situations in the past.

²⁰ Mead, 1934, p. 140.

²¹ Bruno Deschênes, ‘The Interest of Westerners in Non-Western Music.’ *The World Of Music* 47/3 (2005), pp. 10-11. A recent useful discussion of the self from a phenomenological standpoint and related to music is to be found in Harris M. Berger, ‘Horizons of Melody and the Problem of the Self.’ In: Berger & Del Negro, 2004.

²² “Als ik leed heb, of vreugde heb, dan draai je toch wel weer muziek. En dan is het toch wel weer [bij] sommige liedjes dat dat je aangrijpt of bij je past, ja, waar je toch wel je toevluchtsoord in kan vinden.”

²³ “Als ik doedelzakken hoorde dan werd ik helemaal emotioneel, dan kon ik wel huilen. Maar ik wist niet waar het vandaan kwam. (...) We hadden een plaat voor de kinderen, (...) dat was marsmuziek en daar kwam soms ook doedelzak in voor. En dat was mijn eerste aanraking met Ierse muziek. (...) Het raakte een snaar in mijn ziel waardoor emoties naar boven kwamen, verdriet, heimwee, maar ook herkenning. Dat was vooral met doedelzakken. Dat heb ik nu met die Ierse fluiten die een soort melancholisch geluid teweegbrengen, waarbij ik me bijna kan herinneren dat ik ooit in een vorig leven in Ierland heb gewoond. (...) Dat heb ik alleen maar met Ierse muziek, dat het zo diep gaat. (...) Het is een soort thuiskomen. (...) Dat is mijn muziek gewoon, boven alle andere muziek.”

I13: “A very emotional moment was when a friend of my mother, a Hungarian woman, at a certain moment came to sing a song with piano accompaniment. (...) I was moved to tears, I thought: ‘This is so beautiful.’ Well, you did not think that, you simply felt it. [silence] I then realized how impressive the voice is.”²⁴

By becoming a thing at work in the interviewees’ stories, music leads to – sometimes strong – effects with the interviewees (see the underlined passages in the next quotes; and for more examples section 7.4):

I23: “One night, we had a place to stay for the night and we were hopelessly lost (...) and then we ended up in a neighborhood where also many students lived, and apparently also people with a non-Dutch cultural background. We walked past a house and there was a party going on. A soul-band was played [on the stereo], but I did not know it was soul, I simply did not know it. I stood outside, I got goose bumps from the crown of my head to my bottom down to my heels...”²⁵

I21: “It took place in a bar, a band was playing. A man with a white conga was playing there. Wow! I said: ‘What is that?’ [laughs] ‘What is that?’ I fell in love immediately, at once.”²⁶

As can be seen in the quotes above, the phenomenon that music relates to the self is often expressed in metaphors. Maybe because the self being touched is deemed immaterial just as the sound of music is, not only does music become a thing; also the self materializes, often in metaphors where the self is localized in the body in general or in specific places of the body²⁷:

I6: “It isn’t about me having to hear as many things as possible, for me it all really is all about things that touch me.”²⁸

I2: “Aaffe Heynis for example, she sings so flawlessly, yes, that touches my heart. I can listen to that but I have to concentrate on it. I could not bear it²⁹ as background music. I would crack open.”³⁰

²⁴ “Een heel emotioneel moment was toen een vriendin van mijn moeder, een Hongaarse, die kwam op een gegeven moment een liedje zingen met piano, (...) toen schoot ik helemaal vol, van: ‘Wat is dit mooi.’ Ja, dat dacht je niet, dat voelde je gewoon. [stilte] Toen besepte ik hoe indrukwekkend de stem is.”

²⁵ “Op een nacht, we hadden een logeeraadresje en we waren hopeloos verdwaald, (...) en toen belandden wij in een buurt waar ook heel veel studenten woonden, en kennelijk ook mensen met een andere dan Nederlandse culturele achtergrond. We liepen langs een huis en daar was een feest. Er stond een soul-band op, maar ik wist niet dat dat soul was, dat wist ik gewoon niet. Ik stond buiten, ik kreeg kippenvel van de kruin op mijn hoofd tot achter op de kont tot op mijn hakken...”

²⁶ “Het was in een bar, daar speelde een band. Een man met zo’n witte conga speelde er. Wow! Ik zei: ‘Wat is dat?’ [lacht] ‘Wat is dat?’ Ik ben meteen verliefd geworden, in één keer.”

²⁷ See also Berger, 2004, pp. 71-79, where he discusses the perception of the location of the self in the body from a phenomenological perspective.

²⁸ “Het gaat me er niet om dat ik zoveel mogelijk dingen hoor, maar het gaat me echt om dingen die mij raken.”

²⁹ ‘Bearing it’ may be interpreted as yet another metaphor which materializes music as a thing to be carried by the body.

Some other examples of metaphors used in the interviews, apart from ‘touching’, are presented in table 6:

entering	being captivated	being moved
making an impression	being caught	being overwhelmed
touching a string	being drawn to music	catching music
touching the heartstrings	being/going into music	listening with my heart
filling me	having the music inside	and my cells
feeling it	having my heart	getting goosebumps ³¹
making the self vibrate	being attached to me	

Table 6: Metaphors used for 'touching' in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

This phenomenon of music relating to the self in essence seems to be an inexplicable phenomenon. It happens, as the quotes above and many other stories from the interviewees show; but why it happens is hard to explain for the interviewees, and very often they communicate that explicitly, as is the case of I7 above explaining the importance of Irish music, saying: “I did not know where it came from”. Two more examples of the explicit mention of the inexplicability of the speaking of music to the self:

I1: *“So I cannot give the golden clue like, well, if I like that then I will also... Sometimes I totally can not explain why I am crazy about one artist in a genre while an artist of who other people say: ‘Well, he makes exactly the same music’, I think nothing of is rubbish.”*³²

I29: *“In the beginning I had that too, you know. You heard an intro from such a Fats Domino-song, (...) and boy that swings, that runs well, yes I can’t explain it very well, how that comes about. (...) Certain music really touches you.”*³³

Some of the interviewees, however, try to give explanations of the unexplainable, most of them *ex post facto*: looking back on those experiences where music related to the self they acknowledge that whenever that happened it was mostly such-and-such music, or in such-and-such situations:

I2: *“There are always those old loves one continuously... Nina Simone, Mahalia Jackson. I simply love certain deep voices, it makes me peaceful.”*³⁴

³⁰ “Aafje Heynis bijvoorbeeld, die zingt zo bloedzuiver, ja, dat raakt mijn hart. Daar kan ik naar luisteren, maar dan moet ik er voor gaan zitten. Die zou ik nooit als achtergrond kunnen verdragen. Ik zou uit elkaar klappen.”

³¹ Can be used as a metaphor as well as a factual description.

³² “Ik kan dus niet een gouden aanwijzing aanwijzen van, nou ja, als ik dat leuk vind dan vind ik dat ook wel... Ik kan soms totaal niet uitleggen waarom ik één artiest in een genre helemaal te gek vind en een artiest waarvan andere mensen zeggen van: ‘Nou, die maakt exact dezelfde muziek’, dat vind ik dan niks.”

³³ “Dat had ik in het begin ook, weet je wel. Dan hoorde je zo’n intro van zo’n Fats Domino-nummer, (...) en dat swingt jongen, dat loopt, ja ik kan het niet goed verklaren hoor, waar dat nou in zit. (...) Bepaalde muziek dat raakt je echt.”

³⁴ “Je hebt toch ook altijd weer, ja, ouwe liefdes die ik steeds... Nina Simone, Mahalia Jackson. Ik hou gewoon van bepaalde diepe stemmen, daar word ik rustig van.”

I1: “*Hip hop I often find too stripped down. The hallmark actually, right from Hotel California³⁵ and Hysteria³⁶, is: it has to be wall-to-wall, that is the hallmark of both those CDs. It is also the hallmark of classical symphonies; it is the hallmark of metal too, that is wall-to-wall too, it is always two guitars and a bass and a heap of keyboards and sometimes complete string orchestras, all the stops are pulled.*”³⁷

But knowing this is no guarantee that the same will happen in the future, as I1 expresses above – it is not controllable, the effect (or maybe I should use the word ‘affect’ here) cannot be commanded; it just happens.³⁸

7.2.3 From the core: choosing music, judging music

On the basis of the fact that music ‘touches’ them, interviewees in nearly all cases maintain an active relationship with music – they are actively musicking. Because they like certain music (see the quotes in 7.2.2), they choose to make, listen to, collect or buy certain music rather than other music, to engage musically with some people rather than other, et cetera. This relationship is not equally active for all persons: two of my interviewees said that music plays only a limited role in their lives, one of them expressing that she probably could do without music³⁹:

EBB: “*Could you do without?*”

I14: “*Ehm, maybe without music, but I need to have some sounds around me.*”⁴⁰

For most of the interviewees, however, musicking is active behavior: you choose certain music because you like it, and you dislike other music; and you may have a neutral stance to some – or much – music.

Choosing music is sometimes rationalized in terms of *ex post facto* explanatory remarks referring to perceived regularities in the inexplicable phenomenon of liking music, as shown above in section 7.2.2. More often, however, choosing is not rationalized in terms of liking but in terms of judging. Whereas liking music is connected directly to how music speaks to the self, with liking or disliking music, with (in extraordinary cases)

³⁵ LP by the Eagles.

³⁶ LP by Def Leppard.

³⁷ “Hiphop vind ik vaak te kaal. Het kenmerk eigenlijk vanaf Hotel California en Hysteria is: het moet kamerbreed zijn hè, dat is dat is het kenmerk van die beide cd's. Het is ook het kenmerk van klassieke symfonieën; dat is ook het kenmerk van metal, dat is ook kamerbreed, dat zijn ook altijd minstens twee gitaren een bas en een berg keyboards en soms complete strijkorkesten erbij, alles wordt uit de kast getrokken.”

³⁸ See for more on the (in)explicability of the basis of musicking the description of the dichotomy liking-judging in section 7.2.3.

³⁹ I asked one of them explicitly for the interview because he was rumored to be a ‘music hater’. It turned out, though, that although music did not play a big role in his life, it *did* play a meaningful role occasionally. In order to include an interviewee in this study for whom music might be ‘useless’ as well as ‘function-less’, I tried to find an interviewee suffering from *amusia* (“[t]he inability to recognize musical tones or to reproduce them”, www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=19458, consulted January 25, 2013) living in the province of Groningen. Although I asked around in various circles and also posted on websites for the auditory impaired, the search regrettably had no result.

⁴⁰ EBB: “Zou u zonder kunnen?”

I14: “Eh, zonder muziek misschien wel, maar ik moet wel wat om me heen hebben.”

falling in love with a certain music, judging music is not so much connected with liking or disliking music, but with approving music; with finding music good or not good, often in terms of the dichotomy interesting - uninteresting.

I5: *“I think: there is good music and bad music. Something good apparently survives, and that ranges from the Beatles to Bach, doesn’t matter.”*⁴¹

I17: *“Punk, I don’t have affinity with that really. I have really never listened to it. Yes, it was ‘interesting’, but actually I didn’t care for it at all.”*⁴²

Judging music is verbalizing rationalizations, and occasionally is juxtaposed explicitly with liking music:

I6: *“Those bad, off-key Christmas productions, I really liked that, great fun.”*⁴³

I29: *“It [André Rieu] is not my music really, but I do think it is very good what he does. It is rather commercial, but it is... He has a sense of humor, you know, it is rather good.”*⁴⁴

The question: “Do you listen with your head or with your heart”⁴⁵, as posed by interviewee I2 (who struggles with the intellectual approach to music in her classical upbringings and her own emotional connection to music; see section 8.3.3 for more detail) points towards this dichotomy.⁴⁶

Judging permeates nearly all interviews, and takes many different forms, often formulated in terms of internal (e.g. good – bad) or external (judging – liking) oppositions. In the first of the two last quotes above, an implicit relation to social norms, to the ‘oughts’ of the musical circle of the interviewee, can be caught a glimpse of through the words. This phenomenon is present in many of the interviews, and sometimes becomes very clear, specifically when interviewees who listen to or perform⁴⁷ classical music talk about their tastes:

⁴¹ “Ik denk: je hebt goede en slechte muziek. Iets wat goed blijft, dat overleeft dus blijikbaar, en dat is van de Beatles tot Bach, maakt niet uit.”

⁴² “Punk, [daar] heb ik niet echt wat mee. Daar heb ik eigenlijk nooit naar geluisterd. Ja, wel ‘interessant’, maar ik vond er eigenlijk geen reet aan.”

⁴³ “Van die slechte, foute Kerstproducties, dat vond ik hartstikke leuk, echt dikke pret.”

⁴⁴ “Het is mijn muziek niet helemaal, maar ik vind het wel heel erg goed wat die man doet. Het is wel heel commercieel, maar ‘t is wel... Hij heeft humor, weet je wel, toch wel goed hoor.”

⁴⁵ “Doe jij het [muziek luisteren] met je hoofd of met je hart?”

⁴⁶ Sometimes music is liked when played but not liked when listened to, as I5 demonstrates when discussing modern classical music: “It may be a difference that some things are nicer to play than to listen to, you can’t always separate that I think. Sometimes I have something which I quite like to play, I think then: ‘I am happy I do not have to listen to it, as it were, as an audience member’, that is possible. (...) I do not know what I think of as good modern music.” [“Het is soms wel een verschil dat sommige dingen leuker zijn om te spelen dan om te horen, dat kan je niet altijd scheiden vind ik. Soms heb ik wel iets dat ik dan best aardig vind om te spelen, dan denk ik: ‘Ik ben blij dat ik er niet naar hoef te luisteren, zeg maar, als publiek’, dat kan. (...) Ik weet niet wat ik goede muziek vind, moderne muziek.”]

⁴⁷ Interestingly there seems to be a connection between playing an instrument and the way the interviewees talk about music: the role of judging seems to become (even) more articulate. This may be explained by the fact that as soon as people start to learn to play an instrument, they start an open-ended mastering trajectory towards the instrument which ‘spills over’ into their talk about music in general. This may be connected to the idea that playing an instrument is very much considered as a craft, a specialism, something one cannot

16: *“I have [Elisabeth] Schwarzkopf with the ‘Letzte Lieder’⁴⁸, I have Jessye Norman with the ‘Letzte Lieder’. I think Schwarzkopf is more beautiful but (...) Jessye Norman touches me more, or something. It is common sentiment, but still [laughs] I don’t know. I am not sure yet which one I... suppose I would want to play it at my funeral, I can’t really work it out. It is a bit like civilization as opposed to (...)... I think it is going to be a struggle between the culture of the people and the elitist culture, a bit, bit... it is not that bad but it looks a bit like it.”⁴⁹*

In some cases, judging has the upper hand in the story of the interviewee, and liking becomes uninteresting; the real thing is judging. This is mainly the case with people working as a player in the classical genre:

I24: *“We play music by [...] Armin van Buuren⁵⁰. I really don’t understand what people hear in it in a way that they really can feel enthusiasm for it. It is the A-B-C of the alphabet and then it stops; even D-E-F does not follow (...). I really think that’s a pity, because I think that it can do an incredible lot with your whole world view and also your view on all kinds of other matters if you are trained to, if you have learned to understand complex structures. Learned to want to understand them, too. But if already you are happy with a very simple quadruple time with a melody consisting mainly of three repeating notes, if you become happy with that... Well... A pity. Sad. Pathetic, even.”⁵¹*

Choosing music has its own dynamics over the years. Some of the interviewees show a more ‘closed’ attitude towards choosing music, others a more ‘open’ attitude. In the

or should not learn independently; and something in which people, once they start it, want to become better all the time. Although many interviewees playing an instrument in reality learned to play the instrument without any formal tuition, in their stories about their learning this is often juxtaposed against the implicit norm of how learning to play is normally done, for example by trivializing their own competencies: “It doesn’t have any quality really, it is more like playing some chords, some scales in between, trying to keep in the rhythm as it were.” (I20; “Het heeft niet veel niveau hoor, het is meer van wat akkoordjes spelen, wat toonladders ertussen, proberen in het ritme te blijven zeg maar.”) For more on this, see section 8.3.2.

⁴⁸ Reference to the *4 letzte Lieder* by Richard Strauss.

⁴⁹ “Ik heb Schwarzkopf met de *Letzte Lieder*, ik heb Jessye Norman met de *Letzte Lieder*, ik vind Schwarzkopf mooier maar (...) Jessye Norman doet me meer of zo. Het is wel een beetje goedkoop sentiment maar toch, [lacht] ik weet het niet. Ik ben er nog niet uit welke ik – stel dat ik hem op mijn begrafenis zou willen draaien, welke ik zou willen draaien, ik kom er nog niet helemaal uit. Het is een beetje de beschaving tegenover (...)... Zo’n tweestrijd gaat dat volgens mij worden tussen de cultuur van het volk en de elitaire cultuur, een beetje, beetje, zo erg is het niet maar het heeft er wel wat van.” The last part of the quote may refer to Alessandro Barrico’s book ‘The Barbarians’, which at the time of interviewing elicited some debate in the Dutch media (Alessandro Barrico, *De barbaren*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2011).

⁵⁰ World famous Dutch dance/trance producer and DJ.

⁵¹ “We spelen muziek van (...) Armin van Buuren. Ik begrijp werkelijk niet wat mensen daar in horen zodanig dat ze daar ook echt warm voor lopen. Dat is Aap-Noot-Mies en dan houdt het op; zelfs Teun-Vuur-Gijs komt er niet achter aan (...). Dat vind ik echt heel jammer, want ik denk dat het ongelofelijk veel met je hele belevingswereld en je hele kijk op allerlei andere zaken ook kan doen als je gewoon getraind bent, geleerd hebt om complexe structuren te begrijpen. Te willen begrijpen ook. Maar als je alleen al blij wordt van een hele simpele vierkwartsmaat met een melodie die voornamelijk uit drie herhalende nootjes bestaat, als je daar al blij mee bent... Ja.... Jammer. Sneu. Zelig, zelfs.”

closed attitude, interviewees talk about their taste in music as something that is a natural result of their surroundings, a natural part of themselves, a sort of fixed identity:

I30: *“What I experienced in earlier days, also with my grandmother, I now pass that on to my daughter. (...) She [grandmother] also was completely into Dutch music: The Shorts, Corry Konings, she also had all kinds of Dutch [music] at home. It really runs in the family. I have a cousin (...), he has an illegal radio station. So Dutch really is in our genes. Apart from my brother who likes it a bit but not very much, for the rest everyone in our family is into Dutch music. [If I listen to] non-Dutch: Peter Maffay (...), Meatloaf, Creedence Clearwater Revival, UB40 (...). Very varied, yes. (...) As long as it sounds nice and as long as it is nice and cozy, songs that speak to you of course. Some songs speak to you in your life.”*⁵²

Development does take place within a closed attitude towards choosing music, but mainly on the basis of situational stimuli:

I10: *“Those boys jumped out of that car and then I heard music there. A couple of boys jumped into the pond, they wanted to flee from the police, and therefore the door was open. (...) I then heard that music. (...) That’s the way I was introduced to UB40. I had a pal back then, (...) and he thought that music was great too. That was the way you really started with UB40 back then. (...) If you think back, you think: ‘Yes, nice how that worked out, the way you got to another kind of music, from Dutch language to reggae all at once.’”*⁵³

Interviewees with a more open attitude are on the lookout for new experiences consciously, looking for more breadth, more depth – and therefore often judging music on its possibilities for liking it.

I27: *“I now mostly use the computer. YouTube. (...) And Facebook. (...) Also that you see music from other people, people whom you are friends with. And I don’t exclusively have Christian friends, I do look over church walls in that respect, and I do that deliberately. I have many contacts with people from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, (...), so that kind of music also comes to me. (...) That is beautiful.”*⁵⁴

⁵² “Wat ik vroeger dan zelf heb meegemaakt, ook met mijn oma, dat geef ik nou door aan mijn dochter. (...) Die [oma] was ook helemaal Nederlands: The Shorts, Corry Konings, die had ook van alles Nederlands in huis. Dat is echt in de familie. Ik heb dan ook nog een neef (...), die heeft een piratenzender. Dus Nederlands zit echt in onze genen. Alleen mijn broer houdt wel een beetje er van maar niet heel veel, maar voor de rest is alles in onze familie wel zo’n beetje Nederlands. Niet Nederlands: Peter Maffay (...), Meatloaf, Creedence Clearwater Revival, UB40 (...). Heel gevarieerd, ja. (...) Als het maar leuk klinkt en als het maar leuk gezellig is, nummers die je aanspreken natuurlijk. Sommige nummers spreken wel in je leven aan.”

⁵³ “Die jongens die sprongen uit die auto en toen hoorde ik daar muziek. Een paar jongens die sprongen de vijver in, die wouden vluchten voor de politie, en toen stond die deur dus open. (...) Toen hoorde ik de muziek. (...) Zo ben ik aan UB40 gekomen. Toen had ik een kameraad (...), en die vond die muziek ook geweldig. En zo ben je eigenlijk helemaal begonnen aan UB40 toentertijd. (...) Als je daar aan terug denkt dan denk je: ‘Ja, leuk hoe dat zo gelopen is, dat je zo aan een ander soort muziek komt, van Nederlands in een keer naar reggae.’”

⁵⁴ “Ik gebruik nu eigenlijk het meest de computer. YouTube. (...) En Facebook. (...) Ook dat je van anderen weer muziek ziet, mensen waar je vrienden mee bent. En ik heb niet alleen Christelijke vrienden, ik kijk wat dat betreft best wel over kerkmuren heen, en dat wil ik ook gewoon heel bewust. Ik heb veel met

I23: *“I am always on the lookout for extraordinary music and extraordinary musicians because it feeds my experience and makes it more complete. There is an ever growing book of reference in my head. It will never be complete, but... Those Indians say (...): ‘If you have really, really, réally made yourself familiar with a certain melody, than you have only discovered just a small part of a very big ocean.’”*⁵⁵

A closed attitude for my interviewees leads towards a self-evident use of judging talk, whereas an open attitude leads towards forms of explanations about the relationship between judging and liking. People report they have ‘learned to like’ music they judged as possibly interesting, but also of really trying to learn to like certain music but eventually ending up understanding that music – but not specifically liking it:

I17: *“Either you like something or you like it really not, and most of the times I form an opinion quite quickly. It is adjusted sometimes, but not very often. Sometimes you are not yet... It has very much to do with emotion but also with mood, and in which phase of life you’re in, whether music does something to you or not. As long as it does nothing to me, I can do nothing with it and I don’t have any interest in it (...). If I find it musically interesting, it does not necessarily have to do something to me, [but] you can get me to listen to it. So if someone writes about it for example, then I think, well, it sounds as if I could like that, or I would like to hear that, or there is talk about it. Yes, then sometimes you like it, and then you get mad about it and then I look into it.”*⁵⁶

7.2.4 Summary: the affirmative circle

At the basis of using music functionally lies the phenomenon that people like music. In many cases when the interviewees speak about the music they like, they mention the – often inexplicable – fact that music ‘touches the self’. Music has the power to connect to the self, to speak to the self – a phenomenon often described in material metaphors, and is in essence inexplicable in character.

This in turn empowers the interviewees to connect the self to music, by choosing forms of musicking, genres of music, artists, songs, compositions, instruments et cetera. Choosing

mensen contact uit Iran, Irak, Afghanistan (...), dus dat soort muziek komt bij mij wel voorbij. (...) Dat is wel mooi.”

⁵⁵ “Ik ben toch altijd wel op zoek naar bijzondere muziek en bijzondere muzikanten omdat dat mijn ervaring voedt en completer maakt. Ik heb een steeds completer naslagwerk in mijn kop. Het zal nooit compleet worden, maar... Die Indiërs zeggen dan (...): ‘Als je je een bepaalde melodie echt écht helemaal eigen hebt gemaakt, dan heb je maar zo’n klein stukje van een hele grote oceaan ontdekt.’”

⁵⁶ “Je houdt ergens van of echt niet, en ik heb er meestal wel vrij snel een mening over. Die wordt trouwens wel eens bijgesteld, maar niet zo heel vaak. Soms ben je nog niet... Het heeft ook heel erg met emotie, maar ook met stemming te maken, en in wat voor levensfase je zit, of muziek je iets doet. Zolang het mij niets doet, dan kan ik er niks mee en dan heb ik er ook geen belangstelling voor (...). Als ik het muzikaal interessant vind dan hoeft het me nog niet direct iets te doen, dan krijg je me wel zover dat ik er naar ga luisteren. Dus als iemand er over schrijft bijvoorbeeld dan denk ik, dat klinkt wel alsof ik dat mooi zou kunnen vinden, of dat wil ik wel eens horen, of daar wordt over gesproken. Soms vind je dat dan mooi, en dan raak je verslingerd en dan verdiep ik me er in.”

is often accompanied by talk about liking (nice/not nice) and – especially – judging (good/not good, and interesting/not interesting) music; and for some interviewees choosing music is done from a rather closed attitude whereas others have a more open attitude.

Thus, music connects to the self by ‘touching’ the self, and the self in turn connects to music by ‘choosing’ music⁵⁷. What might be called an ‘affirmative circle’ (see figure 6) comes into place, which is verbalized in talk about liking music and judging music.

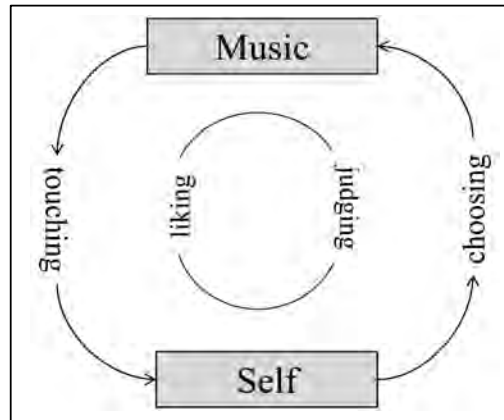


Fig. 6: The affirmative function of music – ‘the affirmative circle

It is this double tie between music and self that is fundamental⁵⁸ in all musicking – musicking in essence ties music and self together. In this process, the interviewees actively (consciously or unconsciously) ‘affirm’ the self – a process which might be understood as “a process of self-objectivation, in the Meadian sense, where the self as subject (I) reflects on the self as object (me)”.⁵⁹ For some of the interviewees, this complex is a rather weak complex, not very meaningful for them. But for many, this complex is extremely meaningful: in itself, as well as because it is the basis for all kinds of opportunities to ‘exteriorize’ the self by connecting it in various ways through music to the ‘not-self’ – a process which will be central in the next section of this chapter.

⁵⁷ Something which might be described as “a form of autobiographical telling, where ‘I’ narrates to ‘me’”. Bryce Merrill, ‘Music to Remember Me By. Technologies of Memory in Home Recording.’ *Symbolic Interaction* 33/3 (2010), p. 468.

⁵⁸ Which is not to say that it predates the other overarching functions of music chronologically – see for further remarks section 7.5.

⁵⁹ Merrill, 2010, p. 460. In opposition to Merrill as well as to for example DeNora (2000), who both seem to take these processes very much as active constructions by conscious agents, I think that those processes of self-objectivation through music are just as often covert and tacit than that they are ‘technologies of the self’ (see DeNora, 2000, p. 46 ff.; and section 7.4 of this study for some more remarks).

7.3 The connecting self – connecting through music to the ‘not-self’

I23: “*At that moment I make a connection with what I like.*”⁶⁰

7.3.1 Introduction: connecting through music

As shown in section 7.2, an intimate tie between music and self lies at the heart of the musicking of my interviewees. This makes it possible for them to exteriorize the self by connecting it to all kinds of ‘not-selves’. The connecting self, by making connections through music, exteriorizes the self.

In analyzing the interviews, I could eventually subsume the connective function of musicking under the following six headings:

- connecting the self to the expressed self – the ‘Me’;
- connecting the self to ‘the other(s)’;
- connecting the self to ‘the supernatural’: for example to the divine, to supernatural cosmic powers, to a mystic essence of nature or inner being, or to the ideal realm of the artistic;
- connecting the self to the world of ‘things’;
- connecting the self to ‘time’: to the past, the present or the future;
- connecting the self to ‘place’.

Before going into more detail into each of these connections, I must mention that an important form of connectivity of course already is present in the previous section, which adds up to a total number of seven different connections to music: the self connecting to music *per se*. What I find expressed in many interviews is that the interplay between the self and music not only functions as an enabler of connections to the ‘not-self’, but is a strong form of connectivity in itself. For many interviewees, it is a connection that is aimed for in its own right – it is the thrill of being touched and of liking, of choosing and of judging that gives enormous satisfaction to some. A relation to music is probably never *only* that; but it is often *also* that in sometimes very strong ways.⁶¹

7.3.2 The ‘Me’: expressing the self

One of the central ideas in nearly all of the interviews is that music is a vehicle to express the self. Music makes the self visible, or rather: audible to the self and to others (see section 7.3.3 for the musical function of ‘bonding the self’): the ‘I’ connects to the ‘Me’ by expressing the self. The list of expressions in the interviews referring to the expression of the self is nearly endless. Four subcategories of expressing the self can be discerned: expressing the proper self, recognizing the proper self, recognizing other self-expressions, and recreating the self-expression of others.

⁶⁰ “Op dat moment maak ik een connectie met wat ik mooi vind.”

⁶¹ For some, this form of connection is verbalized in aesthetic terms, which makes it a form of connection with the ‘supernatural’; see section 7.3.4.

Before going into those four subcategories, three preliminary remarks – on the body, on oppositions, and on the perceived unique character of music – are in place. To start with the first: the body figures widely when interviewees speak about expressing the self. The body is regularly presented as the locus, or the receptacle, of the musical self⁶²:

I23: *“Once I also heard a South-Indian singer, he started off the concert and then 3.5 hours long, and then consequently I have... two days I constantly really completely hear that music, not only in the head but also in my body. Yes, that is fantastic.”*⁶³

The body is also the means with which the self is expressed, as interviewees’ talk about playing instruments or dancing shows:

I20: *“For me music making is a rather autonomous process, as it were. I’ve got something in me and that flows through my hands to the instrument, and there is a lot of feeling in that. It should work quite naturally.”*⁶⁴

I13: *“Danced a lot, always. For me that goes together now, dancing and music. Your body is your instrument, it starts with that. Let alone the processes in your body, which also is an artistic⁶⁵ whole for me.”*⁶⁶

I19: *“Euphoric moods, yes, I mostly achieved them on the dance floor. (...) Especially because for the rest I was not someone who was very exuberant, as it were, I could do that on the dance floor. For me that was very important.”*⁶⁷

A second remark is that interviewees often speak about expression of the self in oppositions: expression vs. technique/craft; expressing the self vs. playing someone else’s music; expressing the self vs. expressing ‘the music’:

I4: *“It is often the case that I have the feeling that most students at the conservatoire want to show how many notes they can play, and yes, I see through that really quickly. I think like: ‘Yes, but this is not who you really are.’”*⁶⁸

I26: *“I couldn’t get my head around it, why a musician would want to perform someone else’s work, rather than wanting to make his own work. I didn’t get it,*

⁶² Cf. Berger, 2006.

⁶³ “Ik heb ook een keer een Zuid-Indiase zanger gehoord, die begint het concert en dan drie-en-een-half uur lang, en dan vervolgens heb ik... Twee dagen hoor ik constant de muziek echt helemaal, niet alleen in de kop maar ook in mijn lijf. Ja, dat is geweldig.”

⁶⁴ “Voor mij is muziek maken een vrij autonoom proces zeg maar. Ik heb iets in me en dat vloeit via mijn handen naar het instrument, en daar zit een hoop gevoel in. Dat moet een beetje vanzelf gaan.”

⁶⁵ Lit.: ‘music’ (Dutch: ‘muzisch’).

⁶⁶ “Veel gedanst ook, altijd. Dat gaat voor mij nu ook samen, dansen en muziek. Je lijf is je instrument, daar begint het mee. Afgezien van de processen in je lijf, wat ook een muzisch geheel is voor mij.”

⁶⁷ “Euforische stemmingen, ja, die behaalde ik toch meestal op de dansvloer. (...) Met name omdat ik voor de rest vaak niet iemand was die heel erg uitbundig was, zeg maar, kon ik dat op de dansvloer wel doen. Dat was voor mij heel erg belangrijk.”

⁶⁸ “Het is vaak zo dat ik heb het gevoel dat de meeste studenten op het conservatorium vooral willen laten zien hoeveel nootjes zij kunnen spelen, en ja, daar prik ik echt heel snel doorheen. Dan denk ik van: ‘Ja, maar dit is niet wie jij bent eigenlijk.’”

back then. (...) Eventually I do understand, own interpretations spring from it, it just did not attract me, because I did not want to perform other people's work."⁶⁹

I24: *"There is no-one there [in the woodwind group of a famous orchestra] who thinks: 'Now you listen to me playing the flute beautifully.' And I think that is really nice to listen to. Because then you simply hear that piece by Brahms, because he did not think about people, often (...). The expression rests purely in the construction of music itself, in the notes. Interpretation is something that most composers detest, and why they often hate conductors, because they always want to make something more beautiful out of the piece. The composer simply wants to hear what he has invented. He wrote it down in that parsimonious staff notation, hoping that people will handle it prudently. Yes, that is often not the case. Stardom, in all different ways.*"⁷⁰

A third and final preliminary remark is that sometimes the idea is expressed that not only the self is expressed through music, but that music makes this possible in another, and sometimes a better, way than words:

I25: *"That your father died, that makes you grow up quickly. (...) It has to do with the fact that you use music as an expression. You don't want people constantly harping on, even when you are a child. (...) But some music, or singing, (...) with music you can always give it a place, I think. (...) But alright [sighs]. That was it, then.*"⁷¹

I21: *"Words fail, then music begins."*⁷²

The first sub-category of expressing the self is expressing the proper self. Interviewees explain how they convey who they are through music. Especially interviewees performing music express this idea. Often their explanations are connected to the idea of showing their feelings, of expressing their emotions, of communicating through their performances:

⁶⁹ "Ik kon mijn hoofd er ook niet omheen krijgen waarom een muzikant andermans werk wou uitvoeren, uitsluitend, en niet eigen werk zou willen maken. Dat snapte ik toen niet. (...) Uiteindelijk snap ik het ook wel, dat er eigen interpretaties van komen, alleen het trok me gewoon niet zo, omdat ik niet andermans werk willen doen."

⁷⁰ "Daar zit niemand die denkt: 'Hoor mij eens even mooi fluit spelen.' En dat vind ik wel ontzettend prettig om naar te luisteren. Want dan hoor je gewoon dat stuk van Brahms, want die heeft niet aan mensen gedacht, vaak (...). De expressie zit puur in de constructie van de muziek zelf, in de noten. Interpretatie is ook wat de meeste componisten verafschuwen, en waarom ze dirigenten vaak haten, omdat die altijd weer iets mooiers willen maken van dat stuk. De componist wil gewoon horen wat hij bedacht heeft. Dat heeft hij met dat karige notenschrift opgeschreven in de hoop dat de mensen daar prudent mee omgaan. Ja, dat gebeurt nogal eens niet. Sterrendom, op allerlei vlak."

⁷¹ "Dat je vader [overleed], zoiets maakt je snel volwassen. (...) Het heeft er mee te maken dat je muziek gebruikt als een uiting. Je hebt geen zin dat mensen constant zitten te zeiken aan je hoofd, zelfs als kind al niet. (...) Maar sommige muziek, of zingen, (...) [dan] kan je dat met muziek altijd wel een plek geven, vind ik. (...) Maar goed [zucht]. Dat was het dan weer."

⁷² "De woorden stoppen, dan begint de muziek." Possibly a version of the quote "Where [sometimes: when] words fail, music speaks", attributed to 19th-century Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, famous for his fairy tales.

I7: *“It is not about playing difficult pieces, I care about performing with feeling. (...) That is the only thing I think is important: doing things with feeling.”*⁷³

I19: *“If I can play music – and I have been doubting very much what I want: guitar or piano; the preference is piano now – I can really put my emotions into that, and in that way also have a better outlet for my emotions than I have now.”*⁷⁴

I21: *“Then you have to work hard. [laughs] (...) Let your feeling fly freely, as it were. And saying what you want to say.”*⁷⁵

I27: *“So with singing it is also like: you can simply be who you are.”*⁷⁶

But also interviewees who do not perform convey the idea that their musicking expresses their self, as I17 who already in an earlier quote (see section 6.4.1) talked about her music collection as being

*“... a bit concentrated on, on completely my thing. (...) I give my energy to one thing, or to limited music, but that then means everything to me.”*⁷⁷

Expression of the self is connected to trust in the self, and for some interviewees may be a risky enterprise because the individual exposes itself. This may give rise to shame about for example the own music collection and the wish to hide it for others:

I26 (while looking through his CD collection): *“Oh yes, Linkin Park. That is the music I am a bit ashamed of, music which I do not show to people [laughs].”*⁷⁸

In some cases the musicking of interviewees reflects uncertainty about the self, leading to talking about a musical quest for the self:

I26: *“I did not know how to choose music that suited me.”*⁷⁹

In one case an interviewee even refers to this literally as an ‘identity crisis’:

I28: *“When I went to secondary school the choosing of music really started. Before that it was simply listening to your surroundings, simply what other people listened to, but not what you listened to. So I did not have my own identity at that time. That was probably why I had an identity crisis at the age of 11 or 12. I did not know what I liked. So at that moment I really put house and urban side by side in order to make a choice.”*⁸⁰

⁷³ “Het gaat er mij helemaal niet om moeilijke stukken te spelen, het gaat er mij om te spelen met mijn gevoel. (...) Dat is wat ik alleen maar belangrijk vind: met gevoel dingen doen.”

⁷⁴ “Als ik muziek kan spelen – en ik heb heel erg zitten twijfelen, wat wil ik: met gitaar of met een piano; de voorkeur gaat nu wel uit naar piano – dat ik mijn emoties daar echt in kan leggen, en op die manier die emoties ook wat beter kwijt kan dan dat ik dat nu kan.”

⁷⁵ “Dan moet je hard werken. [lacht] (...) Je eigen gevoel echt vrij laten vliegen, zeg maar. En zeggen wat jij wil gaan zeggen.”

⁷⁶ “Dus het is met dat zingen ook zo van: je mag gewoon ook zijn wie je bent.”

⁷⁷ “... een beetje toegespitst op, op helemaal mijn ding. (...) Ik geef mijn energie aan één ding, of aan weinig muziek, maar dan is dat ook alles voor mij”.

⁷⁸ “Oh ja, Linkin Park. Dat is een beetje de muziek waar ik me voor schaam, die ik niet aan mensen laat zien.”

⁷⁹ “Ik wist niet hoe ik muziek moest uitkiezen die bij me paste.”

⁸⁰ “Toen ik naar de brugklas ging begon echt pas de keuze van muziek. Daarvoor was het echt gewoon luisteren naar de omgeving, gewoon wat andere mensen luisterden maar niet waarnaar jezelf luisterde. Dus ik had mijn identiteit nog niet. Vandaar dat ik waarschijnlijk op mijn 11^e, 12^e een identiteitscrisis had. Ik

Because the self changes over time, in the interviews change of taste is often mentioned as connected to this idea:

I4: *“On YouTube, those Favorites, I like to watch them occasionally, (...) I like to see what I added once and what means little to me now. (...) For example The Corrs, I really liked that, I saw it once, and six years later I played it again, remembering how much I liked it – I felt it was awful.”*⁸¹

As the self is not solely individual but by definition intensely social in character⁸², the interplay between the individual and the social comes up in many of the stories of the interviewees, specifically when the relation of the individual towards the social circle in which he grew up is called to the fore. This may be described in terms of realizing the proper, individual self as opposed to the socially influenced self, or in a process of gradually defining the individual self as opposed to the social self:

I16: *“At first it simply was a form of being together socially, simply the Surinamese-Javanese culture. I knew all those guys, it was in town, it was also playing a bit (...). Then we practiced for an hour, afterwards we played a bit, ate a bit. It was about being together. But when you’re 15 (...), yes, everybody starts doing his own thing, not everybody felt like it anymore. And then we stopped. We were with five, six guys (...), nobody I know has taken it up again.”*⁸³

However, the social influences on the self retain their presence as a reservoir to work with, as the same interviewee tells:

I16: *“But at the moment I am confronted with Surinamese-Javanese music, I kind of like to listen to it again, because it calls into mind certain memories. Because I did classical dance, I do occasionally watch Indonesian dance on YouTube. Then I try it for a bit again (...), those kinds of movements, those specific movements in it are the same as in Surinamese-Javanese dance”.*⁸⁴

Also ‘biological’ influences may play a role in the stories of expressing the self through music. Interviewees then sometimes shift to a story about expressing the genes (rather than the self), which might again raise tensions between the (genetic) self and the social but in the stories of my interviewees are actually regarded more as a given – musicality is ‘in the genes’, as I15 en I30 state:

wist niet waar ik van hield. Toen heb ik house en urban echt gewoon naast elkaar gelegd [om een keuze te kunnen maken].”

⁸¹ “Op YouTube, die favorieten, ik vind het zelf wel leuk om er af en toe naar te kijken, (...) ik vind het wel leuk om te zien wat ik ooit heb toegevoegd en wat me nou eigenlijk weinig meer zegt. (...) Bijvoorbeeld The Corrs, dat vond ik echt geweldig, dat heb ik een keer gekeken, en zes jaar later toen heb ik het weer eens opgezet met de herinnering dat ik het fantastisch vond - ik vond het verschrikkelijk.”

⁸² “The self is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience”. Mead, 1934, p. 140.

⁸³ “In het begin was het een soort samenzijn, de [Surinaams-]Javaanse cultuur gewoon. Ik kende al die jongens, het was in de stad, het was ook een beetje spelen. (...) Dan gingen we een uurtje oefenen, dan gingen we daarna een beetje spelen, een beetje eten. Het was meer het samenzijn. Maar als je 15 bent (...), ja, iedereen gaat toch zijn eigen ding een beetje doen, en niet iedereen had er meer zin in. En toen zijn we gestopt. We waren met 5, 6 jongens (...), niemand die ik ken is er [weer] mee begonnen.”

⁸⁴ “Maar op het moment dat ik het [(Surinaams-)Javaanse muziek] tegenkom vind ik het wel weer leuk om naar te luisteren, want het roept bepaalde herinneringen op. (...) Omdat ik klassieke dans heb gedaan, kijk je wel eens op YouTube naar de Indonesische dans. Dan probeer ik dat weer een beetje (...), dat soort bewegingen, de bepaalde bewegingen erbij die zijn hetzelfde [als in de Surinaams-Javaanse dans].”

I15: *“My father comes from a very Jewish family so I always had the feeling that there was a lot of music in that family. (...) I also notice with the musicians that perform now, that (...) often it turns out that they have Jewish blood. So I’m interested in that, I notice.”*⁸⁵

I30: *“It really runs in the family. (...) So Dutch [music] really is in our genes.”*

The second sub-category of expressing the self is the recognition of the self in music. This ranges from an alignment of musical choices with moods or stages of life, to a complete recognition of the self in certain music. An example of alignment is one of the interviewees who states:

I17: *“It has to do very much with emotion but also with mood, and in which phase of life you’re in, whether music does something to you or not.”*⁸⁶

In his interview he intimately links the description of his musical taste to the stages of life he went through and the emotions that were connected to these stages. Two examples:

I17: *“Also (...) a period in which I was not terribly happy, and that is rather sad music. I am not attracted anymore to much of it.”*⁸⁷(...)

*“So after that [a difficult period in a relationship] I had to let my hair down, also musically – the Smashing Pumpkins...”*⁸⁸

An example of the recognition of the self in certain music is one of the interviewees who is completely ‘into’ Dutch schlager music. She describes in a multitude of ways how this music, in general as well as in her particular case, gives her, as a listener, the feeling that the song is not only about the singer but very much also about herself:

I30: *“Thomas Berge⁸⁹ has an incredible beautiful song, a moving song, about a star, and that star, well yes, if I think about that song of his and I listen to that song, then the tears come, because my father is not there anymore, and my granny. With that song, my feeling erupt.”*⁹⁰

A third subcategory in the expression of the self is when the interviewee in music recognizes the expression of other individuals in music. Getting to know someone’s music is getting to know someone’s self, as I2 says when she expresses her curiosity about the other interviewees:

I2: *“[Music] is actually a great means to get to know someone.”*⁹¹

⁸⁵ “Mijn vader komt uit een hele Joodse familie dus ik heb altijd het gevoel gehad dat daar heel veel muziek in die familie (...) zat. (...) En (...) aan de musici die nu optreden, merk ik ook vaak dat (...) dan ook veel vaak naar buiten komt dat ze Joods bloed hebben. Dus daar ben ik wel in geïnteresseerd merk ik.”

⁸⁶ “Het heeft ook heel erg met emotie maar ook met stemming te maken, en in wat voor levensfase je zit of muziek je iets doet.”

⁸⁷ “Ook wel (...) een periode dat ik niet vreselijk gelukkig was, en dat is wel een beetje trieste muziek. Heel veel daarvan daar heb ik nu geen zin meer in.”

⁸⁸ “Dus daarna moest het weer los, ook muzikaal gezien – the Smashing Pumpkins...”

⁸⁹ Dutch-language music singer. The song mentioned is ‘1000 sterren’ [‘1000 stars’].

⁹⁰ “Thomas Berge die heeft een ontiegelijk mooi nummer, een ontroerend nummer, over een ster, en die ster, nou ja, als ik aan dat nummer denk van hem en ik luister dat nummer, dan gaan bij mij de tranen. Omdat mijn vader die is er niet meer, en mijn oma. Bij dat nummer, dan gaat mijn gevoel los.”

⁹¹ “Het [muziek] is toch eigenlijk een prachtig medium om iemand te leren kennen.”

Interviewees for example say they recognize the musician's, singer's or composer's emotions or energy in his music, or they hear character traits – honesty and pureness, for example – in the music, up to the point where someone is said to 'be' music:

I21: *"In Africa in the middle of nowhere someone makes music, I start to cry in Groningen. How is that possible? He translates what his feelings are so beautifully, he touches me. That is music. That magical force. Great, isn't it?"*⁹²

I4: *"We watched a video clip by Johnny Cash. Just before he died he made a CD and also a clip in which he looks back on his life. (...). That has really touched me because of his voice, what it expressed. And also his way of singing was very honest and pure."*⁹³

I13: *"You are in an atmosphere where somebody simply is music, you know."*⁹⁴

I19: *"He pours all his emotions completely into the music, I think that is so extremely beautiful. (...) You see that nowhere, of course, that someone is so connected to the music, it is fantastic to see."*⁹⁵

Sometimes musicking thus brings forward someone's hidden personality:

I15: *"My father was not a very nice man but when he played the piano you had the feeling something very 'warm' came out."*⁹⁶

Finally, there is a fourth subcategory where individuals actively try to recreate the expression of another individual. Although this phenomenon is known to be central in much classical music, where the 'essence' of a musical piece has to be uncovered and is for some performers intensely tied to the personality of the composer, none of my interviewees expressed this idea connected to classical music. However, also in other musical genres this phenomenon takes place, as the following quote may show:

I12: *"Elvis is my thing. I am a fan of that man, I think it's fantastic. I read so much about him, and saw so much of him, also the way he lived his life (...), much humor too, and he was generous, gave away a lot, and the way he came across, that's unique too. There is no one who can imitate that or should imitate that, but it is one of the most imitated persons in the world. (...) It is great that I can give that feeling to other people and am invited by them because of that."*⁹⁷

⁹² "In Afrika in de *middle of nowhere* maakt iemand muziek, ik begin te huilen in Groningen. Hoe kan dat? Hij vertaalt zo mooi wat zijn gevoel is, hij raakt mij. Dat is muziek. Die magische kracht. Superleuk, hè?"

⁹³ "Wij [gingen] een videoclip kijken van Johnny Cash. Net voordat hij dood was heeft hij een cd gemaakt en ook een clip waarin hij zijn leven overziet (...). Dat heeft me heel erg geraakt omdat zijn stem, wat daar uit sprak. En ook zijn manier van zingen [was] heel eerlijk en puur."

⁹⁴ "Dan zit je gewoon in zo'n sfeer, van iemand die muziek is, weet je."

⁹⁵ "Hij gaat met zijn emoties zo verschrikkelijk in de muziek zitten, dat vind ik zo ontzettend mooi. (...) Dat zie je natuurlijk nergens, dat iemand zo verbonden is met de muziek, dat vind ik ontzettend mooi om te zien."

⁹⁶ "Mijn vader was helemaal niet z'n aardige man maar als hij piano speelde had je het gevoel dat er iets heel 'warms' uitkwam."

⁹⁷ "Elvis is mijn ding. Ik ben een fan van die man, ik vind het geweldig. Ik heb al zoveel van hem gelezen en van hem gezien, zoals die man ook in het leven stond (...), ook veel humor, hij was heel gul, gaf heel veel weg, en zoals hij overkwam, dat is ook uniek. Er is ook niemand die dat na kan doen en zou moeten

This may also lead to the inverse idea that playing someone else's music or playing the audience's music is a surrogate for playing your own music:

I26: *"I don't play an instrument. (...) I couldn't get my head around it why a musician would want to perform other people's pieces, and not create his own pieces. (...) Eventually I did understand it, that it leads to own interpretations, but I did not want... It simply did not attract me because I did not want to play other people's work."*⁹⁸

I19 (about DJ-ing): *"At some point I did not like it that no-one ever danced, I then thought: 'Then I will try to conform', because musical taste also changed. That was a bit of a wrong decision, at some point I played music I did not like myself at all. I then became rather demoralized, I thought: 'Yes, it is nice I can earn money with it, but for the rest, yes, what does it bring to me?' So then at some point I stopped."*⁹⁹

Summarizing, interviewees express their self (often located in the body) through music in a way that sometimes is perceived to be unique to music. Various sub-categories of expressing the self are mentioned in the interviews: expressing the self proper through for example performing music, recognizing the self in music, recognizing music as the expression of other selves, and recreating other individual selves through music.

7.3.3 The 'Other(s)': bonding the self

The self objectifies itself in the affirmative circle (see section 7.2) and positions itself as a 'Me' in the world (see the previous section). Both are firm foundations for bonding the self to others. Connecting to others through music is one of the ubiquitous functions of music in the interviews. In this section I will discuss bonding the self to others through music. I will start with some remarks on how this bonding in general takes place (through playing or listening together or through the exchange of things, with attention for 'negative bonding' and 'liking by proxy'). Then I will focus on categories of others to bond with (partners, families, wider social circles up to 'imagined communities'), on developmental issues of bonding, and finally on social positioning through bonding.

doen, maar het is wel een van de meest geïmiteerde personen in de wereld. (...) Dat ik dat gevoel een beetje bij mensen kan neerleggen en daardoor uitgenodigd wordt, dat vind ik gewoon te gek."

⁹⁸ "Ik speel geen instrument. (...) Ik kon mijn hoofd er ook niet omheen krijgen waarom een muzikant andermans werk wou uitvoeren, uitsluitend, en niet eigen werk zou willen maken. (...) Uiteindelijk snap ik het wel, dat er eigen interpretaties van komen, maar ik wou niet... het trok me gewoon niet zo omdat ik niet andermans werk wou doen."

⁹⁹ "Op een gegeven moment vond ik het wel vervelend dat er nooit gedanst werd, toen dacht ik van: 'Dan ga ik wel proberen me aan te passen', want de muzieksmaak veranderde ook. Dat was een beetje een foute beslissing, toen draaide ik op een gegeven moment muziek die ik zelf helemaal niet leuk vond. Toen raakte ik eigenlijk best wel gedemotiveerd, toen dacht ik van: 'Ja, het is leuk dat ik er geld mee kan verdienen, maar voor de rest, ja, wat heb ik er eigenlijk nog aan.' Dus toen ben ik op een gegeven moment ook wel gestopt."

First I look at bonding in general. This means: recognizing others on the basis of being recognized, which may give rise to behavior such as performing music together, playing mediated music together, or meeting like-minded people when going to concerts:

I6: *“It was the first time I played in a symphony orchestra, a real big one. So with all the string players, that you were allowed to play your own part in that, really big. (...) There were rehearsal weeks during school holidays, you stayed (...) in a youth hostel, that was also a lot of fun of course: all kinds of new people, all with the same interests as yourself, the same scene. (...) At that age it is also not just the music, but also simply all those boys and girls together, going to the café together, telling jokes, sitting in a bus. It simply is that whole little world, such a music scene but the filled with adolescents, you can imagine what that means.”*¹⁰⁰

I19: *“At the office I listen to music occasionally. It really is a mish-mash. (...) Small speakers next to the computer, I am with one other person at my room so we close the door. (...) We can play our music as we like, we have a similar music taste, that suits us. We have moments when we are very occupied with music. Then a colleague enters, as this morning, coming in to ask: ‘Oh did you hear this already?’ ‘Oh, no.’ Then we look for it, ‘Oh yes, this is nice indeed’, we are occupied with that then. So that is fun.”*¹⁰¹

I18: *“What I do like is talking about music with someone who also likes to do that. I go to the concert hall sometimes, most of the times I meet one or two people I know, that is quite nice. In The Hague it is the same by the way, you do meet one or two persons you know, you say: ‘Hey, do you like jazz too?’”*¹⁰²

As explained earlier, exchange is an important form of musicking to share experience through things (see section 6.4 for some remarks), and thus for bonding:

I3: *“I did it lately for friends. They threw a party. Well, I put some MP3 files on a little hard disk and I took it with me: ‘Here you are.’”*¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ “Het was voor het eerst dat ik in een symfonieorkest speelde, echt groot. Dus met al die strijkers, dat je je eigen partijtje daarin mocht meeblazen, dat vond ik geweldig. (...) Dan had je repetitieweken in de schoolvakanties, dan zat je (...) in zo’n jeugdherberg, ook dat was natuurlijk allemaal heel erg leuk: allemaal nieuwe mensen, allemaal dezelfde interesse als je zelf, hetzelfde wereldje. (...) Die leeftijd is ook niet alleen de muziek, maar ook gewoon dan al die jongens en meisjes bij elkaar, met mekaar het café in, moppen tappen, in zo’n bus zitten. Het is gewoon het hele wereldje, zo’n muziekwereldje maar dan op puberniveau, nou daar kan je je wel iets bij voorstellen.”

¹⁰¹ “Op kantoor luister ik ook wel muziek als dat zo uitkomt. Dan is het ook echt van alles wat. (...) Kleine boxjes naast de computer, ik zit met één ander persoon op kantoor, dan doen we de deur dicht. (...) Kunnen we gewoon lekker muziek draaien, we hebben een overeenkomstige muzieksmaak, dat komt wel goed uit. Dan hebben we momenten dat we veel met muziek bezig zijn. Dan komt [een collega] zoals vanmorgen weer binnen, komt hij vragen: ‘Oh heb je dit al gehoord?’ ‘Oh, nee.’ Dan gaan we het even opzoeken, ‘Oh, ja, dat is mooi inderdaad,’ en dan zijn we daar weer mee bezig. Dus dat is leuk.”

¹⁰² “Wat ik wel leuk vind is praten over muziek met iemand die het ook leuk vindt. Ik ga weleens naar [de concertzaal], meestal kom ik wel een of twee mensen tegen die ik ken, dat is op zich wel leuk. Dat is in Den Haag trouwens net zo, dan kom je toch wel een of twee personen tegen die je kent, dan zeg je: ‘Hé, hou jij ook van jazz?’”

¹⁰³ “Voor vrienden heb ik het laatst nog gedaan. Die hadden een feestje. Ach, dan doe ik wat MP3-tjes op een hard schijfje en die neem ik dan mee, alstublieft.”

On a more general level one of the interviewees expresses her affinity with this form of bonding:

I7: *“What music does for me is something you would like to give to everyone. And sometimes I think it’s a pity when you hear something nice and it moves you or brings you in a certain mood or whatever, I think like: ‘Gee, everybody should be able to experience that, how nice that feeling is.’ And that you know that certain people will not experience that, or will not experience it like you experience it.”*¹⁰⁴

Not only giving gifts bonds people, rejecting gifts may bond people too, albeit in the negative:

I3: *“I can even remember that those people once on Sinterklaas eve¹⁰⁵ gave me a walkman, and of course music had to be included. And then they bought those cassette tapes with that music. Well, that walkman has not been listened to a lot [laughs], I can tell you that. Really terrible.”*¹⁰⁶

Bonding the self to others also takes negative forms. Bonding takes place with certain people, and not with others. Bonding through music is including *and* excluding; and may sometimes become a confusing thing as well:

I1: *“We [board members of a hard-rock music organization] met alternately at people’s homes, and metalheads first have a look at the record collection of everyone. Just looking what’s there. Well, this was a mess, a true metalhead couldn’t do anything with it, the Eagles and Guns N’ Roses simply next to each other in a cabinet. I’ve got two acts from Norway. One is Aha and the other one is an extremely heavy band. Initially they said: ‘Oh, are those your girlfriend’s CDs?’ ‘No, this one is mine.’ And about an extremely loud CD next to it I said: ‘Yeah, that one happens to be my girlfriend’s.’ That was hard to make sense of for them.”*¹⁰⁷

Bonding with other people not only takes place through a shared liking of music. A regularly occurring phenomenon in the interviews is what I call bonding through ‘liking-by-proxy’. Liking-by-proxy is liking music deeply and intensely not because the music speaks to the interviewee, but because the music speaks so intensely to other individuals that the interviewee appreciates the music for that reason:

¹⁰⁴ “Wat muziek voor mij doet, dat gun je iedereen. En soms dan vind ik het wel eens jammer als je dan bijvoorbeeld eens iets moois hoort en het kan je ontroeren of het brengt je in een bepaalde stemming of wat dan ook, dat ik denk van: ‘Goh, dat zou toch iedereen moeten kunnen meemaken, hoe prettig dat gevoel is.’ En dat je weet ook dat bepaalde mensen dat niet zullen ervaren, of niet zo ervaren zoals jij dat ervaart.”

¹⁰⁵ The Dutch equivalence of Christmas, on December 5, where children are given presents.

¹⁰⁶ “Ik kan me zelfs nog heugen dat ik van die mensen een keer op Sinterklaas een walkman had gekregen, en daar moest natuurlijk ook muziek bij. En dan gingen ze van die bandjes met die muziek erbij kopen. Nou, die walkman is niet veel beluisterd [lacht], dat kan ik je wel vertellen. Echt verschrikkelijk.”

¹⁰⁷ “Wij vergaderden bij toerbeurt bij mensen thuis, en metalheads gaan dan eerst bij iedereen even de platenkast bekijken. Even gewoon kijken van wat heb je er allemaal tussen staan. Nou, dit was dus een puinhoop, een rechtgeaarde metalhead kon daar niks mee, dat de Eagles en Guns N’ Roses naast elkaar stonden gewoon in één kast. Ik heb twee acts uit Noorwegen in mijn kast staan, de ene is Aha en de ander is een snoeiharde band. In het begin zeiden ze van: ‘Oh, dat zijn de cd’s van je vriendin?’ ‘Nee, die is van mij.’ En van een spijkerharde cd die ernaast stond zei ik: ‘Ja, die is toevallig van mijn vriendin.’ Dat vonden ze lastig om te duiden.”

I7: *“I have also started to like the music my husband liked. Buddy Holly. And the music of my children. That is very special, because I sometimes have the feeling that I want to be close to what someone else likes and that I want to experience what it means for them. And then it does something to me too. It is Bruce Springsteen for my two oldest children, and a son is crazy about (...) Bob Dylan.”*¹⁰⁸

A second point of interest is the way bonding takes place with various categories of persons. Taking the concentric circle of persons in section 6.2 as a lead, we might start with showing the importance of music for some interviewees for bonding with partner and family members. Music, for example, may be one of the stimuli to become – and stay – partners:

I1: *“We met at the introduction week of our studies, and then it turned out that a lot of artists of which we thought ourselves: ‘I am really the only one who likes that, I definitely know no-one who likes that too’ ... Well, it turned out that we had the same CDs in the cabinet and the same cassette tapes. From then on our tastes developed rather in parallel. We feed each other, so sometimes I come with something new and another time she comes with something new. Actually, from the moment when we started our studies it has been a bit of a common path, and of course that does enrich you.”*¹⁰⁹

The music collection may be seen as reflecting the partnership and the effects the getting together of partners – or the ‘disbonding’ of partners – may have on musical taste:

I2: *“Well, this is our music. It is all here.”*¹¹⁰

I10: *“Then a woman comes into your life, she likes different music than what I like. Then we switched a bit to romantic music. From romantic music to... From Marco Borsato¹¹¹ to, yes to what not, to what she plays. She likes more quieter music, you go along with that.”*¹¹²(...)

¹⁰⁸ “Ik ben ook wel gaan houden van de muziek waar mijn man van hield. Van Buddy Holly. En van mijn kinderen. Dat is dan heel bijzonder, omdat ik soms het gevoel heb waar iemand anders van houdt dat ik daar dicht bij wil zijn of wil proeven wat dat voor hen betekent. En dan gaat het bij mij ook iets doen. Het is Bruce Springsteen van mijn twee oudste kinderen, en een zoon is gek van (...) Bob Dylan.”

¹⁰⁹ “Wij kwamen elkaar in de [introductieweek] van de studie tegen, en toen bleek dat een heleboel artiesten waarvan we zelf dachten van: ‘Nou ik ben echt de enige die dat leuk vindt, ik ken helemaal niemand die dat ook leuk vindt’ ... Nou, toen bleken wij dus dezelfde cd’s in de kast te hebben staan en dezelfde bandjes. Vanaf dat moment hebben onze smaken zich ook redelijk parallel ontwikkeld. We voeden elkaar wat dat betreft, dus de ene keer kom ik met iets nieuws en de andere keer komt zij met iets nieuws. Eigenlijk vanaf dat we allebei begonnen met studeren is dat een beetje een gezamenlijk pad geweest en dat verrijkt je natuurlijk behoorlijk.”

¹¹⁰ “Nou, dit is onze muziek. Het ligt allemaal hier.”

¹¹¹ Popular Dutch language pop singer.

¹¹² “Dan komt er een vrouw in het leven, die houdt weer van andere muziek dan waar ik van houd. Toen zijn we een beetje op de romantische muziek overgegaan. Van de romantische muziek tot... Van Marco Borsato tot, ja wat niet meer, wat zij allemaal draait. Zij houdt van rustige muziek en daar ga je dan in mee.”

“I have to record Jannes regularly for my parents, and Frans Bauer¹¹³ (...). I don't play it anymore. (...) Since we are together I don't listen to it anymore.”¹¹⁴

I4: *“My brother's in-laws had an enormous attachment to South-American music. (...) In that way it came to him and he brought it into my parents' home, and in that way it came to me. I thought that really funny, because someone's life can change enormously when you meet a partner. (...) Style of music is only a small thing, but what an enormous influence someone living beside you has.”¹¹⁵*

I17: *“One of the reasons why I do not play it anymore now, it has to do with old love again. It is over, divorced, a couple of years already with my new wife. Yes. She very well knows: Peter Hammill, a load of it is in the music cabinet, but it belongs to a former life, a certain someone also belongs to that. Some parts of music, it is emotion. Before [being married to my second wife] I listened a lot to Peter Hammill, but at a certain moment the connection is made. You don't get rid of that easily. When women start to belong to music... [laughs]”¹¹⁶*

Music of course may not only bond together partners but also families:

I17: *“Then [going to the holiday destination] you sit in that car quite long so I made (...) a kind of music collection for in the car. No-one was allowed to hear that beforehand. (...) A bit of music history, mixing it with songs they [the children] liked, all kinds of new music I had not heard myself actually. (...) With six or seven CDs we set off. (...) Yes, that is a real music listening experience for all of us.”¹¹⁷*

Bonding takes place not only with partners and other family members. It also occurs with fellow musicians, as the first quote of this section shows in which I6 talks about a youth symphony orchestra. For some, this is the essence of making music, connected intrinsically to learning to know musical structures¹¹⁸:

¹¹³ Jannes, Frans Bauer: popular Dutch language schlager singers.

¹¹⁴ “Ik moet voor mijn ouders nog wel geregeld Jannes opnamen en Frans Bauer (...). Ik draai het helemaal niet meer. (...) Sinds wij bij elkaar zijn [luister ik er niet meer naar].”

¹¹⁵ “Die [schoonouders van broer] hadden een enorme band met Zuid-Amerikaanse muziek. (...) Zo kwam het bij hem en hij bracht het hier bij mijn ouders thuis, en zo kwam het weer bij mij. Dat vond ik heel grappig, omdat een leven van iemand enorm kan veranderen als je een partner ontmoet. (...) Muziekstijl is maar een klein dingetje, maar wat voor enorme invloed dat heeft als iemand naast je leeft.”

¹¹⁶ “Een van de redenen waarom ik het nu nooit meer draai, dat heeft toch weer met oude liefde te maken. Dat is weer voorbij, gescheiden, alweer een paar jaar met (...) mijn nieuwe vrouw. Ja. Maar zij weet wel: Peter Hammill, daar staat een lading van in de kast, maar dat hoort bij een vorig leven, daar hoort ook iemand bij. Sommige delen van muziek, dat is emotie. Daarvóór luisterde ik ook heel veel naar Peter Hammill maar ja, op een gegeven moment is dat verband gelegd. Dan kom je er ook niet meer zomaar van af. Als vrouwen bij muziek gaan horen, dan...”

¹¹⁷ “Dan zit je vrij lang in die auto dus dan maakte ik (...) een soort muziekcollectie voor in de auto. Dat mocht ook verder niemand horen, voor die tijd. (...) Een beetje muziekhistorie, en ook wat mixen met nummers die zij dan leuk vinden, allemaal nieuwe muziek die ik zelf ook nog niet gehoord had eigenlijk. (...) Met zes of zeven cd'tjes gingen we dan op stap. (...) Ja, dat is wel echt een muziekluisterervaring voor met zijn allen.”

¹¹⁸ A further analysis of what interviewees remark about the importance of ensemble playing in music education is to be found in Bisschop Boele, 2011b.

I24: *“I have always played together. I started to play in order to play in a wind orchestra and as soon as I could I was part of that wind orchestra and played along and you hear around you what other people do and the conductor tells you what is not good, what could be better, how it could be different, what really is notated. So you would say: without effort you learn to master your instrument, you learn to play music. (...) I found it a joy to do and also always found it very interesting, right from the start, (...) what others did, what others had to do.”*¹¹⁹

In one case, this goes as far as that in the words of the interviewee fellow musicians become metaphorical family members:

I1: *“We put together a new band. A guitarist became part of it, Chris, and he is my guitar brother. From him I learned everything I wanted to learn about the guitar. Improvising, amongst other things; and simply doing instead of being stuck in playing scales nicely. It has developed and it influenced my CD collection. (...) Things where people from the band started to listen to, I also started to listen to.”*¹²⁰

Another example of bonding with non-family face-to-face others is bonding with religious partners through music:

I27: *“Last week a relative passed away (...) and today a week ago we had her funeral. (...). When you are in a church and there is a funeral service and you sing songs together, and we believe also that after death, that God will simply create something new, that we will all see each other again some time, so... (...) You can really get consolation from those songs. That so much power comes from singing a song together, that really struck me then. (...) It really brings you together when you sing together.”*¹²¹

Bonding to others through music may also reach out from face-to-face groups to members of ‘imagined communities’¹²². Audiences of certain genres may for example share a fandom of the genre with people they know face-to-face as well as with the people-in-

¹¹⁹ “Ik heb dus altijd samengespeeld. Ik ben gaan spelen om in een vereniging te gaan spelen en zo gauw dat kon zat ik in die vereniging en speel je mee en hoor je om je heen hoe anderen dat doen en krijg je al van een dirigent te horen wat niet goed is, wat er beter kan, hoe het anders kan, wat er eigenlijk staat. Dus je zou zeggen: spelenderwijs leer je je instrument ook beheersen, leer je muziek maken. (...) Ik vond het een genot om te doen en vond het altijd ook heel interessant, vanaf het begin al (...) wat anderen deden, wat anderen te doen hadden. (...)”

¹²⁰ “We hebben een nieuw bandje bij elkaar gezocht. Daar is toen ook een gitarist bijgekomen, Guus, en dat is mijn gitaarbroertje. Daar heb ik alles van geleerd wat ik op gitaargebied wilde leren. Onder andere improviseren en gewoon doen in plaats van keurig in de toonladdertjes vast blijven zitten. Dat heeft zich toen ontwikkeld en dat is teruggekomen in de cd-verzameling (...). Dingen waar iemand van de band mee aankomt, daar ga ik ook naar luisteren.”

¹²¹ “Vorige week is een familielid overleden (...) en vandaag een week geleden hebben we daar de begrafenis van gehad. (...) Als je in een kerk zit en je hebt een begrafenisdienst en je zingt met elkaar liederen, en wij geloven dan ook dat er na de dood, dat God gewoon ook weer iets nieuws schept, dat we elkaar ooit allemaal weer terug zullen zien, dus... (...) Je kunt heel veel troost uit die liederen halen. Dat daar zoveel kracht vanuit gaat om samen een lied te zingen, dat viel mij toen echt op. (...) Het verbindt gewoon heel erg om samen te zingen.” It may not be a coincidence that the interviewee mentioned singing together as one of the features of her religious denomination but also of the Dutch schlager community.

¹²² Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1983.

abstracto who are part of the fan community. Some genres seem to focus more or less on bonding into (real or imagined) communities. The Dutch schlager may be an example in case. In section 7.3.2, this genre has already been shown to be perceived as expressing very strongly the self of some of the individual interviewees. On that basis, it seems that in this genre self and others (musicians and fellow members of the audience) are more or less equated, which leads to a strong feeling of bonding to others. This may be exemplified by for example a story of one of the interviewees telling about the highlights in her musical life; one of them is when she was personally picked up by one of her idols when she nearly fell during a concert. Another highlight is that her daughter has been touched, even picked up, by several famous artists:

I30: *“She has been lifted up by Jannes. (...) Yes, and she has been lifted up by (...) what’s his name, that singing milk vendor? (...) Yes: Burdy.”*¹²³

Similar forms of bonding in another genre can be demonstrated by one of the interviewees considering himself as part of the punk scene. In his story it becomes very clear that the scene is not just musical but also ideological:

I10: *“What I liked about that world, it was rather... Not that I am such an activist, never have been, but it was rather left-wing and the lyrics were rather left-wing and that attracted me.”*¹²⁴

Turning to the topic of development, many interviewees described the developmental influence on the self of connecting to others through music. Others, such as partners, other family members, peers, and teachers, help the interviewees to ‘become who they are’. In that sense, some of the others turn into ‘significant others’¹²⁵:

I19: *“At my sixteenth birthday I got a record player and a mixing console, which was borrowed, and a couple of records as a present from him and another friend. For me that was the start of a DJ career actually. (...) The one who gave me that record player on my birthday – I did not expect it at all at the time – really left an enormous extra mark on it I think.”*¹²⁶

¹²³ “Toen is ze ook nog opgetild geweest door Jannes. (...) Ja, en ze is al opgetild geweest door (...) hoe heet hij nou weer, die zingende melkboer? (...) Burdy, ja.” The idea that a certain music expresses your self and, therefore, certain musicians are your absolute equals may be the reason why interviewees operating within this musical genre stress the fact that musicians (‘artists’, as they are called in these circles) have very much stayed simple, ordinary people. Artists often use their first name, like the duo ‘Lucas & Gea’ or one of the top singers of the moment, simply called ‘Jannes’; others call themselves ‘Zanger Jan’ [‘Singer John’] or ‘Zanger Rinus’ [‘Singer Rinus’]. Stories abound about how easily famous singers are reached. Cf. for similar observations in a related genre Mendivil, 2008, e.g. pp. 343-345.

¹²⁴ “Wat ik wel leuk vind van dat wereldje, het was vrij... niet dat ik zo’n ontzettende activist was, dat ben ik nooit geweest, maar het was vrij links en de teksten ware vrij links en dat heeft me echt wel aangetrokken.” For a comparable form of ‘communality’ as expressed in the Dutch folk music scene in the 1970s see Jos Koning, ‘De folkbeweging in Nederland. Analyse van een hedendaagse muziek-subcultuur.’ [‘The folk movement in the Netherlands. Analysis of a contemporary musical subculture.’] PhD dissertation. Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1983.

¹²⁵ A significant other is “any individual who is or has been deeply influential in one’s life and in whom one is or once was emotionally invested”. Susan M. Andersen & Serena Chen, ‘The Relational Self. An Interpersonal Social-Cognitive Theory.’ *Psychological Review* 109 (2002), p. 619.

¹²⁶ “Op mijn zestiende verjaardag kreeg ik van hem en van een andere vriend een platenspeler en een mengpaneel, die was geleend, en een aantal platen. Dat was eigenlijk de start voor mij van een dj-carrière.

Peers play an important role when it comes to development. They can be a source of inspiration and of influence, but also peer pressure can be neutralized or even actively resisted:

I17: *“Through her I started to really like the Sound of Music. She had a small record player and we were sitting together, the two of us... The more enthusiastic she become, the more something happened with me too.”*¹²⁷

EBB: *“And friends in secondary school. Did they influence you and your taste?”*

I11: *“No, absolutely not. (...) There was one other guy who also liked metal, but... Maybe exchanged a cassette tape once, but for the rest never. No, I had to look for it myself, in that respect. (...) During drawing lessons everybody was allowed to play a tape. (...) Paradise City by Guns N’ Roses was a hit at the time, (...), I took that LP with me, I had it in its entirety, I thought it was rather good. I played it, everybody was like: ‘Oh, what is this?’, also because it was mine and I had a rough taste. The second song was Paradise City: ‘Oh, that is Paradise City, that song is nice, the rest is really rubbish.’ That kind of behavior, as it were, of people who really do not love music but do have an opinion about it, I think that is very remarkable. That group behavior.”*¹²⁸

Relating to others may, finally, result in social positioning through music: certain elements of individual musicking may serve as an indicator of group belonging and of eventual status differences ensuing from that¹²⁹. Interesting in that respect are not only musically defined scenes of which individuals feel part, such as the hardrock/punk scene of which I11 is a ‘member’, but also for example groupings resulting from e.g. (religious) pillarization (of which I27 remarked above: “It really brings you together when you sing together”), or ‘youth culture’:

I25: *“At my fifteenth (...) I went to the youth centre. Gruppo Sportivo played there, Jan Akkerman, all those Moluccan bands, I attended sitting-down concerts, I thought... Wow! Wow! It was part of it. Real youth culture. (...) Smoking joints was part of that too. Yes, it simply was a discovery, that music and a way of living*

(...) Diegene die mij toen die platenspeler op mijn verjaardag had gegeven, had ik ook helemaal niet verwacht toen, die heeft er toch wel een enorme stempel denk ik ook nog extra op gedrukt.”

¹²⁷ “Door haar ben ik de Sound of Music heel mooi gaan vinden. Dan had zij een klein platenspelertje en dan zaten we er met zijn tweeën bij... Naarmate zij enthousiaster was gebeurde er bij mij ook iets.”

¹²⁸ EBB: “En vrienden op de middelbare school, beïnvloedden die jou met je muzikale smaak?”

I11: “Nee, absoluut niet. (...) Er was één andere jongen die hield ook wel van metal, maar... Misschien één keer een keer een bandje mee gewisseld, maar verder eigenlijk nooit. Nee, ik moest het echt zelf opzoeken wat dat betreft. (...) Tijdens de tekenles mocht iedereen even een bandje draaien. (...) Paradise City van Guns N’ Roses was toen een hit (...), toen nam ik die lp mee, die had ik helemaal, die vond ik best goed. Toen draaide ik hem, iedereen had zoiets van: ‘Oh, wat is dit?’, ook omdat het van mij was en ik een ruige smaak had. Het tweede nummer was Paradise City: ‘Oh, dat is Paradise City, dat nummer is leuk, de rest is helemaal niks.’ Dat gedrag, zeg maar, van mensen die helemaal niet van muziek houden maar er wel een mening over hebben, dat vind ik heel apart. Dat groepsgedrag.”

¹²⁹ For a short overview of research on the matter, see North & Hargreaves, 2008, pp. 102-106, pp. 217-225.

could go together. Wow! That you could do what you wanted. A sort of freedom.”¹³⁰

Although affiliation to social groups through musicking often functions in taken-for-granted ways, as part of the “socially standardized and standardizing, ‘seen but unnoticed,’ expected, background features of everyday scenes”¹³¹, it is sometimes consciously sought after – or consciously battled against – through musicking:

I26: *“It is not as if would play music myself before my eighth. When I did it, it was on one of those small radios you could carry around. I would go to the shopping centre. I did not have many friends and I was very uncool, and I thought that such a thing, yes, that you were supposed to walk around in it carrying it with you. I know it was pop from the early 90s, like TMC, Waterfalls, horrible pop, BoyzIIMen.”*¹³²

I7: *“My oldest sister, she was a bit ahead of her time, I would say now. That was very tricky in the family, because she liked jazz, and classical music. (...) She was a bit more educated than the rest of the family. (...) I think because she also met other people. But I know my father thought that was terrible. He tried to root it out. She would turn on the VPRO¹³³ often; on Saturday there was a program with Rinus Ferdinandusse¹³⁴, and a tad loud. Of course that went completely against my father’s feeling, in a strict Calvinistic family. VPRO, freethinkers. Whether it was puberty that was the cause for her acting in this way against my father, but there always was a tension between the two of them. He has (...) tried to root it all out. Then they were arguing about the music, about the radio, where it was tuned to, and then he wanted the radio turned off and she did not want that. She was so hurt in that so much. And then he said: ‘You don’t like this music! It’s impossible!’, he said. He did not understand a thing of that world. But she persevered.”*¹³⁵

¹³⁰ “Op mijn vijftiende (...) ging ik naar het jongerencentrum. Daar speelde Gruppo Sportivo, Jan Akkerman, al die Molukse bandjes, zitconcerten maakte ik dan mee, dat vond ik... Wow! Wow! Dat hoorde gewoon allemaal bij elkaar. Echte jongerencultuur. (...) Daar hoorde blowen ook gewoon bij. Ja, dat was gewoon een ontdekking, dat muziek en leefpatroon samen konden gaan. Wow! Dat je kon doen wat je wou. Een soort vrijheid.”

¹³¹ Garfinkel, 1984 (1967), p. 36.

¹³² “Het is niet alsof ik voor mijn achtste zelf muziek ging opzetten. Toen ik dat deed was het met z’n kleine radio die je met je mee kon dragen. Ik zou naar het winkelcentrum gaan, ik had niet zo heel veel vrienden en ik was helemaal niet cool, en ik dacht dat zo’n ding dan, ja, dat het de bedoeling was dat je daarmee er door heen loopt. Ik weet dat het van die vroege jaren ’90 pop [was], zo van TMC, Waterfalls, afschuwelijke pop, BoyzIIMen.”

¹³³ Very liberal Dutch broadcasting corporation.

¹³⁴ Famous Dutch media presenter, also author.

¹³⁵ “Mijn oudste zus, die was een beetje haar tijd ver vooruit zeg ik nu wel eens. Dat was toen heel lastig in het gezin, want zij hield van jazz, en klassiek. (...) Zij was wat verder ontwikkeld dan de rest van het gezin. (...) Ik denk omdat ze wat met andere mensen omging. Maar ik weet dat mijn vader dat afschuwelijk vond. Die probeerde dat de kop in te drukken. Dan had zij ook de VPRO vaak opstaan; op zaterdag was er dan zo’n programma met Rinus Ferdinandusse, en een beetje hard. Dat was natuurlijk helemaal tegen het gevoel van mijn vader in, van een gereformeerd gezin. VPRO, vrijzinnig denken. Of dat nou ook haar puberteit was dat ze gewoon ook zo tegen mijn vader inging, maar dat was altijd spanning tussen die twee. Hij heeft (...) geprobeerd dat allemaal de kop in te drukken. Dan hadden ze ruzie over die muziek, over de radio,

Summarizing, my interviewees talk about bonding the self to others through music: recognizing others on the basis of being recognized, possibly leading to forms of musicking where others are involved. The exchange of things may play a role here, and bonding may also take the forms of negative bonding or ‘liking-by-proxy’. Bonding is done with all kinds of persons: partners, family members, friends, but also people not known face to face such as members of ‘imagined communities’. Bonding develops over the life span, and may lead to forms of social positioning.

7.3.4 The ‘Supernatural’: transcending the self

In the interviews, interviewees regularly speak about the ways music connects them to the transcendent – to what is “beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience”¹³⁶.

I7: *“We are in the body, we are of course very limited, and our spirit is not. Of course you find that in music too. In music you can go much further than your earthly possibilities.”*¹³⁷

Often interviewees express themselves directly in terms of connections:

I27: *“I live for God, I have a relationship with Him.”*¹³⁸

I23: *“There have been moments I had epiphanies, strong intense experiences with music. (...) At that moment I make a connection with what I like.”*¹³⁹

I15: *“It gives a sort of connection, I do think so, when you sing [in church].”*¹⁴⁰

Interviewees connect, through music, with the ‘supernatural’ or ‘superreal’¹⁴¹, with what I call here, for want of a better term, the ‘existing unknowable’. The existing unknowable is a domain that exists for many of the interviewees, but is unknowable in a double sense: it is a domain which transcends everyday life as we know it, and the way of knowing this domain transcends our ordinary ways of knowing in everyday life. Concerning the latter, interviewees express that it can for example be felt rather than known intellectually, and can be expressed in music rather than in words.

waar die op stond, en dan wilde hij dat die radio uit ging en zij wilde dat niet. Zij werd daar ook zo in gekwetst. En dan zei hij: ‘Je houdt niet van die muziek! Dat bestaat niet!’, zei hij. Hij snapte daar niks van, van die wereld. Maar dat heeft ze toch doorgezet.”

¹³⁶ Oxford Dictionaries Online, oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/transcendent?q=transcendent, consulted February 12, 2013.

¹³⁷ “We zitten in het lijf, we zijn natuurlijk zo beperkt, en onze geest niet. Dat vind je natuurlijk in de muziek terug. In muziek kun je veel verder gaan dan je aardse mogelijkheden.”

¹³⁸ “Ik leef voor God, ik heb een relatie met Hem.”

¹³⁹ “Er zijn momenten geweest dat ik een soort openbaringen had, hevige intense ervaringen bij muziek.

(...) Op dat moment maak ik een connectie met wat ik mooi vind.”

¹⁴⁰ “Het geeft een soort verbinding, dat denk ik wel, als je zingt.”

¹⁴¹ For the ‘superreal’ as connected to transcending the temporal dimension of “our mortal condition” through musical experiences, see Roger W.H. Savage, ‘Being, Transcendence and the Ontology of Music.’ *The World of Music* 51/2 (2009), p. 16.

Adjectives and words like ‘super-’, ‘beyond’, ‘above’, and indeed ‘transcendent’ itself, point to one of the two metaphors often used by interviewees to indicate the nature of the existing unknowable: a metaphor which locates the unknowable ‘outside’ normal human experience. The unknowable is formulated as an opposition to the self, and may take the more traditional form of God or gods, or a less traditional form such as a – more mystical – essence of nature. The inverse metaphor is used as well: the unknowable is hidden in the ‘inside’ of normal human experience, and thus is not located *beyond*, but rather deeply *within* normal human experience. The unknowable is formulated not as a transcendence of the self but rather as an intensification of the self, for example as the ‘inner being’, sometimes going way back to earlier lives.¹⁴² Some interviewees combine the two metaphors of inside and outside:

I17: *“I was completely mad about Irish music. And not only mad about it, it also invoked emotions. If I heard that music, then a deep longing came over me, some sort of longing for... Yes, for what? (...) For something deeper, something bigger, something I once experienced maybe.”*¹⁴³

In general, the domain of the existing unknowable is a domain in which metaphors abound, basically because interviewees seem to have the feeling that something inexpressible needs to be expressed here. In that sense, it is comparable to the domain of being ‘touched’ by music (cf. section 7.2.2).

When interviewees talk about this domain, four types of relationships with the existing unknowable can be found: two positive, one negative, and one neutral. The first type of relationship is direct and positive. Interviewees accept that music connects them to the transcendent:

I13: *“And the artistic¹⁴⁴ aspects of tone, of sound, of rhythm. That may be a development, a deepening too. And the mystical side. Yes, you have to use the words but I think that is troublesome, an esoteric something. But for me it is not esoteric, it is a theoretical, scientific, physical thing, it is about the laws of nature.”*¹⁴⁵

I27: *“In a service it is all about God, that is very important for me.”*

EBB: *“And there songs play an important role?”*

¹⁴² Another form of the ‘way back’ idea is the description by one of the interviewees of religious ceremony as the oldest form of ceremony. The idea that an inner essence, of others or of self, may be touched through music may lead to strong thoughts about the healing capacity of music (see also section 7.4).

¹⁴³ “Ik was helemaal dol van Ierse muziek. En niet alleen dol, het bracht ook emoties teweeg. Als ik die muziek hoorde dan kwam er een verlangen in mij, een soort heimweegevoel, naar... ja naar wat? (...) Naar iets diepers, iets groters, iets wat ik ooit heb meegemaakt misschien.”

¹⁴⁴ Lit. ‘music aspects’.

¹⁴⁵ “En die muzische aspecten van klank, van geluid, van ritme. Dat is misschien wel een verandering, een verdieping ook. En de mystieke kant. Ja, je moet de woorden gebruiken maar ik vind het wel lastig, wat is dat voor zweverigs. Maar het is voor mij niet zweverig, een theoretisch, wetenschappelijk, een natuurkundig iets is het, het zijn natuurwetten. Ja. En ook de helende kant dus, van muziek, en van de stem als instrument.”

I27: *“Yes, it really is worship. (...) We also believe that the Holy Spirit, God’s spirit, lives in us and works in us.”*¹⁴⁶

In a second type of relationship interviewees recognize connections with the transcendent in others without feeling it themselves, sometimes leading to forms of liking-by-proxy (cf. section 7.3.3):

I2: *“I think I sing with the same choir about eight years now. Nice people. A faith I do not adhere to, at least not in the way they believe in it. (...) But I do love those simple praise songs. Even if I don’t believe in them, I think it is so moving that those people believe that so much from within. That touches my heart.”*¹⁴⁷

A third type of relationship with the idea of connecting to the transcendent is one in which interviewees react against this type of connecting:

I4: *“I never sang along in services, out of the hymnals, what was in church, in liturgy, I did not sang along because I really had no affinity with it. They often tried to make me do it, but I never did it because I simply did not have any affinity with it.”*¹⁴⁸

And finally there is a relationship which consists of a form of neutral recognition of the fact that in general this type of connecting exists, while downplaying its importance. This can be done for example by handling it not as a form of a transcendental connection but rather as a tradition, knowing it is something that played a role for e.g. parents and therefore connects the interviewee with the past:

I16: *“With us it was not from religion anymore but from tradition. So religion did play a role (...) but more from its traditional aspect than from its religious aspect. (...) For the rest it had no meaning, or influence, when it comes to music.”*¹⁴⁹

A peculiar variety of connecting the self with the transcendent is the idea that through music a connection is made with the realm of the artistic. This idea may have platonic undertones – the realm of the artistic can be approached through music but is never fully reached, music (either as a ‘work’ or as process) functions as a reflection of the realm of the artistic. The way music connects to the artistic – often seen as the realm of beauty – can be manifold. Music may capture beauty per se:

¹⁴⁶ I27: “Het draait tijdens zo’n kerkdienst wel om God, dat vind ik heel belangrijk”

EBB: “En daar spelen die liederen een belangrijke rol in?”

I27: “Ja, het is echt aanbedding. (...) Wij geloven ook dat de Heilige Heest, de geest van God, in ons woont en dat die in ons werkt.”

¹⁴⁷ “Ik denk dat ik acht jaar zing ongeveer bij hetzelfde koor. Aardige mensen. Een geloof dat ik niet aanhang, tenminste niet zoals zij het geloven. (...) Maar ik hou wel van die simpele opwekkingsliedjes. Ook al geloof ik het niet, ik vind het zo ontroerend dat die mensen dat zo van binnenuit geloven. Dat raakt mijn hart.”

¹⁴⁸ “Ik zong nooit mee in diensten uit de liedbundels, wat in de kerk stond, in de liturgie, daar zong ik niet mee, want daar had ik echt helemaal niks mee. Dat hebben ze me wel vaak proberen te laten doen maar dat heb ik nooit gedaan omdat ik er gewoon niks mee had.”

¹⁴⁹ “Bij ons was het ook niet meer vanuit de religie maar meer vanuit de traditie. Dus religie speelde wel een rol (...) maar meer vanuit het traditionele aspect dan vanuit het religieuze aspect. (...) Het heeft verder geen betekenis gehad, of invloed, op muziekgebied.”

I25: *“Your ears train themselves to hear beauty.”*¹⁵⁰

Music may also capture the perfect form:

I24: *“As orchestral musician you can simply, in the spirit of the composition, in the spirit of what the composer means, try to play your little role in it as good as possible. (...) Then you simply hear that piece by Brahms. (...) The expression sits purely in the construction of the music – in the notes.”*¹⁵¹

Alternatively, music may capture the artistic core of a person. Well-known is the idea that music expresses the artistic core of the composer – catching “the spirit of what the composer means”, as I24 says above. Another possibility (related to the phenomenon of expressing the self, see section 7.3.2) is that music expresses the artistic core of the musician and, the other way around, musicians are completely tuned to expressing the transcendental side of music, sometimes in such a way that they are extraordinary in that respect:

I15: *“Look here, there are people who are musicians, that is different [from developing a musical talent].”*¹⁵²

Finally music may capture the not-yet-materialized aspects of the artistic: the creative, the border-transgressive, the imaginative:

I26: *“That extreme, that you do give the performers an assignment... I was happy to learn that the experienced opera singers with whom I cooperated, that they could not use their formal training really, that they had to deconstruct themselves as singers and then had to put themselves together again. (...) I think that is equally important for a composer, that he makes it ten times as difficult for himself as for other people. So I am a ruthless worker.”*¹⁵³

Because the realm of the artistic is often verbalized as the realm of beauty, the experience of beauty is lifted out of the personal space of individual taste and into a wider domain of connoisseurship. For some interviewees, personal taste and connoisseurship clash then (cf. the clashing of ‘liking’ and ‘judging’, see section 7.2):

I6: *“With the modern classical music organization I have done many things, experimental music. A good laugh, always. I hardly ever appreciate it, but very nice to play [laughs]. I don’t think my heart really is in that music I have to say, but it is a good laugh, and I’ve done very interesting things.”*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ “Je oren trainen zich om schoonheid te horen.”

¹⁵¹ “Als orkestmusicus kun je gewoon in de geest van de compositie, in de geest van wat de componist bedoelt, proberen zo goed mogelijk jouw rolletje daarin te vervullen. (...) Dan hoor je gewoon dat stuk van Brahms. (...) De expressie zit puur in de constructie van de muziek zelf – in de noten.”

¹⁵² “Kijk, je hebt mensen die musici zijn, dat is wat anders.”

¹⁵³ “Dat extreme, dat je de performers wel wezenlijk een opdracht geeft... Het deed me deugd dat de ervaren operazangers met wie ik heb samengewerkt, dat ze niks hadden aan hun formele training in feite, dat ze zichzelf als zangers moesten deconstrueren en weer in elkaar zetten. (...) Ik vind dat dat ook net zo belangrijk is voor een componist, dat hij het zichzelf minstens tien keer zo moeilijk maakt als dat hij het voor de mensen maakt. Dus ik ben ook een genadeloze werker.”

¹⁵⁴ “Met [de organisatie voor moderne klassieke muziek] heb ik heel veel (...) dingen gedaan, van die piepknor-muziek. Vond ik ook heel erg lachen, altijd. Ik vind er bijna nooit echt wat aan, maar wel heel leuk om te doen [lacht]. Ik geloof niet dat mijn hart echt bij die muziek ligt moet ik zeggen, maar wel erg veel lol gehad, en ook heel interessante dingen gedaan.”

Summarizing, interviewees connect through music to the transcendent: the supernatural, the existing unknowable. This domain may be situated either outside or deep within human experience, and the relationship towards it may be positive (either direct or in the liking-by-proxy-form), neutral or negative. One of the forms the transcendent may take is the realm of the artistic – of beauty, of the perfect form, of the spirit of musical works or composers, or of creativity.

7.3.5 *'Things': materializing the self*

Things, in their broadest sense, are, as we have seen (see section 6.4) important ingredients of musical social situations. They are a means enabling the musicking of the interviewees – instruments to play on, CDs to listen to, audio installations to play the CDs on, banknotes to buy them with, et cetera. Sometimes these things are mere means for musicking, but they can obtain an 'end'-character in different gradations dependent upon the relations interviewees build up with them. These relations can become very personal, especially when things are in possession – handling things is essentially an activity loaded with personal as well as cultural meaning.¹⁵⁵

The attraction of things, their meaningfulness, is connected to their 'thinginess'. One interviewee says this about wanting to own CDs rather than audio files, and original CDs rather than copies:

I1: *"We [he and his partner] really like having the CD in our hands and paging through the inlay booklet."*¹⁵⁶

In the stories of the interviewees, the overwhelming idea is that it is the meaningful connection to the thinginess of the things that counts, rather than a mere will to own and consume. Only in some cases it seems that the status connected to owning or consuming music plays a role:

I11: *"Earlier when you discovered a band and you had ordered something from them, nobody knew them. (...) This friend of mine discovered it, I also bought a single, then we were the only two guys in the Netherlands who know that band. It makes... Not that it makes a difference for the music, but it makes it a bit more special. (...) Now you simply download it."*¹⁵⁷

This seems also to be the case when the wish to own musical things turns into collecting. In collecting, interviewees want to own things for the sake of owning it as part of a (complete) collection. But fundamentally there is always a connection with the personal meaningfulness of things. Given the intimate connection between music and self (see

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Slater, 1997, chapters 5 and 6.

¹⁵⁶ "We zijn allebei nog wel echt van het in de hand hebben van een cd en het doorbladeren van een boekje".

¹⁵⁷ "Vroeger als je een band vond en daar had je iets van besteld, die kende dan nog niemand. (...) Dan ontdekte die vriend van mij dat, dan kocht ik ook een singletje, nou dan waren wij de enige twee lui in Nederland of zo die die band kenden. Dat maakt... Niet dat dat uit moet maken voor de muziek, maar het maakt het wel wat specialer. (...) Nu kan je het gewoon downloaden."

section 7.2), it is not surprising that sometimes interviewees express the necessity of owning a certain item:

I5: *“But I have also thought occasionally: all [Bach] cantatas, bless me, I want to know them all, because they are so beautiful. If I hear something new I don’t know yet, I think: ‘Lord, I am going to collect them. I want to know them all.’”*¹⁵⁸

I1: *“Now and again, for example at a concert or on the radio or at a party I hear something, then suddenly I think: ‘Hey, what’s this? I have to have this!’”*¹⁵⁹

In most of the interviews, when on the topic of collecting, the boundary between owning a personal music collection and collecting is therefore not straightforward. Many interviewees stress the fact that, although they own an extensive CD collection for example, they actually are not collectors really. Often they set themselves apart consciously from those ‘fanatics and freaks’, as one of the interviewees describes them: the interviewee is not like them, he just happens to want to own beautiful things and this takes the form of a collection:

EBB: *“Are you a collector?”*

I23 (owning thousands of LPs and CDs): *“Eehhm...”*

EBB: *“(…) Ali Akbar Khan, Yehudi Menuhin. Are you like: ‘I want to have those original records’?”*

I23: *“No, no, not in that sense. I want to hear the music, and I want to hear the beautiful music of the man. If the man has done productions which are not beautiful I will not buy them, really. No, I don’t do that. (...) I have been looking out for second-hand stuff at some point, you can find nice things of course. (...) So to Amsterdam, to Black Music-fairs. Then of course you also meet the fanatics and the freaks [laughs].”*¹⁶⁰

One may think of the true collector as situated on the end of a continuum where their collecting activities are not tied to the meaningfulness of music any more but rather to the meaningfulness of the act of collecting. Hence the critical words on collecting by the interviewees who were expressing themselves as music lovers in the interview.

‘Owning music’ (in the form of e.g. LPs, CDs, or audio files) or owning instruments or audio gear sometimes leads to the idea that through the possession the self is shown:

¹⁵⁸ “Maar ik heb ook wel gedacht: alle cantates, verdorie, ik wil ze allemaal kennen, want ze zijn zo mooi. Als ik dan weer eens iets nieuws hoor wat ik niet ken, dan denk ik: ‘Jeetje, ik ga ze verzamelen. Ik wil ze allemaal kennen.’”

¹⁵⁹ “Heel af en toe heb ik dat ik bijvoorbeeld bij een concert of op de radio of op een feestje iets hoor, dat ik ineens denk van: ‘Hé, wat is dit? Dit moet ik hebben!’”

¹⁶⁰ “EBB: Ben je een verzamelaar?”

I23: Eehhm...

EBB: (...) Ali Akbar Khan, Yehudi Menuhin. Ben je dan ook zo van: ‘Ik wil die originele platen ook hebben?’

I23: “Nee, nee, niet in die zin. Ik wil de muziek kunnen horen, en ik wil de mooie muziek van de man kunnen horen. Als de man er producties tussen heeft zitten die niet mooi zijn zal ik ze echt niet kopen. Nee, dat doe ik niet. (...) Ik ben ook wel een periode heel erg op zoek geweest naar tweedehands, dan kon je natuurlijk wel leuke dingen vinden. (...) Dus naar Amsterdam, naar Black Music-beurzen. Dan ontmoet je natuurlijk daar ook weer de fanatiekelingen en freaks [lacht].”

I2: *“And this [cabinet] is filled with records, you can see where we come from.”*¹⁶¹

This specifically happens with music carriers, as their content is (more than e.g. audio gear or – most of the times – instruments) so tied to the core of the musical self as found in the ideas on being touched by and liking music (see section 7.2.1/7.2.2):

I25: *“You can see the development of music style, of taste also in the development from LPs to cassette tapes, CDs, DVDs. The cassette tapes: a lot of rock. The LPs are quite a collection, there is blues and reggae (...). The CDs are nearly all jazz things.”*¹⁶²

In most of the interviews, interviewees talk about their music carrier collection as having a core which is kind of fixed, also because of memories from their past. Parts of the musical things people own gather a material persistency for that reason. Ubiquitous among the somewhat older age category of the interviewees are remarks about LP (and to a lesser extent tape reel, cassette tape and CD¹⁶³) collections: the LPs are kept – even when the record player is long gone or broke – and will remain to be kept in the future:

I17: *“Upstairs I still have an old LP collection. 200 LPs, 300, I don’t know exactly.”*

EBB: *“And you’re not throwing it away?”*

I17: *“I’m not throwing it away. (...) A couple of years ago I bought a new record player. They all have nice sleeves. I notice, at work there are many people of around 30 years old, they don’t have any affinity with it. They don’t care, such a sleeve. Yes, it’s historically determined. I like that. That art work, that is also part of it.”*¹⁶⁴

I2: *“The record player just died. We have to buy it all again, but my husband does not want to throw them away, those LPs. (...) They simply are old loves.”*¹⁶⁵

EBB: *“You still have those cassette tapes?”*

¹⁶¹ “En deze zit vol met platen, dat kan je ook zien waar we vandaan komen.” See section 7.3.2 for more examples in quotations.

¹⁶² “Je kan aan de ontwikkeling van lp’s naar cassettebandjes, cd’s, dvd’s ook de ontwikkeling van de muziekstijl, de smaak zien. De bandjes veel rock. De lp’s is wel een verzameling, er zit blues en reggae bij (...). De cd’s zijn bijna allemaal jazzdingen.”

¹⁶³ CDs may be considered too current to have emotional collector’s value; cassette tapes and tape reels are probably considered essentially as copies whereas LPs and CDs are originals. Tapes, however, can become originals too, for example when they contain irreplaceable recordings of an own band – as in the case of I25 (see quote further on in this section) – or of radio transmitted concerts not available on CD, as in the case of I29, who adds: “I have kept them all” (“Dat heb ik allemaal bewaard”).

¹⁶⁴ I17: “Boven heb ik nog een oude lp collectie. 200 lp’s, 300, ik weet het niet precies.”

EBB: “En dat ga je ook niet weg doen?”

I17: “Dat ga ik ook niet weg doen. (...) Ik heb een paar jaar geleden nog een nieuwe platenspeler gekocht. Het zijn allemaal van die mooie hoezen. Ik merk dan, ik heb bij ons op het werk wel mensen van rond de 30, die hebben daar helemaal niks mee. Het maakt hen niet uit, zo’n hoes. Ja, het is gewoon historisch bepaald. Ik vind dat wel mooi. Dat *art work*, dat hoort er ook bij.”

¹⁶⁵ “Het [de platenspeler] is net ter ziele gegaan. We moeten alles opnieuw aanschaffen, maar mijn man wil ze toch niet weggooien, die elpees. (...) Het zijn gewoon ouwe liefdes.”

I25: *“Yes, I can’t throw them away. (...) I have my own business, my own teaching room, my own studio, all my cassette tapes are there.”*

EBB: *“And you don’t use them anymore, or do you?”*

I25: *“No, but I can’t throw them away. There are still beginner’s recordings of myself on it. (...) There is also music on it which I collected with a lot of love, lent from the library and put on tapes. Little money and everything, whole collections. Those are memories I have.”*¹⁶⁶

I19 (having sold his CD player): *“I cannot find it in my heart to sell the CDs.”*¹⁶⁷

An interesting opposition in the stories of the interviewees is the one between ‘sound’ and ‘music’, an opposition which functions often as an opposition between form or matter on the one hand and content or meaning on the other. For some interviewees, the sound of music represents a certain ‘thingification’ of music, specifically when the interviewee likes sound so much that he becomes an audiophile:

EBB: *“Are you an audiophile?”*

I19: *“Yes, I don’t know if I can call myself one but I think I am. (...) I definitely hear the difference between certain stereo sets, and I am also interested in the positioning of the audio installation (...). I am involved with music in a different way than most people are. (...) I also know much more about music than average. I remember facts because I think they are interesting. I don’t think that most people buy such an expensive stereo. I think that is more or less reserved to audiophiles. (...) Like: here you hear more details when you use these cables, or with this stereo the spatial image is much more beautiful. With people who also have that you talk in those terms really. So no, I think I can be described as being an audiophile.”*¹⁶⁸

Audiophile talk occurs not only with audiophiles, but seeps into the interviews in many cases: for example in discussions about the difference between live and mediated music, or about the perceived quality differences between analog or digital recordings, or between the digital formats of MP3 and FLAC. But the opposite also takes place:

¹⁶⁶ EBB: “Je hebt ze [de cassettebandjes] nog wel?”

I25: “Ja, ik kan ze niet weg doen. (...) Ik heb een eigen bedrijfje, een eigen lesruimte, een eigen studio, daar staan al mijn cassettebandjes.”

EBB: “En je gebruikt ze niet meer, of wel?”

I25: “Nee, maar ik kan ze ook niet weg doen. Er staan ook echt beginopnames van mezelf op. (...) Ik heb er ook muziek op staan die ik met heel veel liefde verzameld heb, van de bibliotheek op bandjes gezet. Weinig geld en alles, hele verzamelingen. Dat zijn herinneringen die ik heb.”

¹⁶⁷ “Ik kan het niet over mijn hart verkrijgen de cd’s te verkopen.”

¹⁶⁸ “EBB: Ben je een audiofiel?”

I19: “Ja, ik weet niet of ik me zo kan noemen maar ik denk het haast wel. (...) Ik hoor absoluut het verschil tussen een bepaalde stereo, en ook met opstellingen ben ik bezig (...). Ik ben wel op een andere manier met muziek bezig dan de meeste mensen. (...) Ik weet ook veel meer dan gemiddeld over muziek. Het zijn weetjes die ik onthoud omdat ik dat wel interessant vind. Ik denk ook niet dat de meeste mensen zo’n dure stereo kopen, ik denk dat dat wel een beetje aan audiofielen is voorbehouden. (...) Zo van: je hoort hier meer details als je gebruik maakt van deze kabels, en in deze stereo is het ruimtelijk beeld weer veel mooier, Je praat dan met mensen die het ook hebben ook echt in die termen. Dus nee, ik denk wel dat ik omschreven kan worden als audiofiel.”

I6: *“I actually think the sound of a record is very beautiful. I also don’t mind if there are scratches or things on it, that makes a difference too. Because getting irritated by that seems terrible to me. But I don’t mind. (...) Also it is not the case that I want expensive loudspeakers or an audio installation or so, it doesn’t mean much to me. For me it is purely about the music. In a concert hall half of the audience coughs through the music anyway.”*¹⁶⁹

Summarizing: handling things is a *conditio sine qua non* in musical situations, it is a means to other ends. But in some cases, the handling of things – and specifically the owning of them – can become a very personal and meaningful matter and then the thinginess of musicking gradually turns more into an end in itself.

7.3.6 ‘Time’: ‘presenting’ the self

7.3.6.1 Self and past: remembering the self

For nearly all of the interviewees, music connects them to the timeliness of their “mortal condition”¹⁷⁰ – and to their past mostly. For many of the interviewees, music functions as what Bryce Merrill describes as technologies of memory, “memory practices enabled by technical objects that influence an individual’s ongoing constitution of self” – the “mnemonic construction of self”¹⁷¹. In this section, I will first discuss some more general features of remembering through music: individual remembering, social remembering, the role of things, and the strength of musical connections to the past. I will then focus on the positive, negative or neutral qualities of remembering, and finish with some remarks on remembering as an act.

Music often functions as a personal reminder of days gone by and at the same time as an inspiration for the present:

I20: *“That really appealed to me, the phenomenon of recovering certain memories with music again and again, certain feelings it can evoke. And also the other way around, that for certain moods or occasions you can pick your own music or play it, that has been a very important phenomenon in my life.”*¹⁷²

Hearing music, playing music, or simply possessing an audio carrier may bring back memories of the past – circumstances in which the music was played, persons it was attached to, feelings it aroused, games played while hearing the music, even DJs’ intros to a specific song taped from the radio may be remembered very vividly:

I26: *“Every time I hear a church organ I return to the smell of my older brother who would hammer the keys covered in perspiration, and that you don’t dare to*

¹⁶⁹ “Ik vind het geluid van een plaat toch wel heel mooi. Ik vind het ook niet erg als er tikken of dingen op zitten, dat scheelt ook. Want als je je daar aan irriteert dan lijkt me dat verschrikkelijk. Maar ik vind dat niet zo erg. (...) Ook niet dat ik mooie dure boxen of een installatie of zo, dat zegt me niet zoveel, het gaat me wel puur om de muziek; in de concertzaal hoest ook de helft er door heen.”

¹⁷⁰ Savage, 2009, p. 16.

¹⁷¹ Merrill, 2010, p. 458.

¹⁷² “Dat sprak me erg aan, het fenomeen van steeds maar weer het terugkrijgen van bepaalde herinneringen bij muziek, bepaalde gevoelens bij muziek die het op kan roepen. En dus ook andersom dat je bij bepaalde sferen of gelegenheden dus ook zelf muziek kan uitzoeken of zelf kan gaan spelen, dat is een heel belangrijk fenomeen altijd in mijn leven geweest.”

turn the page one second too early or too late because if you are too late he will turn the page himself [laughs] and if you are too early he will get a heart attack [laughs]."¹⁷³

I16: *"My granny of course, of course she had that real classical old Javanese [music]... I can remember – and still – (...) the moment I am somewhere or hear it somewhere I pick it up immediately, like: 'Oh yes, I remember that from my granny.'*"¹⁷⁴

I5: *"I also could become very sad from listening to music. Schubert's four-hand piano Fantasia, I can remember I put it on at home, I still was at primary school. And then I sat there just crying. But I had to hear it, I thought it so... And still, that's funny, you keep that association, also with that piece, when I hear that piece I cannot bear it really."*¹⁷⁵

I8: *"I played a lot on the computer and that was [the game] 'The Incredible Machine', and my father always played the song 'Yesterday' by the Beatles back then, so every time I hear that song again I think of the computer game."*¹⁷⁶

I1: *"When I heard them again after 20 years (...) then with some songs I could... I still knew which announcements before or after were made by the DJ. So I knew: oh, this song must have been a number 7, because when the song was finished I would hear in my head: 'Number six', so that song must have been at number seven once."*¹⁷⁷

Sometimes, though, the musical taste of the former self becomes incomprehensible:

I17: *"Looking back at that time... I really have to look up what I did play then, I don't think I did not listen to music for years. I started to listen to more easy-going music... I don't understand now that I listened to that. [Looks through his CD*

¹⁷³ "Elke keer als ik een kerkorgel hoor dan kom ik terug naar die lucht van mijn oudere broer die helemaal bezweet aan het hameren is op de toetsen, en dat je niet durft één seconde te vroeg of te laat het blad te keren, omdat als je te laat bent dan pakt hij het zelf [lacht] en als je te vroeg bent dan krijgt hij een hartaanval [lacht]."

¹⁷⁴ "Mijn oma natuurlijk, die had natuurlijk echt dat klassieke ouwe Javaanse... Ik kan me wel herinneren – en nog steeds – (...) op het moment dat ik ergens ben of het ergens hoor dan pik ik het gelijk op, van: 'Oh ja, dat weet ik nog van mijn oma.'"

¹⁷⁵ "Ik kon ook wel heel verdrietig worden van muziek. Fantasia van Schubert, quatre-mains piano, dat kan ik me nog wel herinneren dat ik die dan opzette thuis, toen zat ik nog wel op de lagere school, en dan zat ik gewoon alleen maar te huilen, Maar ik moest het dan ook wel horen, dat vond ik dan zo... En nog steeds, dat is dan gek, die associatie houd je wel, bij dat stuk ook, als ik dat stuk hoor dan kan ik het eigenlijk niet verdragen."

¹⁷⁶ "Ik speelde heel veel op de computer en dat was dan 'The Incredible Machine', en toen had mijn vader altijd het nummer Yesterday van de Beatles opstaan, dus elke keer als ik dat nummer weer hoor dan denk ik aan dat spelletje."

¹⁷⁷ "Als ik ze na 20 jaar weer eens beluisterde (...) dan kon ik bij sommige nummers, dan wist ik nog welke aankondiging of afkondiging de dj erbij had. Dus dan wist ik: oh, dit nummer dat moet op nummer zeven hebben gestaan, want als het nummer afgelopen is dan zit in mijn hoofd: 'nummer zes', dus dan moet dat nummer op nummer zeven hebben gestaan een keer."

collection.] *Oh yes, Björk, that is not too bad. Also played some soul. Those were not my most inspiring years, as it were.*”¹⁷⁸

Memories also play a social role. Shared memories may unite partners, for example by sharing memories from their individual youths:

I1: *“Let me see. We have a huge pile of Greatest Hits CDs, the best of the ‘80s, the best of the ‘90s. (...) The real focus when we listened to music is the second half of the ‘80s, and all those songs we know inside out.*”¹⁷⁹

And it may unite friends, leading to social occasions where playing music-with-memories is central:

I19: *“Three months ago with two friends (...) – in the past we played records very often at night in our attic, we repeated that three months ago, years after we had done that for the last time, (...) we were playing music at night and someone said: ‘Oh yes, that song is nice too’, we would look it up on the internet and download it and five minutes later someone mixed it in.*”¹⁸⁰

Things are important in memorizing. A lot of memorizing is done through access to music which is mediated. I2, for example, refers to her record collection as an option ‘to see where we come from’ (see section 7.3.5, and cf. section 7.3.3). Sometimes visits of concerts fulfill this role, as with I1 who connects the past with the present through memorizing:

I1: *“Last Sunday I went to Europe¹⁸¹ as part of nostalgia for my youth. (...) They don’t play pop-rock anymore but a bit more guitar oriented... It all has become a bit louder, that actually fits perfectly with what I really like now.*”¹⁸²

Connections once made with the past often are strong:

I17: *“At a certain moment the connection is made, you don’t simply get rid of it then.*”¹⁸³

I19: *“I now notice it is especially the memory which is beautiful, and not the music itself.*”¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ “Achteraf was toen... Ik moet echt even nakijken wat ik toen wel draaide, ik denk niet dat ik jaren geen muziek beluisterd heb. Toen ging ik wel wat rustiger muziek... Ik snap nu niet meer dat ik daar naar luisterde. Oh ja, Björk, dat valt dan nog mee. Ook nog wat soul gedraaid. Het waren niet mijn meest inspirerende jaren zeg maar.”

¹⁷⁹ “Eens kijken. We hebben een enorme stapel Greatest Hits cd's van het beste van de jaren ‘80, het beste van de jaren ‘90. (...) Het echte brandpunt van toen we naar muziek luisterden, dat is zeg maar de tweede helft van de jaren ‘80, en al die nummers kennen we ook van haver tot gort.”

¹⁸⁰ “Drie maanden geleden heb ik met twee vrienden (...) – heel vaak vroeger gingen we ’s avonds op zolder bij ons platen draaien, dat hebben we drie maanden geleden nog eens gedaan na echt jaren dat we dat ooit nog eens hadden gedaan, (...) dan zaten we ’s nachts te draaien en dan zei iemand: ‘Oh ja, dat nummer is ook mooi’, dan gingen we op internet zoeken en dan downloaden en 5 minuten later mixte iemand dat er bij.”

¹⁸¹ Swedish rock band, famous for their hit ‘The Final Countdown’ (1986).

¹⁸² “Ik ben afgelopen zondag naar Europe geweest in het kader van jeugdsentiment. (...) ze maken geen pop-rock meer maar wat meer gitaargeoriënteerde... het is wat zwaarder allemaal geworden, dat past eigenlijk perfect bij wat ikzelf nu heel leuk vind.”

¹⁸³ “Op een gegeven moment is dat verband gelegd, dan kom je er ook niet meer zo maar van af.”

Sometimes this goes as far as bringing back memories from an earlier life, as Irish music does for I7 (see quote in section 7.3.4) or black music for I2:

I2: *“I make one exception: that Soweto gospel choir. (...) That is inside of me, as if I have been a member once. I can imagine that vividly. (...) I think that I have a lot of those black lives. Native American lives, but also black lives.”*¹⁸⁵

Musical memories can be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. An example of a pleasant memory is for example I1’s reference to the power of the music of The Young Messiah¹⁸⁶:

I1: *“We still play The Young Messiah in the family at Christmas. For my brother and my sister and me it is really a homecoming experience, as it were. It truly is Christmas only when we are at my mother’s and that CD has been played at least once. I have it myself as a simple copied CD in the collection, for playing at Christmas. (...) Last Christmas it was nice because it snowed, because I have an image of snow in my head with it. Once that record was playing when I came back from the skating rink and that must have been a winter with snow, I was sitting in my reading chair with hot chocolate and the Young Messiah in the background.”*¹⁸⁷

Unpleasant memories may be equally powerful:

I1: *“Still today. That little building is next to the garage where we had our car serviced. I recognized the building immediately, I knew: ‘Ooh’. It is such a remembrance, that association was there immediately, like: ‘Oh, this is not a nice place to be.’ I had to do it for a year, it mainly were recorder lessons and that meant nothing to me. I did not like the music, the teacher simply was a very nice*

¹⁸⁴ “Ik merk nu dat het met name de herinnering is die mooi is, en niet de muziek zelf.”

¹⁸⁵ “Ik heb één uitzondering: dat Soweto gospelkoor. (...) Dat zit in me, net of dat ik daar ooit lid van geweest ben. Dat zou ik me levendig kunnen voorstellen. (...) ik denk dat ik heel veel van die zwarte levens heb. Indianenlevens, maar ook zwarte levens.” I am not sure how realistic or metaphoric I2 means this statement – there may be an analogy at work like this: music is emotional because it brings back memories from the past – this music is emotional for me but I can’t trace it to my knowable past – so there might be an unknowable past to explain the force of this music.

¹⁸⁶ An adaptation of Georg Friedrich Handel’s “Messiah” by Tom Parker, with singers such as Labi Siffre and Vicky Brown.

¹⁸⁷ “The Young Messiah draaien we in de familie nog altijd met kerstmis. Dat is voor mijn broer en mijn zus en voor mij ook echt thuishouden zeg maar. Het is pas Kerstmis als we bij mijn moeder zitten en die cd is minstens een keer langsgekomen. Ik heb hem zelf ook als gewoon als gekopieerd cd’tje in de kast staan voor tijdens de kerst. (...) Afgelopen kerst was het leuk want het sneeuwde, want ik heb daar een sneeuwbeeld bij in mijn hoofd. Ooit een keer stond die plaat op toen ik van de ijsbaan terugkwam en dat moet dus een sneeuwwinter geweest zijn, dat ik in mijn leesstoel zat met warme chocolademelk en The Young Messiah op de achtergrond.” This quote also points to the fact that many memories are not only individual, but also they make use of a social reservoir of ‘memorability’. The skating rink feeling is not just an individual memory but also connected to a collective Dutch memory playing a role in the (sub)conscious of many Dutch people and finding expression in for example references to it in advertising campaigns in the Netherlands (see the campaigns in recent years by for example by companies such as Calvé, Mars, Aegon, and Essent; and the host of companies connecting in their advertising campaign in winter 2012 to the hope that the famous 200 kilometer long Elfstedentocht [‘Eleven Cities Tour’] could be held, amongst which Actimel, Albert Heijn, Durex, Gamma, Heineken, Hema, Karwei, Mentos and Unox; cf. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJay72-rT_s, consulted February 19, 2013), thus laying a secure foundation on which individuals can easily build their buildings of memories.

slightly older woman who wanted to make some sweet murmuring music. Yes, I do not know much about it anymore. It is purely an emotion that stayed with me. After that I did not want to have to do anything with music at all for five, six years.”¹⁸⁸

I2: *“By accident Psalm 8 was sung there [at a funeral], and all those images came back because that was the place where that [teacher] at the Academy of Social Work had said [when I2 was singing a psalm with her class mates]: ‘Stop that growling, keep quiet you.’ That was Psalm 8, (...) about human beings being mindful of their fellows*”¹⁸⁹. ”¹⁹⁰

Neutral memories do exist but are, because of their neutral nature, hardly referred to. Sometimes, however, interviewees speak of in essence neutral memories which become positive in retrospect:

I8: *“I think I did not really like it, that music. But when I hear it again now, I think it’s fantastic. Maybe a bit of youth sentiment, I don’t know what it is. I have not really looked for a CD with those Happy Hardcore songs but it could be a CD of which I think: ‘I would like to have that CD now.’ Occasionally I hear a song from the tasteless ‘90s, (...) then the car radio gets played somewhat louder, it makes me cheerful, that music.*”¹⁹¹

Memorizing is not a simple act of recollection of the past, but also a “partial reconstruction of the past that attends to and connects memory traces according to the press of present needs and interpretations”¹⁹². It may therefore be important to distinguish between the memory and the memorizing process – many musical memories are neutral in themselves but the process of memorizing those neutral memories can be something which is actively sought and deemed pleasant by many interviewees. This may be the effect of the fact that through memorizing interviewees bring their biography into

¹⁸⁸ “Nu nog steeds. Dat gebouwtje dat staat vlak naast de garage waar we een tijdje onze auto in onderhoud hebben gehad. Ik herkende dat gebouw ook meteen, ik wist meteen ‘Ooh’, het is zo’n herkenning, die associatie die was er meteen weer, van: ‘Oh dit is geen leuke plek om te zijn.’ Ik moest het een jaar doen, het was blokfluitles hoofdzakelijk en dat sprak niet tot mij. Dat vond ik geen leuke muziek, de lerares die het deed dat was gewoon een hele aardige wat oudere mevrouw die wat zoete kabbelmuziek wilde maken op blokfluit. Ja, ik weet er ook niet zo heel veel meer van. Het is puur een emotie die ik nog daarvan over heb gehouden. Daarna heb ik dus ook een jaar of 5, 6 helemaal niks met muziek te maken willen hebben.”

¹⁸⁹ There seems to be a replacement of God by fellow human beings at stake in I2’s reading of psalm 8, the original text being addressed to God and reading in 8:4: “What is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them?”

(<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=NIV>, consulted February 19, 2013)

¹⁹⁰ “Daar werd toevallig psalm 8 gezongen, en ik kreeg al die plaatjes weer terug want dat was de plek waar die [docent] op de sociale academie gezegd had: ‘Hou eens op met dat gebrom, hou jij je nou maar stil.’ Dat was psalm 8, (...) over de mens die de zijnen gedenkt.”

¹⁹¹ “Volgens mij vond ik er toen niet heel veel aan, die muziek. Maar als ik het nu weer hoor, dan vind ik het fantastisch. Misschien ook wel een beetje jeugdsentiment, ik weet niet wat het is. Ik heb eigenlijk nooit weer gezocht om een cd van die nummers met Happy Hardcore maar het zou wel een cd zijn waarvan ik denk: ‘Die zou ik wel weer eens willen hebben.’ Ik hoor zo nu en dan wel weer eens een nummer van de foute jaren ’90, (...) dan gaat de autoradio toch wel wat harder, ik word er wel vrolijk van, van die muziek.”

¹⁹² Donald E. Polkinghorne, ‘Narrative Psychology and Historical Consciousness.’ In: Jürgen Straub (Ed.), *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*. New York: Berghahn, 2005, p. 9.

being¹⁹³ and thus, in Meadian terms, the ‘I’ begets a ‘me’. That may explain why some interviewees talk about their musical past as uncovering an implicit red thread connected to the interviewee’s individuality:

I4: *“Queen was one of the great. So that style of music, symphonic rock, I got acquainted with it them, and it is something I still really like. The symphonic in classical music, as well as the symphonic in pop or rock music, it caught on with me and that still is the case.”*¹⁹⁴

I27: *“I grew up in a neighborhood (...) where many South Moluccans lived, so I really caught those foreign sounds, music, smells and those sorts of things. We had an asylum seekers centre here for five years, and I thought: ‘Hey, how come these sounds and music and so on, that they touch me so much in a way’; especially the smells. (...) For me it was a nostalgia trip, that that came back.”*¹⁹⁵

This ‘biographizing’ effect may also account for the idea that one must ‘make up’ for gaps in the musical collection:

EBB: *“You don’t have many (...) copies I believe.”*

E17: *“Yes, that seems to be the case (...) because I do it very neatly. So I have... Of the bands of which I am really a fan, I buy most of the material. Sometimes you become an enthusiast of something and they have already been playing for some time. So yes, I have to make up for that, I don’t buy all that. I can square this with my conscience a little, my means are not unlimited.”*¹⁹⁶

Memorizing is not only a factual recollection of the past – it is also a conscious act. That becomes very clear for example in the acknowledgement of I1 that the connotation between Young Messiah and his parental home has probably been consciously constructed by his parents¹⁹⁷:

¹⁹³ Cf. Alheit & Dausien, 2009; Riessman, 2008, p. 7 ff.

¹⁹⁴ “Queen was een van de grote. Dus die stijl muziek, de symfonische rock, daar kwam ik toen mee in aanraking in die tijd, en dat is ook nog steeds iets wat ik geweldig vind. Sowieso in de klassieke muziek het symfonische, als in de pop c.q. rockmuziek het symfonische, dat sloeg bij mij aan en dat is ook zo gebeven.” Cf. I1 on ‘wall-to-wall music’ in section 7.2.3.

¹⁹⁵ “Ik ben in een wijk (...) groot geworden waar heel veel Zuid-Molukkers woonden, dus ik heb ook echt de buitenlandse klanken, muziek, geuren en dat soort dingen opgevangen. We hebben hier vijf jaar een AZC [asielzoekerscentrum] gehad en toen dacht ik: ‘Hé, hoe kan het dat ik die klanken en die muziek en zo, dat dat mij zo raakt op de een of andere manier’; vooral de geuren. (...) Het was voor mij eigenlijk een feest der herkenning, dat dat weer terugkwam.”

¹⁹⁶ EBB: “Je hebt niet veel (...) kopieën volgens mij.”

E17: “Ja dat lijkt maar zo (...) omdat ik die heel netjes doe. Dus ik heb... Van de bands waar ik echt liefhebber van ben, daar koop ik toch wel het meeste materiaal van. Soms dan word je ergens liefhebber van en dan zijn ze al een tijdje bezig. Dus ja, dan moet dat even ingehaald worden, dat koop ik niet allemaal. Dat kan ik dan altijd wel een beetje naar mezelf toe verantwoorden, de middelen zij ook niet onbeperkt.”

¹⁹⁷ One might say that a form of identity construction through inventing a tradition is going on; cf. Fredrik Barth (Ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Long Grove: Waveland, 1998 (1969); and Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

I1: *“That Young Messiah-record, that is the only thing that stuck in my memory. Probably mainly because my parents later made some sort of tradition out of it, to... When we came to dinner, that record was played.”*¹⁹⁸

7.3.6.2 Self, the future and the present: expecting the self, celebrating the self

Although, when it comes to connecting the individual with ‘time’, stories about the past abound, in some cases interviewees mention connections to those two other aspects of our timeliness: future and present.

A connection to the future takes two forms basically: a personal one, and one through (grand)children. A personal connection to the future again takes different forms. Basically the idea is that there is some kind of development or progress from the past towards the present, which extends to the future:

I25: *“I got a boy-friend [when I was 17], he also listened to jazz-rock. I thought it horrible, wind instruments, not my sort of thing. It made me nervous. I thought it was terrible. (...) Eventually you start liking it, I don’t know how that works. Then in the end I also liked jazz very much suddenly. (...) You mature in your feelings but that also comes with age, I think. You grow, it belongs to phases. (...) It has developed, more and more, and that is still going on, it doesn’t stand still.”*¹⁹⁹

Strong stories in this respect are told by those interviewees who are performing or composing themselves. An inherent characteristic of performing and composing – and specifically of playing an instrument – in the stories of the interviewees seems to be that they, as an automatism, feel the need to become better at it; when playing an instrument, progression is the norm²⁰⁰:

I5: *“My father, with that violin... But he himself also had that feeling: ‘Playing the violin, oh, that is so hard.’ Always the difficult, the awkward side of it. And the recorder of course did not have that. Playing a recorder, everybody could do that. I was given it in my hand, and I was the only one having fun with it. But they did not have to tell me anything, (...) I simply liked to play those pieces. I also was like... I probably liked the manual skill required learning to play such a small instrument. Not so much only the music but simply... doing it, or so.”*²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ “Die Young Messiah-plaat, dat is het enige wat is blijven hangen. Dat is ook hoofdzakelijk omdat mijn ouders er later een soort traditie van hebben gemaakt, om... als wij daar kwamen eten dan ging die plaat op.”

¹⁹⁹ “Toen kreeg ik een vriendje, die luisterde ook naar jazzrock. Dat vond ik vreselijk, blazers, kon ik helemaal niks mee. Ik werd er zenuwachtig van. Afschuwelijk vond ik het. (...) Uiteindelijk ga je het toch mooi vinden, ik weet niet hoe het gaat. Toen uiteindelijk vond ik jazz in één keer ook heel mooi. (...) Je gaat verder in je gevoel maar het hoort ook bij je leeftijd denk ik soms. Je groeit, het hoort ook bij fases. (...) Het heeft zich ontwikkeld, steeds meer, en dat is nu nog steeds aan de hand, het staat niet stil.”

²⁰⁰ Cf. Bruno Nettl’s characterization of Western music culture as focused on “a kind of athletic view of music”. Bruno Nettl, ‘Introduction. Studying Musics of the World’s Cultures.’ In: Bruno Nettl (Ed.), *Excursions in World Music*. Sixth Edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 2012, p. 7.

²⁰¹ “Mijn vader, die toch die viool... maar ook zelf altijd het gevoel: ‘Viool, ach, dat is zo lastig.’ Altijd dat moeilijke, dat zware er van. En dat had die blokfluit natuurlijk helemaal niet. Blokfluit, dat kan iedereen. Die kreeg ik in mijn hand, en ik ben de enige die er lol in had. Maar ze hoefden mij ook niets te zeggen,

I20: *“I bought a violin for my daughter. (...) She is nearly six now, and she was completely crazy about the violin. I gave her a little stereo set and some nice music, classical, she loved violin so much, so I think like: ‘Then she must have music in her room.’ (...) So I bought her a children’s violin, the reason behind it being that I want to pass it on in the way it has been passed on to me also. (...) Those things are really so affordable at present, and of reasonable quality, so I think: ‘I must have one myself too.’ (...) Nice to have, and there will be a time I will pick it up and get it tuned and I will try it out.”*²⁰²

I12: *“After ten lessons, I decided it was enough. (...) But I did keep recording myself and playing it back, listening if it would become better, become different. Actually that has worked out well, I think.”*²⁰³

I4: *“That [a certain song] is something I download to listen to it very closely, to copy it, to imitate it, so that I can make my own song from it. It really is reference material.”*²⁰⁴

I15: *“If you don’t play that much anymore your playing simply goes downhill. Then you become frightened of your touch so it simply becomes less fun.”*²⁰⁵

The last quote indicates that the future may not only be a domain of (hopeful) expectations, but also of sorrow: ambitions may have to be put aside because of e.g. physical handicaps, as is the case with I19 who gave up a career as a DJ. On the one hand he sometimes expresses a longing to take it up again (showing that ambitions not necessary are about the new, but also about the known) but on the other hand he feels reluctant because of the possible worsening of the ear damage he has in one ear.

Connecting to the future is not just an individual matter, interviewees also connect to the future musically through others: children, grandchildren, or pupils for example. I20 above already talked about passing on to his children what has been passed on to him, and expands on that elsewhere in the interview; and other interviewees express the same idea of passing on music to children:

(...) ik vond het leuk gewoon om die stukjes te spelen. Ik vónd er niet zo veel van misschien. Ik had ook een beetje... de handvaardigheid van zo’n instrumentje te leren spelen vond ik waarschijnlijk ook al leuk. Niet zozeer alleen maar de muziek of maar gewoon ... het doen of zo.”

²⁰² “Ik heb voor mijn dochter een viool gekocht. (...) Ze is nu bijna zes, en die was helemaal gek van viool. Ik heb haar ook een stereo’tje gegeven en wat mooie muziek, klassiek, ze hield zo van viool, dus ik denk van: ‘Dan moet ze ook muziek op de kamer hebben.’ (...) Dus ik heb een kinderviooltje voor haar gekocht, ook weer met de achterliggende gedachte dat ik het graag wil doorgeven zoals het aan mij is doorgegeven. (...) Die dingen zijn eigenlijk zo betaalbaar tegenwoordig, en van redelijke kwaliteit, dus ik denk: ‘Nou moet ik er zelf ook maar één hebben.’ (...) Leuk voor de heb en er komt ooit een moment, dan pak ik hem en ga ik hem stemmen en dan ga ik dat ook proberen.”

²⁰³ “Na 10 lessen vond ik het goed. (...) Maar wel altijd zelf [opnemen en] terugluisteren, kijken of het beter kan, anders kan. Eigenlijk is dat best wel – vind ik – redelijk goed [gelukt].”

²⁰⁴ “Dat is iets wat ik dan download om er even goed naar te luisteren, om het na te doen, om dat te imiteren, om er vervolgens een eigen nummer van te kunnen maken. Het is echt referentiemateriaal.”

²⁰⁵ “Als je niet meer zoveel speelt dan ga je gewoon achteruit. Dan schrik je van je eigen aanslag dus dan wordt het gewoon minder leuk.”

I20: *“That love [for music] is also passed on. (...) I can share it with the kids too, and that is as it used to be at home. My parents shared it with me, as it were, and that more or less went effortlessly, and now that happens again. I am happy with that. They also try to make music (...). Yes, those are the better things making a full circle, as it were.”*²⁰⁶

I5: *“With the eldest I think the seed has been sown, as it were. (...) I think I would like it if they would like classical music later on. (...) They see us having such pleasure in our jobs [as classical musicians]. Of course they are very sensitive to... I absolutely don’t want to push or anything. (...) I would like it if they, later, like... What music does for me, you would want to give to everybody.”*²⁰⁷

EBB: *“Was there a lot of singing at home?”*

I22: *“A lot. Yes, a lot.”*

EBB: *“Of course that’s inevitable, with such a father [a musician].”*

I22: *“[Laughs.] Yes, my little boy gets much out of it already. He is completely into music, and he is just three years old. [Laughs.] You have to cram it in at an early age, right? Music makes you happy. Everybody agrees with that. Music is for everybody. If you want to become happy, that’s what music is for.”*²⁰⁸

Connecting, finally, to the present is mentioned directly by I21 who reports experiencing a loss of time consciousness when playing or listening to music, giving rise to a ‘celebration’ of the self ‘in the moment’ in a form of a heightened self awareness:

I21: *“When I make music, I fly. I become timeless. I always put the alarm clock on when I make music, I don’t know what time it is, which day it is. (...) It’s no burden to me, I get energy, I become happy.”*²⁰⁹

A similar connection to the present takes place when music is used to ‘mark the moment’:

I20: *“Music for me also is an addition to conviviality. (...) A party without music, or a social evening without music, that does not exist for me. Something bad must be going on or so, if I don’t want music with it.”*²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ “Ook die liefde wordt weer doorgegeven. (...) Met de kids kan ik het ook delen, en dat is net als vroeger thuis. Mijn ouders deelden dat met mij, zeg maar, dat ging dan min of meer spelenderwijs en vanzelf, en dat gebeurt nu weer. Daar ben ik blij om. Ze proberen ook muziek te maken (...). Ja, dat zijn de betere cirkeltjes die rond komen, zal ik maar zeggen.”

²⁰⁷ “Bij de oudste is denk ik nu dat zaadje wel gezaaid, zeg maar. (...) Ik zou het toch wel leuk vinden als ze die klassieke muziek toch ook wel straks mooi zullen vinden. (...) Ze zien dat wij ontzettend plezier in ons vak hebben. Ze zijn natuurlijk ook gevoelig voor... Ik wil absoluut niet pushen of zo. (...) Ik vind het wel leuk als zij, later, net zo als... Wat muziek voor mij doet dat gun je iedereen.”

²⁰⁸ EBB: “Werd er ook veel gezongen thuis?”

I22: “Heel veel. Ja, heel veel.”

EBB: “Moet ook wel met zo’n vader natuurlijk.”

I22: “[Lacht.] Ja, mijn kleine neemt het nu ook al weer mee. Die is ook al helemaal weg van muziek, en die is nog maar net drie. [Lacht.] Dat moet je er vroeg in stouwen, hé? Van muziek word je ook vrolijk. Iedereen kan zich daarin vinden. Voor iedereen is muziek. Als je vrolijk wilt worden, daar is muziek voor.”

²⁰⁹ “Als ik muziek maak, vlieg ik. Ik word tijdloos. Ik zet altijd de wekker als ik muziek maak, ik weet niet hoe laat het is, welke dag het is. (...) Het belast mij niet, ik krijg energie, ik word gelukkig.”

7.3.6.3 Summary

Summarizing, interviewees connect to time through music: to the past, the future and the present. Of these three, the past is by far the most often mentioned. Remembering the past is done individually as well as with others, and mediated music – and therefore music carriers – play an important role. Memories may be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, and the memorizing process as such for many interviewees is a rewarding form of musicking in itself. Connecting to the future happens either through expectations concerning the development of the self (a strong mechanism when performing music is concerned), as well as through expectations concerning the musical future of others such as (grand)children. Connecting to the present, finally, is found when interviewees describe a heightened form of self-awareness ‘in the moment’.

7.3.7 ‘Place’: rooting the self

Music can give interviewees a powerful connection to certain places²¹¹. As shown earlier, this may take various forms: for example a direct connection to a specific place filled with memories, as for example the building where I1’s music lessons took place (see quote in section 7.3.6.1), or a connection to friends’ places:

I27: *“For example I have a CD of ELO also, that one simply was played a lot at the house of a friend of mine. (...) I thought it fantastic. Dire Straits, that was at a friend’s, he was crazy about the Dire Straits, that [LP] was completely worn out. Very nice. It brings to mind memories of music, if you hear the songs again you think: ‘Oh, yes’, you go back in time for a moment and you know again where you were.”*²¹²

Recollections to places visited on holidays are frequently mentioned. Sometimes they come up through CDs bought in the country which was visited, but connections are sometimes also made rather incidentally:

I17: *“So we went out camping (...). In the meantime we played Robbie Williams till it was worn out. (...) Everybody knows that CD by heart, it belongs to that holiday.”*²¹³

Sometimes connections are made to a place of origin through music: a place of personal origin, as in the case of I16 who identifies Javanese music as music belonging to him through his Javanese-Surinamese grandmother (see quote in section 7.3.6.1); a place of a more ‘mythical’ origin, as when I7 talks about her strong connection to Ireland and

²¹⁰ “Muziek betekent voor mij ook gewoon een stuk aanvulling op gezelligheid. (...) Een feestje zonder muziek, of een avond gezellig met elkaar zonder muziek, dat bestaat eigenlijk niet bij mij. Dan moet er iets ergs aan de hand zijn of zo, dat ik er geen muziek bij wil.”

²¹¹ For an extensive discussion see Martin Stokes (Ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music. The Musical Construction of Place*. Oxford: Berg, 1994.

²¹² “Ik heb bijvoorbeeld ook een cd van ELO, die werd gewoon heel veel gedraaid bij een vriendin van mij thuis. (...) Dat vond ik gewoon geweldig. Dire Straits, dat was bij een vriend van mij, die was helemaal gek van de Dire Straits, die muziek was helemaal grijsgedraaid. Heel leuk. Dan krijg je ook echt weer herinneringen aan muziek, dat als je nu die liederen weer hoort dat je denkt van: ‘Oh ja’, dan ga je even weer terug in de tijd en dan weet je weer waar je was ongeveer.”

²¹³ “Dus we gingen kamperen (...). Ondertussen draaiden we Robbie Williams helemaal grijs. (...) Iedereen kent die cd uit zijn hoofd, dat hoort echt bij die vakantie.”

Scotland (see quote in section 7.2.2); or a place of musical origin, a connection to a country as the country of origin of beloved music, as is the case with I23 and India:

I23: *“In December I will go to South-India for a month, to a festival. It lasts 2½ months, but December is the month, as it were. There are really thousands of performances then, I am going to be there for a month. I say: ‘I will return enlightened, boys.’ [Laughs.] (...) Of course it makes a difference whether you go to a concert here or whether you are there, in that culture and for such a long time and with all... Here you are with a load of Dutch people, and there you are with a load of Indians, and you are one of the few whites, so to speak.”*²¹⁴

Music thus functions as a means of connecting to places – sometimes because the music is inherently connected to it, sometimes because an incidental connection has come into being. A specific form of connection to a place is connection to a place of origin.

7.3.8 Summary: the connecting self

In section 7.2 I described the affirmative circle in which music touches individuals and, conversely, how individuals connect to music, thus in a way affirming the self. This affirmative circle enables the individual to reach out from the self to the ‘not-self’ through music. In the present section, I described how individuals not only connect to music, thus objectifying the self in the affirmative circle, but how music enables them to build connections to the not-self in six other ways:

- individuals connect to their objectified self (their ‘Me’) by expressing the self through music, thus making the self ‘visible’ for the I and for other individuals. This may take various forms: expressing the proper self in music, recognizing the proper self in music, recognizing self-expressions of others, or recreating self-expressions of others;
- individuals connect to a variety of other individuals by bonding the self with them through music in various ways;
- individuals connect to the supernatural by transcending the self and the world through music. They do so in connecting to either the ‘existing unknowable’ situated outside normal human experience, or to the existing unknowable situated hidden deep within normal human experience;
- individuals connect to the material world by materializing their self in musical things (e.g. music carriers or musical instruments) meaningful to them;
- individuals connect to time (the past, the future and the present) by ‘presenting’ the temporal dimension of the self through music. This can take the form of remembering the musical past, expecting the musical future, or celebrating the musical moment;

²¹⁴ “In december ga ik een maand naar Zuid-India, naar een festival. Dat duurt 2½ maand, maar de maand december is de maand, zeg maar. Dan zijn er echt duizenden optredens, daar ga ik een maand in zitten. Ik zeg al: ‘Dan kom ik verlicht terug, jongens.’ [Lacht.] (...) Het is natuurlijk anders als je hier naar een concert toe gaat of je zit daar al in die cultuur en zo lang en met allemaal.... Hier ben je met een bult Nederlanders, en daar ben je met een bult Indiërs, en dan ben jij een van de weinige blanken, zeg maar.”

- finally, individuals connect to place by rooting the self through music in specific places.

In a figure, the seven connective movements of the self (one to music and six to the ‘not-self’) based on the affirmative function can be represented as follows (see figure 7):

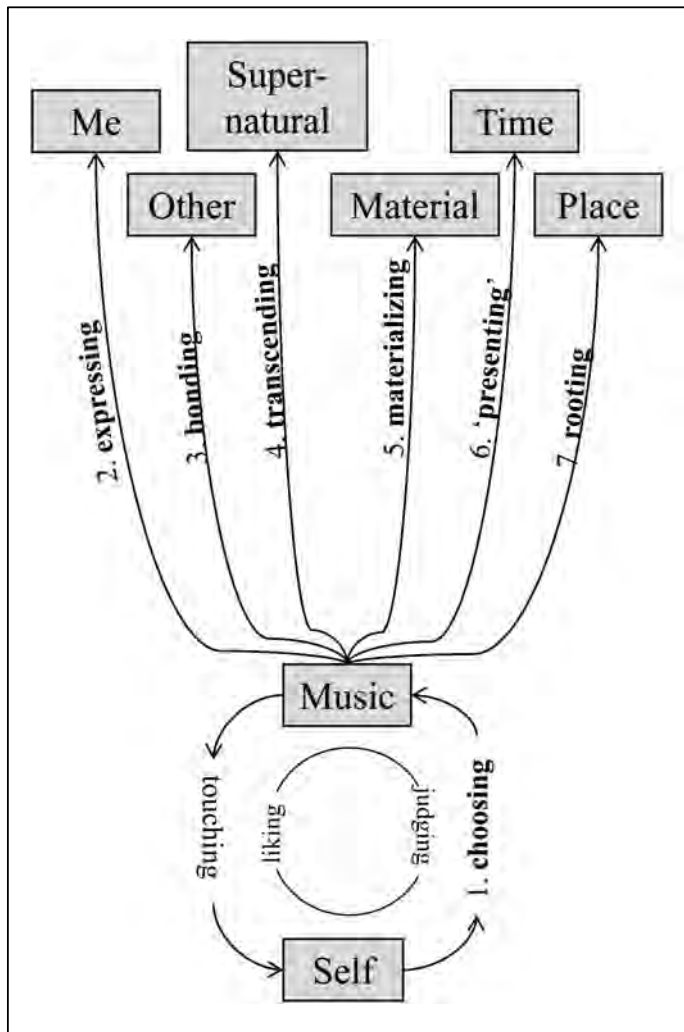


Fig. 7: The affirmative and connective functions of music

7.4 The regulating self - music as a technology of the self

I2: “Yes, I can go totally ‘wow’ because of that.”²¹⁵

Music is used in everyday musical social situations constantly, performing a variety of connective functions for my individual interviewees. This functional use leads to all kinds of effects on my interviewees, as the underlined passages in the following quotes show:

I2: “I lived in Amsterdam. A series of that modern classical music, Schönberg. (...). At first I thought: ‘If you hear that as background music...’ But once you listen to it: wow, wow, all those discords. Yes, I could really enjoy it (...) but I have to make a conscious choice for it. I have to really sit down for it and then I will leave concerts completely fulfilled.”²¹⁶

I26: “So music has always been with me, not to go public with, but rather as an expression of myself. (...) We then formed a group that played in the streets, and by amazingly good fortune we had a lot of success. I got a lot of attention from the audience because of my voice. (...) So that made me very self-confident, or a sort of acknowledgement, that people reacted strongly on my voice. (...) What my story leads to is: I have really changed as a human being. From a shy person I turned into a real chatterbox.”²¹⁷

I7: “I remember my mother always started to sing when there was a thunderstorm. I think she was afraid of thunderstorms and I consequently too. (...) She then started to sing Christian songs. I always was afraid instantly. I think: ‘Oh, we will die. Now lightning will strike us.’ (...) It always led to some sort of mixed feeling.”²¹⁸

I7: “Later I went to concerts with girlfriends. Artists came to a village nearby: André van Duin, Anneke Grönloh. They were up-and-coming artists in the Netherlands, later they became very famous. (...) All the youth gathered there. We loved it! It really was a marvelous evening. I mean: you had some pocket money and you went to the youth club. Of course I was a Calvinistic girl. I mean: in the beginning, from childhood on, you weren’t even allowed to play with children from another church, we were not allowed to have something to do with people

²¹⁵ “Ja, daar kan ik helemaal ‘wauw’ (...) van worden.”

²¹⁶ “Ik woonde in Amsterdam. Een hele serie van die moderne klassieke muziek, Schönberg (...). In het begin dacht ik: ‘Als je dat op de achtergrond hoort....’ Maar als je ernaar luistert: wauw, wauw, al die dissonanten. Ja, ik kon er van genieten (...) maar ik moet er wel voor kiezen. Ik moet echt gaan zitten en dan kom ik helemaal vervuld uit concerten.”

²¹⁷ “Muziek is dus altijd wel bij me geweest maar niet om naar buiten te treden, maar meer als uiting van mezelf. (...) Toen hebben we een groepje gevormd dat op straat speelde, dat wonder boven wonder ontzettend veel succes had. Ik kreeg heel veel aandacht van het publiek over mijn stem. (...) Dus dat maakte me heel zelfverzekerd, of een soort bevestiging, dat mensen sterk op mijn stem reageerden. (...) Waar mijn verhaal eigenlijk naar toe gaat: ik ben echt als mens veranderd. Van een verlegen persoon ben ik echt een kwebbelkont geworden.”

²¹⁸ “Ik weet, als het onweerde, dan begon ze [moeder] altijd te zingen, dus dat had ook een spannende lading voor mij. Ik denk dat zij bang was voor onweer en ik daardoor ook. (...) Zij begon dan Christelijke liedjes te zingen. Ik werd altijd meteen bang. Ik denk: ‘Oh, we gaan dood. Hier raakt de bliksem ons.’ (...) Het riep bij mij altijd een soort dubbel gevoel op.”

who did not go to church. It still was very strict. And then you were 12 or 13 years old and you were allowed to go to such a youth club, from the Reformed church, you were allowed to go to those music nights. (...) You had the first courtship-like... you met nice boys. Together with that music, it lifted you out of your family a bit, out of that heaviness, of course you feel that on a daily basis.”²¹⁹

I8: *“A lot of music gives me good memories. Jason Mraz really makes me think about South-Africa.”²²⁰*

Interviewees not only are aware of these effects, often they seek them out consciously in order to influence themselves. Music becomes a ‘technology of the self’²²¹ – a regulative device²²². Some examples of consciously sought after effects:

- relaxing:

I9: *“There are also some music programs in Germany which are very nice. (...) There is also a program with Anna, that’s a tugboat. It sails the waters over there in Schleswig-Holstein and those kind of things, with all sorts of music included. You can listen to those music programs and watch them, and you can also read the paper with it. The television is on, you don’t have to be completely immersed in it, just nice relaxation.”²²³*

- socializing:

I11: *“Often I go there for social reasons. I like it anyway to go to a concert, and afterwards drink a beer. I like that better than simply going to a bar. You’ve got something to do, or you have something to watch, if it was no good you can run it into the ground when you’ve left the concert hall, that’s also great. And if it was good then – then it was nice music.”²²⁴*

- healing:

²¹⁹ “Later ging ik wel met mijn vriendinnen naar optredens. Daar kwamen artiesten, in [een dorp vlakbij]: André van Duin, Anneke Grönloh. Dat waren beginnende artiesten in ons land, wat later hele bekende mensen zijn geworden. (...) Daar kwam dan de hele jeugd bij elkaar. Dat vonden we prachtig! Dat was echt een topavond. Ik bedoel: je kreeg wat zakgeld mee en je ging naar zo’n jeugdgebouw. Ik was natuurlijk een gereformeerd meisje. Ik bedoel: je mocht in het begin, van dat ik kind was, nog niet eens spelen met mensen van een ander geloof, met mensen die niet naar de kerk gingen mochten wij ons niet bemoeien. Dat was nog zo streng. En dan was ik een jaar of 12, 13 en dan mocht je naar zo’n jeugdgebouw, dat was bij de hervormde kerk, dan mocht je naar die muziekavonden toe. (...) Dan had je ook de eerste verkeringsachtige... dan kwam je leuke jongetjes tegen. Samen met die muziek, dan werd je een beetje uit je gezin getild, uit de zwaarte, dat voel je natuurlijk toch wel dagelijks.”

²²⁰ “Veel van die muziek daar heb ik goede herinneringen aan. Jason Mraz, dan denk ik echt aan Zuid-Afrika.”

²²¹ Cf. DeNora, 2000, chapter 4.

²²² Cf. Clayton, 2009, pp. 40-41.

²²³ “Er zijn een paar muziekprogramma’s in Duitsland die heel leuk zijn. (...) Er is ook nog een programma dat gaat met Anna, dat is een sleepboot. Die vaart dan over de wateren daar in Schleswig-Holstein en dat soort dingen, met allerlei soorten muziek erbij. En dat zijn muziekprogramma’s, daar kun je dus naar luisteren en naar kijken en je kunt ook gewoon de krant er bij pakken. De TV staat aan, je kunt eens even kijken, je hoeft er niet helemaal mee bezig te zijn, gewoon lekker ontspannen.”

²²⁴ “Vaak ga ik er voor de gezelligheid heen. Ik vind sowieso een leuk avondje uit om even naar een concert te gaan, daarna nog even een biertje drinken. Dat vind ik leuker dan dat je gewoon naar de kroeg gaat. Je hebt even wat te doen of zo, of je staat even te kijken, als er niks is aan is kun je het buiten gewoon even helemaal afkrakend, da’s ook hartstikke leuk. En als het wel goed is dan, dan is het leuke muziek.”

12: *“I work with bodily movements, a whole group of people whom I help through sadness and pain, but there I worked a lot with sound. Purely to descend to the emotional plane of people I started with ‘O’, ‘A’. Then I let them meander on sounds, (...) and that turned into crying or into an emotion in a natural way (...). That was the moment I felt a conductor. (...) Music for me also is vibration, and if you let that work in the human body, and the sound moves to a deeper and deeper level, then the emotions between it come up with it automatically, so undealt-with pain or undealt-with anger, and healing.”*²²⁵

- emotional discharge:

117: *“It becomes more interesting again when we got divorced. Then I discovered I had completely missed grunge²²⁶. And from a need to let my hair down, to get over that business, and a new élan like... yes, you have to start afresh after a divorce. I felt the need to let my hair down, and nice rough guitar music was really useful for that.”*²²⁷

- concentrating:

18: *“That music [trance²²⁸], it meant nothing to me, but I really liked to listen to it when I was studying. Because you couldn’t sing along, that is good for your concentration.”*²²⁹

- energizing:

18: *“There is a danger sometimes that I doze off while driving (...). Often I go to the first gas station I see, but sometimes it also happens that I become sharp and alert when I put on music to sing along to.”*²³⁰

- facilitating action:

110: *“Without music I can hardly work. No, and it seems like you don’t listen to it but unconsciously you start to hum along, and hey, another hour has gone by.”*²³¹

- balancing:

²²⁵ “Ik werk met lichamelijke *movements*, een hele grote groep mensen die ik door verdriet en pijn heen help, maar daar werkte ik heel veel met klank. Puur om af te zakken naar de emotionele drive in een mens begon ik met ‘O’, ‘A’. Dan liet ik ze meanderen op klanken, (...) en dat ging vanzelf over in huilen of in een emotie (...). Dat was het moment dat ik me dan een dirigent voelde. (...) Muziek is voor mij ook trillingen, en als je dat in het menselijk lichaam zich laat afspelen en de klank steeds op een diepere plek [komt], dan komen de emoties die er tussen liggen vanzelf mee, dus onverwerkte pijn of onverwerkte woede, en heling.”

²²⁶ A form of alternative rock, originating in the 1980s in Seattle (US).

²²⁷ “Het begint pas weer interessant te worden toen wij gingen scheiden. Toen ontdekte ik dat ik de hele grunge had gemist. En vanuit ook toch wel de behoefte om je heel veel uit te leven, om dat proces een beetje te verwerken en een soort nieuw elan van... Ja, je moet weer opnieuw beginnen na zo’n scheiding. Daar had ik wel veel behoefte om mezelf uit te leven en een beetje lekkere harde gitaarmuziek, die was daar best geschikt voor.”

²²⁸ A sub-genre of dance.

²²⁹ “Ik vond die muziek [trance], daar kon ik helemaal niets mee, alleen ik vond het wel heerlijk om naar te luisteren op het moment dat ik aan het studeren was. Want ja, je kon niet meezingen, dat helpt je bij je concentratie.”

²³⁰ “Ik heb nog wel eens het gevaar dat ik wegdommel in de auto (...). Vaak zoek ik het eerste benzinestation op, maar het komt ook wel eens voor als ik muziek opzet dat ik dan weer helemaal scherp ben en alert als ik mee kan zingen.”

²³¹ “Zonder muziek kan ik haast niet werken. Nee, en dan is het net of je er niet naar luistert maar onbewust dan begin je mee te neurien, en hé, het is alweer een uur verder.”

I23: *“That is my job [a taxing job in health care]. So I can use music in a good way as an antidote, as it were – to remind me that there are more beautiful things on the planet.”*²³²

- closing off:

I3: *“When I still lived at home... I never had a good relationship with my parents really, and yes, that is a way to resist or to close off. Headphones on, music on.”*²³³

Forms of ‘negative regulation’ come up in interviews too. Some interviewees refrain from certain types of musicking in order to prevent unwanted effects. I2, for example, tells that she consciously limits her listening experiences because it is too impressive for her:

I2: *“Yes, I really like to go there [concerts] and also to leave it behind again. I would not want it in my home too much. I never have any music on, a radio or a television on the background, never; not in the car, not at home. (...) At my children’s for example: something is on and they don’t listen to it, I ask: ‘Can we please turn it off?’ (...) It turns me completely chaotic in my head.”*²³⁴

The regulative power of music is not only used by individuals themselves as a technology of the self, it is also used on others by the interviewee, or by others on the interviewee, in order to obtain effects. Those others can be known others:

I30: *“My husband and son really like different music. My husband does play a lot of music for me, because that matches my mood very well mostly.”*²³⁵

I15: *“My daughter even says, when she was pregnant and she played: ‘That is very good for the child’, she said. That is the theory nowadays (...). But I think it does play a part. Not talking too much, but simply giving children a feeling of safety through music.”*²³⁶

They can also be anonymous others – sometimes perceived as more anonymous ‘forces’ – trying to influence the interviewees²³⁷; which sometimes leads to resistance, as in the case of interviewees trying to avoid restaurants or other places with background music:

I15: *“I don’t like cafés with lots of music, I think that’s very dismal. I think: either music, or talking. But I don’t like both of them together. I used to be very offended*

²³² “Dat is mijn werk. Dus daar kan ik de muziek goed voor gebruiken, als antigif zeg maar – dat er ook nog mooiere dingen op de wereld zijn.”

²³³ “Toen ik nog thuis woonde... Ik heb nooit echt een goede band gehad met mijn ouders en ja, dat is dan een manier om je te verzetten of om je af te sluiten. Koptelefoon op, muziek aan.”

²³⁴ “Ja, ik vind het heel fijn om erheen te gaan en dat ook weer af te sluiten. Ik zou het niet teveel in mijn huis willen hebben. Ik heb nooit iets aan staan, een televisie of een radio op de achtergrond, nooit; niet in de auto, niet in huis. (...) Bij mijn kinderen bijvoorbeeld: er staat iets aan en ze luisteren er niet naar, dan vraag ik: ‘Mag het alsjeblieft af?’ Daar word ik helemaal chaotisch van in mijn hoofd.”

²³⁵ “Mijn man en mijn zoon die hebben liever gewoon echt wat andere muziek. Mijn man die draait wel heel veel muziek voor mij af, omdat dat meestal wel met mijn stemming goed te maken heeft.”

²³⁶ “Mijn dochter zegt zelfs, toen de baby in haar buik zat en ze speelde: ‘Dat is heel goed voor het kind’, zei ze. Dat is tegenwoordig de theorie (...). Maar ik denk wel dat het meespeelt. Niet te veel praten, maar kinderen gewoon een gevoel van veiligheid geven door muziek.

²³⁷ See e.g. North & Hargreaves, 2009.

when the children had to perform somewhere, at such parties where they also wanted to have some classical music in a corner. I find that very annoying.”

EBB: “*And Chopin at dinner?*”

I15: “*That is possible, I think [laughs].*”²³⁸

Summarizing, interviewees connect to the ‘not-self’ through music and this leads to various effects on the interviewees. When they are aware of these effects, they may be used deliberately, thus turning musicking into a ‘technology of the self’ – interviewees regulate themselves through music, for example by using it for relaxing, socializing, healing, concentrating or closing off. And in that way, music can also be used for regulating others.

With that, the model of the functions of music is completed. An affirmative circle is at work (see section 7.2.1) in which the self is affirmed. From the affirmative circle, individuals reach out connecting to the not-self (see section 7.2.2). And in this section I described how this leads to various effects, which may be used consciously for the regulation of self and others. Represented in a figure (see figure 8, next page):

²³⁸ “Ik houd niet van een café waar heel veel muziek is, dat vind ik heel naar. Ik vind: of muziek, of praten. Maar samen vind ik niet prettig. Ik was vroeger ook altijd heel beledigd als de kinderen ergens moesten optreden, dat waren dan van die parties waar ze dan ook nog een beetje klassieke muziek in een hoekje willen hebben. Dat vind ik heel storend.”

EBB: “En Chopin bij het eten?”

“Dat kan wel, vind ik.”

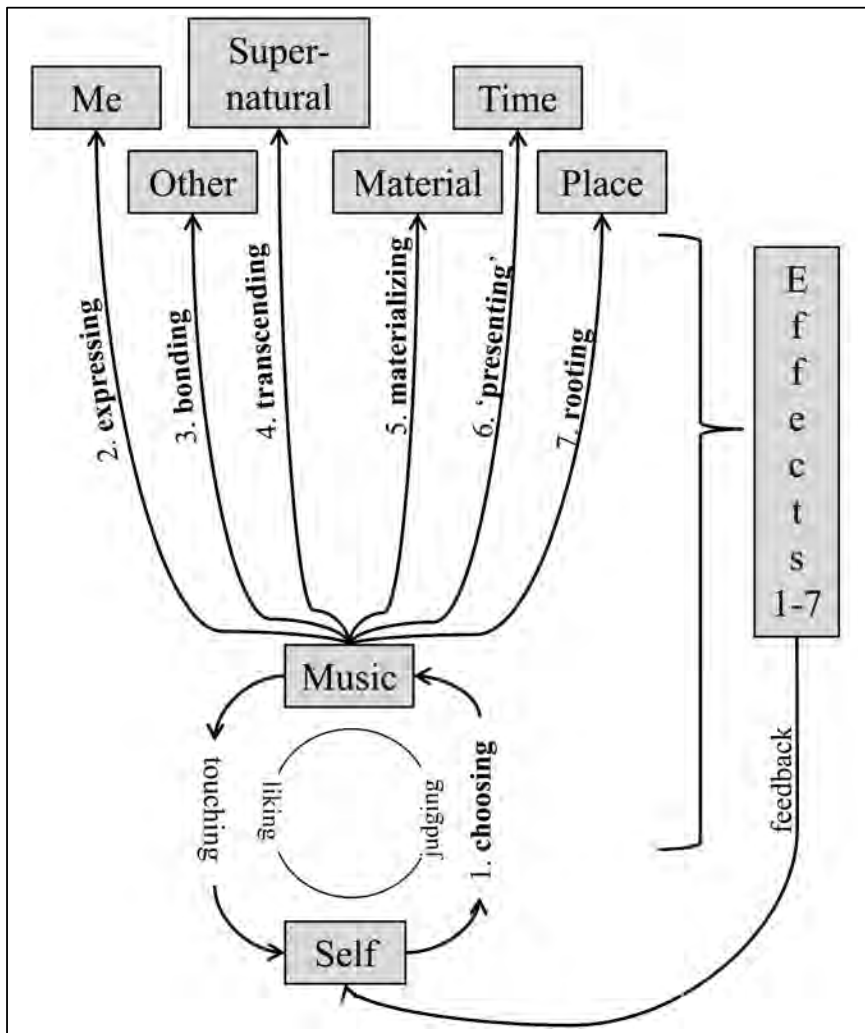


Fig. 8: The affirmative, connective and regulative functions of music

7.5 Summary

In this chapter, I developed a model of the functions of music. Based on the presupposition that in the modern era the constitution of the self is the fundamental project for the individual (see chapter 2), I have shown how music fundamentally and inexplicably touches the self of my interviewees, a process which leads the interviewees to choose music they like, thus affirming their selves. This affirmative circle enables individuals to connect to the not-self. Connecting to the not-self leads to effects which may be used in a regulative feed-back loop. The three overarching functions of music – affirmation, connection, and regulation – may be depicted in simplified versions of the figure as shown at the end of section 7.4 as follows (see figs. 9a-c, next page):

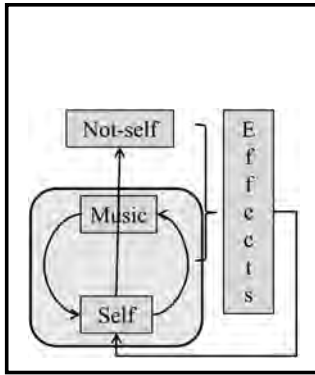


Fig. 9a:
The affirmative function

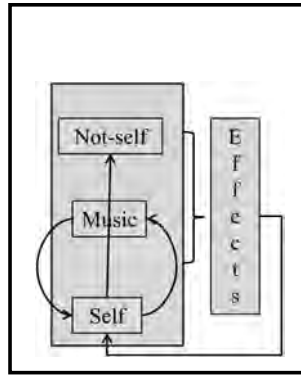


Fig. 9b:
The connective function

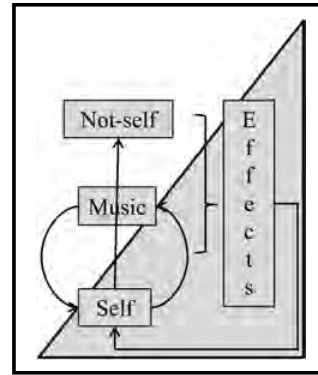


Fig. 9c:
The regulative function

I want to point out that the model developed here, as any model, is a simplified version of reality. In particular, it is not the case that the three overarching functions of music – affirmation, connection, and regulation – exist separately from each other and are easily detected independently of each other. Affirmation of the self in daily life goes hand in hand with connecting to the ‘not-self’ and with regulating the self. The same counts for the different forms of connections made with the different ‘not-selves’ (see section 7.3.2-7.3.7): they are not clearly demarcated in any way – they are interpretative constructs rather than descriptions of single elements existing in reality. In reality, interviewees sometimes explicitly talk about one specific connective function of music, but often their quotes make it apparent that two or more connective functions are in play at the same time, are heavily interrelated and sometimes hard to separate at all. This is the reason why, as I progressed in writing this chapter, I felt that quotations started to refer more and more to the multiplicity and ambiguity of the functions of music in daily life rather than to neatly categorized separate functions of music. I therefore often felt the urge to refer to quotations from earlier sections when I came to later sections, as quotations often were indicative of two or more different functions; this is the reason why in certain cases I deliberately used the same quote in different sections.

I also want to make clear here that the model as presented here is in no way meant to be interpreted chronologically. Although I do present the affirmative circle as lying ‘at the bottom’ or ‘at the heart’ of the functions of music, I cannot conclude on the basis of the stories of my interviewees that first the affirmative function is executed, and only later the connective and regulative functions of music. Nor is there any way I can tell²³⁹ whether, evolutionary speaking or speaking in terms of developmental psychology, the affirmative function of the affirmative circle was in place first, on which basis the connective and regulative functions were developed. All I can conclude here is that, confirming Mead’s assertion that the self is never locked up in individuality but is, right from its beginnings,

²³⁹ Nor any will to want to tell.

a social phenomenon²⁴⁰, it may be prudent to interpret the model as a temporal integral model – all the elements basically happen in conjunction, rather than consecutively.

Thus a picture is presented in chapters 6 and 7 in which my interviewees use music in an enormous variety of ways, performing a variety of functions: affirming the self, connecting to the ‘not-self’ in various ways, and regulating the self. A final step now has to be taken. It may be that this and the previous chapter have led to the impression that the uses and functions of music can be described as if they function for the individuals in some sort of societal vacuum – as if they are in a way ‘culturally neutral’, performed on a ‘level playing field’, and not connected to for example questions of dominance and power. That subject will be taken up in the following – and final – interpretative chapter.

²⁴⁰ Cf. Mead, 1934; see also Berger & Luckman, 1966.

8. Culture at work: cultural codes in the uses and functions of musicking

8.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, I described the theoretical background of this study, specifically referring to Andreas Reckwitz' formulation of a theory of practice. Central in his ideas is the individual subject – a subject operating within a web of cultural codes which make it possible to understand itself and the world; and a subject making cultural codes visible in practices (ways of doing) and discourses (ways of talking). Particular understandings of what it means to be an individual in the world lead, according to Reckwitz, to particular subject forms, attached to particular practice/discourse-formations. These subject forms may turn, when covering enough social fields, into subject cultures which may strive for a hegemonic position.

In chapters 6 and 7 I described in detail how my interviewees talk about using music in specific musical social situations, and about the functions they use it for. I did this by reporting which elements figure in the musical social situations talked about by my interviewees in chapter 6: which persons, forms of musical behavior ('musicking'), things, immaterial resources, places and periods are the ingredients of musical social situations. In chapter 7 I discussed how my interviewees talk about how they, in those musical social situations, affirm, connect and regulate their selves through music.

All this may, at first sight, be taken as a thick description of Groningen's 'music culture' in the early 21st century. However, the description in chapters 6 and 7 of how interviewees talk about their musical lives in Groningen in the early 21st century cannot yet be equated with an attempt to describe Groningen's music culture. Reckwitz' theory of practice works with a 'consciously thin theory of culture'. As I formulated earlier (see section 2.4.2), following Reckwitz, 'if culture is a noun, then a plural; but it is more likely to be a verb'. 'A' music culture therefore is not a monolithic object to be described, but rather a web of cultural codes expressed in shared as well as disputed 'musical ways of doing/ways of talking'. The musicking of individuals therefore represents not 'a' musical culture, but individuals act contingently in the concrete musical social situations they find themselves in, against the background of and informed – but not determined – by an extensive web of cultural codes referring to different and inherently hybrid subject cultures, which are acted out in a variety of practices and verbalized in a variety of discourses.

In this section I will attempt to connect Reckwitz' rather abstract social theory as explained in chapter 2 to the concrete empirical material as presented in chapters 6 and 7 – if only to prevent giving the impression "that doing serious fieldwork somehow gives one license to theoretical absent-mindedness"¹. Acknowledging the fact that this poses a

¹ Loïc Wacquant, 'Scrutinizing the Street. Poverty, Morality, and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography.' *American Journal of Sociology* 107/6 (2002), p. 1523. Italics omitted.

problem for me, namely the general problem of the social sciences of how to relate theoretical abstractions (such as Reckwitz' concepts of practices and subject forms) to empirical observations of everyday life – Coulter's “‘micro-macro’ linkage problem”² – I will nevertheless try to show how, within the stories my interviewees tell me, not so much ‘a’ musical culture is presented but rather how these stories can be interpreted as shedding light on shared *and* disputed ways of doing and ways of talking within a society in which a variety of ‘musical subject cultures’ figure.

I will do that in two steps. In section 8.2 I will show the importance of three basic cultural codes in the interviews. In section 8.3 I will focus on a set of specific cultural codes as found in the interviews, which I think can be seen, in Reckwitzian terms, as part of a ‘hegemonic music subject culture’: the musical subject order of art music. Section 8.4 will give a summary of this chapter.

8.2 Being a musical person in this world – the cultural codes of the music specialist

8.2.1 Introduction

In this section I will point out how several basic cultural codes filter through the stories of my interviewees, serving as a general reservoir of ideas about what it basically means to be musical in this world for my interviewees – Garfinkel's “socially standardized and standardizing, ‘seen but unnoticed,’ expected, background features of everyday scenes”³ – and showing how individuals are “the unique crossing point of practices, of bodily-mental routines”⁴. These ideas are shared to a rather high degree, although not by all interviewees in all situations. I will highlight three specific cultural codes as acted out in discourse: musicking as playing an instrument, the importance of instrumental craftsmanship, and the definition of the musical person in terms of talent.⁵

8.2.2 The hierarchical ranking of musicking: putting playing an instrument centre stage

In section 6.3, I presented a set of 35 concepts denoting musicking, ranging from cataloging music to visiting concerts and performing music. My interviewees have the tendency to cluster forms of musicking into sets. Forms of musicking related to performing music – to actual ‘sound production’, to ‘playing music’ and ‘making music’ – are clustered under the overarching concept of ‘doing music’. Forms of musicking

² Coulter, 2001, p. 29.

³ Garfinkel, 1984 (1967), p. 36.

⁴ Reckwitz, 2002, p. 256.

⁵ I am aware that in my description of cultural codes in this section an important element of Reckwitz' use of the concept of the ‘code’ is missing: its inherent hybridity. Further research might show that the codes presented in this chapter are indeed hybrid of character. Indications of the hybrid character of the codes described in this chapter are present abundantly. In the code of ‘playing an instrument’, for example, a certain hybridity is built in concerning the question whether playing the instrument is a solitary or rather a presentational activity; another hybridity here lies in the evaluation of the voice as on the one hand ‘the instrument everybody owns by nature’ and on the other hand ‘not really an instrument’; et cetera.

related to (concentrated) listening to music – to ‘sound consumption’ – are clustered under the overarching concept of ‘listening’⁶.

Not only do interviewees cluster forms of musicking into sets, they also rank those (sets of) forms of musicking in three categories. In general, the forms of musicking related to ‘doing music’ are ranked in the top category of musicking. The forms of musicking related to ‘listening’ are found in a category second in rank. The category lowest in rank (often considered as rather irrelevant in itself – see section 3.5.1) is filled with those forms of musicking which are perceived to be not or hardly related to either ‘doing music’ or ‘listening’.

Rather than presenting a picture of the ranking of musical behavior in three neat hierarchic ordered boxes, in the figure below I give a detailed picture of the many forms of musicking as found in the interviews, ordered on the basis of the interviews in a way which shows a gradual difference between more and less central forms of musicking (see figure 10). In the center we find a conglomeration of musicking related to ‘doing music’ and slightly less in the center a conglomeration of musicking related to ‘listening’. More in the periphery we find all kinds of musicking behavior perceived as less central: exchanging music, but also such activities as talking about music, cataloging music or making instruments.

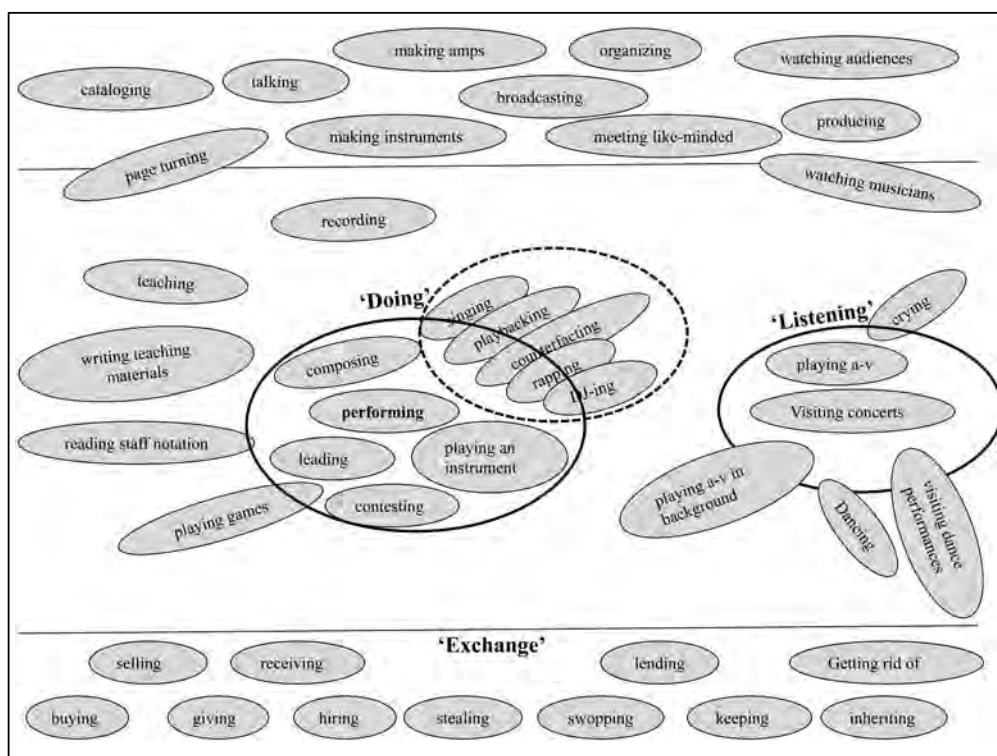


Fig. 10: Forms of musicking as mentioned in the interviews (not-exhaustive)

⁶ As I pointed out in section 6.3 a slightly problematic concept in terms of behavior

That ‘doing music’ indeed is considered the ultimate form of musicking speaks from many small remarks throughout all of the interviews. I will restrict myself to give three examples here. I8 describes why he was obliged to take music lessons in his youth by pointing out the esteem playing an instrument held with his mother:

I8: *“I do not know where it really comes from. (...) I think my mother always was rather in awe for people who could play very well, who could play the piano very well, who could play the guitar very well. (...) I think it originates in that.”*⁷

The same dominant position of ‘doing music’ shows when I20 characterizes his mother – an avid music listener – as someone who has never really been ‘engaged with music’:

EBB: *“So at home you listened to a lot of music. You said your mother had the radio playing at times.”*

I20: *“Always. Always. (...) My mother has never really been busy with music, except for the mouth harp, she played that as a child already.”*⁸

And although I23 (owning a record/CD collection of several thousands of items and visiting concerts on a weekly basis) characterizes himself as someone who is very active musically, he immediately nuances that with a ‘but’ followed by an apologetic laugh: he does not play an instrument:

I23: *“Yes, I am simply active. An active music listening attitude. I may not play myself, but [laughs] for the rest I am reasonably active in it.”*⁹

At the core of the ‘doing music’ area generally stands ‘performing’ (playing music for an audience), surrounded by related forms of musicking mentioned by my interviewees such as ‘playing instruments’ (alone or together), ‘composing’, and ‘leading’. Some forms of ‘doing music’ have a more peripheral status, as illustrated in the following quote, where rehearsing on an instrument and singing are hardly considered as music making¹⁰:

EBB: *“Was there any music making at home?”*

I24: *“No making, in that sense. My father practiced his parts (...)”*

EBB: *“And your mother? Was she active, musically?”*

I24: *“No, not at all. She sang beautifully, I think she had an ear for music, but for the rest, no... She played nothing.”*

EBB: *“But she did sing, at home?”*

I24: *“Yes, just for fun, in the kitchen.”*¹¹

⁷ “Ik weet niet waar het echt vandaan kwam. (...) Volgens mij had mijn moeder altijd wel ontzag voor mensen die heel goed konden spelen, die heel goed konden piano spelen, die heel goed konden gitaar spelen. (...) Ik denk dat het daar vandaan kwam.”

⁸ EBB: “Thuis luisterden jullie heel veel muziek dus. Je zei: je moeder had wel de radio aan, tussendoor.”
I20: “Altijd. Altijd. (...) Mijn moeder is ook nooit echt met muziek bezig geweest, behalve mondharmica dan, deed ze ook als kind al.”

⁹ “Ik ben, ja, gewoon actief. Een actieve muziekluisterhouding. (...) Ik speel dan zelf niet, maar [lacht] voor de rest ben ik er redelijk actief mee bezig.”

¹⁰ In interpreting this quote we must remember that I24 is a professional instrumental musician, which may lead to a musical bias towards playing an instrument at a high level.

¹¹ EBB: “Werd er thuis muziek gemaakt?”

I24: “Gemaakt niet, in die zin. Mijn vader studeerde zijn partijen. (...)”

That singing is lower in rank than playing an instrument also becomes clear in the following quote which shows the tendency of (professional) singers to shift their attention from the voice to the vocal ‘apparatus’ when talking about singing, thus legitimately entering the core of the domain of ‘doing music’ by turning the voice into an instrument:

I13: “*Singing. It is... I cannot say: the most beautiful instrument, because then all wind instrument players will say: ‘No!’, or all violinists, but it is the most natural instrument and the closest to you.*”¹²

The small divide between ‘doing music’ and ‘singing’ is also expressed by one interviewee who is a singer but does not consider himself to be a musician:

EBB: “*You are the musician in the family?*”

I12: “*Yes, but I am not a musician, right? I always say that. I think it’s a pity...*”

EBB: “*Singer.*”

I12: “*Yes.*”

EBB: “*That is also a musician, isn’t it, or not?*”

I12: “*Yes, I don’t know whether or not you are a musician when you are a singer. I think of that as really playing an instrument.*”¹³

Summarizing, the cultural code of the centrality of playing an instrument is encountered again in the interviews where the interviewees tend to group forms of musicking in three categories: ‘doing music’, ‘listening’, and a rest category. Of these, ‘doing music’ – and specifically those forms of doing where an instrument comes into play – is perceived as the most important form of musicking, with ‘performing’ at the core.

8.2.3 The centrality of instrumental craftsmanship in ‘doing music’

Playing an instrument is the central form of musicking in the interviews. The idea that ‘doing music’ – playing music on instruments and, to a lesser degree, singing – is a craft (“an activity involving skill in making things by hand”¹⁴) permeates the interviews:

I21 (explaining who he is as a professional musician): “*I make music, I made 14 CDs. I am a music maker. Craftsmanship, craftsmanship, I like that.*”¹⁵

EBB: “En je moeder? Was die ook actief, muzikaal?”

I24: “Nee, helemaal niet. Ze kon erg mooi zingen, ik denk dat ze erg goede oren had, maar nee... die speelde niks.”

EBB: “Maar dat zingen deed ze wel, thuis?”

I24: “Ja, gewoon, voor de lol, in de keuken.”

¹² “Zang. Het is... ik kan niet zeggen: het mooiste instrument, want dan beginnen alle blazers te zeggen: ‘Nee!’, of de violisten, maar het is wel het natuurlijkste instrument en het is het dichtst bij je.”

¹³ EBB: “Jij bent de muzikant in de familie?”

I12: “Ja, maar ik ben geen muzikant, hè? Dat zeg ik ook aldoor. Ik vind het wel jammer...”

EBB: “Zanger.”

I12: “Ja.”

EBB: “Dat is ook een muzikant toch, of niet?”

I12: “Ja dat weet ik dus niet of dat zo is, of je ook een muzikant bent als je zanger bent. Dat zie ik echt dat je een instrument bespeelt.”

¹⁴ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/craft?q=craft>, consulted March 12, 2013.

¹⁵ “Ik maak muziek, ik heb 14 cd’s gemaakt. Ik ben muziekmaker. Ambachtelijk, ambachtelijk, dat vind ik leuk.”

I1: *“When I heard that drummer play for the first time, it was the first drummer who could do more than boom chak boom chak (...). He could do everything, he could really drum. I knew a lot of guitarists who would occasionally sit behind the drum set, but that was not drumming really. And he, he could really drum.”*¹⁶

I8: *“When for example I listen to jazz, to jazz musicians or jazz bands, I especially watch those guitarists with astonishment, how they play with their instrument. I don’t think I really listen to the music itself, but more that I like it how they play effortlessly, and that it feels as if every note is just right.”*¹⁷

I4: *“Such a perfect control, and they do exactly what they want to do. (...) They can jump around like crazy, but they keep control perfectly over their instrument.”*¹⁸

I5 (talking about music education in primary school): *“Singing too. Children love to sing, they want to sing – but they don’t do it anymore. Isn’t that a pity?”*¹⁹

‘Doing music’ for my interviewees is a craft involving skills. People therefore in the interviews are often characterized as more or less skillful. This brings about that the interviews, when focusing on the subject of ‘doing music’, are massively pervaded by ‘judging talk’ (cf. section 7.2.3): talk about levels of playing (and about ‘really’ playing – see the quote of I1 above), about (lack of) progress in playing and about (lack of) ambitions, as the underlined passages in the following quotes illustrate:

I1 (admiringly): *“Now she has gone in a much quieter direction, with a piano or only an acoustic guitar, and singing in tune flawlessly.”*²⁰

I20 (about his own playing): *“It isn’t a very high level, really, it is just playing some chords, some scales in between, trying to stay in the rhythm as it were.”*²¹

I12: *“In those days you had those karaoke tapes (...), I looked for Elvis songs and would imitate that. I had a double cassette deck, and I listened it back again. And*

¹⁶ “Toen ik die drummer voor het eerst hoorde spelen, dat was de eerste drummer die meer kon dan boem-tak boem-tak (...). Hij kon alles, hij kon echt drummen, en ik kende helemaal niemand die echt kon drummen. Ik kende allemaal gitaristen die ook wel eens achter een drumstel gingen zitten, maar dat was niet echt drummen. En hij, hij kon echt drummen.”

¹⁷ “Als ik bijvoorbeeld naar jazz luister, jazzmuzikanten of jazzbands, dan kijk ik met name met verbazing naar die gitaristen, van hoe spelen zij met hun instrument. Ik geloof niet dat ik echt naar die muziek zelf luister, maar meer van dat ik het prachtig vind hoe makkelijk ze dat spelen, en dat voor mijn gevoel ook elke noot raak is.”

¹⁸ “Zo’n perfecte beheersing en ze doen precies wat ze willen. (...) Ze kunnen heel gek staan springen, maar nog steeds hebben ze een perfecte controle over hun instrument.”

¹⁹ “Ook het zingen. Kinderen houden van zingen, ze willen zingen – maar ze doen het niet meer. Dat is toch erg?”

²⁰ “Ze is nu helemaal de rustige kant opgegaan, dus met piano of met alleen maar een akoestische gitaar, en dan spatzuiver zingen.”

²¹ “Het heeft niet veel niveau hoor, het is meer van wat akkoordjes spelen, wat toonladders ertussen, proberen in het ritme te blijven zeg maar.”

I was critical, I think: ‘That one can be deleted immediately’, (...) until I thought: ‘That is a nice recording’, and then I would go looking for other tapes.”²²

I2: “So after that I had to take (...) piano lessons. (...) Well, I did not amount to much, I simply can do the basic things.”²³

I24: “As an orchestral musician you can, in the spirit of the composition, (...) try to play your role as good as possible. That is the thing I like best, especially to do it as good as possible.”²⁴

I17 (about playing the piano and singing pop songs): “Simply to let my hair down really, not for any further ambition.”²⁵

This may lead to examples where people who play an instrument at a lower level are characterized as actually not playing an instrument at all:

I18: “I do not really know people who play themselves. Well, I mean, I will occasionally know someone who plays an instrument, but not... No... (...) A friend plays the ukulele, of course, (...) mouth harp, of course, and he also plays guitar.”²⁶

Because in music the craftsmanship of playing an instrument is so central, playing music yourself is perceived by some interviewees to lead to a different perception of music altogether:

I11: “I think I would have liked it [music] in any case, but I think I listen to it differently, I experience it differently because I play music myself. It is not the case that you can judge it better then, it is purely a question of taste, but it is important for... Yes, you experience it completely different, you are simply more involved with it.”²⁷

I24 [a professional musician]: “Interested listeners probably listen to it in another way than I do. I read a book about it, a year ago or so, that with professional

²² “Je had toen van die karaoke bandjes (...), dan zocht ik de nummers van Elvis op en dan ging ik die nadoen. Dan had ik een dubbele cassette, en dan speelde ik dat weer af. En dan was ik ook wel kritisch, ik denk: ‘Die kan direct weer weg’, (...) totdat ik dacht: ‘Dit is een leuke opname’, en dan ging ik weer naar andere bandjes op zoek.”

²³ “Dus daarna moest ik (...) naar pianoles. (...) Nou, ik heb het niet ver geschopt; ik kan gewoon de basisingetjes.”

²⁴ “Als orkestmusicus kun je gewoon in de geest van de compositie (...) zo goed mogelijk proberen jouw rolletje daarin te vervullen. Dat vind ik in ieder geval het prettigste werk dat er is, vooral om het zo goed mogelijk te doen.”

²⁵ “Gewoon echt om mezelf uit te leven, niet voor enige verdere ambitie.”

²⁶ “Ik ken ook niet echt mensen die zelf spelen. Ja, ik bedoel, ik zal wel her en der iemand kennen die een muziekinstrument bespeelt, maar niet... nee. (...) Een vriend speelt ukelele natuurlijk, (...) mondharmonica natuurlijk, en gitaar is hij ook mee bezig.”

²⁷ “Ik denk dat ik het anders ook wel leuk had gevonden, maar volgens mij omdat ik zelf muziek maak beleef je dat toch gewoon anders, luister je er anders naar. Niet dat je het beter kunt beoordelen of zo, het is gewoon puur smaak, maar het is wel belangrijk voor... Ja, dan beleef je het gewoon heel anders, dan ben je er gewoon meer mee bezig.”

musicians their parts of the brain... other neurons fire, as it were, than with the interested listeners. It takes place elsewhere."²⁸

For many interviewees, a certain amount of knowledge is connected to the craft of 'doing music'. I5 describes below how she felt that a lack of knowledge disqualified herself – in her own eyes – as a musician:

I5: *"For a long time I had the feeling I knew nothing. And I really did know nothing (...). It purely had entered only through my ears, but for the rest... (...) I was an awful layman actually qua knowledge, as it were. For a long time I thought: 'Oh, I hope nobody will find out that I actually don't know a thing at all.'"*²⁹

A specific kind of knowledge about 'doing music' is the ability to read staff notation. For some of the interviewees, reading staff notation seems to be intrinsically connected to the idea of 'doing music':

EBB: *"Singing at home, or playing instruments, did that occur? (...)"*

I28: *"No, actually not, not much. (...) Like the piano, I know it ranges from low to high, (...) but for the rest... No staff notation, not a bit."*³⁰

Although many of the interviewees of course acknowledge that music making without the help of staff notation is possible, often they feel the need to stress the fact that they are able to play without the help of staff notation, thus implicitly fortifying the adverse norm:

I29 (a professional rock musician with a successful career spanning over 40 years): *"I can hardly read staff notation, but I always work it out."*³¹

The skills and knowledge of the craft of 'doing music' can be learnt independently, but for many of the interviewees there is a connection to more formal situations where teaching and learning take place, which are often seen as the 'normal' way of learning 'doing music'³²:

I20: *"I am self-taught. What I play will not really be technically sound."*³³

And connected to that idea is the idea that one must start at a young age to learn the craft of 'doing music':

²⁸ "[Geïnteresseerde luisteraars] luisteren dus ook waarschijnlijk anders naar muziek dan ik. Daar heb ik wel eens een boekje over gelezen, en jaar gelden of zo, dat bij beroepsmusici andere hersengedeelten... andere neuronen vuren zeg maar dan bij de geïnteresseerde luisteraar. Het speelt zich ergens anders af."

²⁹ "Ik heb heel lang het gevoel gehad dat ik niks wist. Ik wist ook echt niks (...). Het was puur alleen maar binnengekomen via mijn oren maar verder... (...) Ik was een ontzettende leek eigenlijk in kennis zeg maar. Heel lang dacht ik" "Oh als niemand er nou maar achter komt dat ik eigenlijk helemaal niets weet."

³⁰ EBB: "Zingen thuis, of instrumenten spelen of iets dergelijks, gebeurde dat? (...)"

I28: Nee, eigenlijk niet, weinig. (...) Net als piano, ik weet wel dat het van laag naar hoog gaat, (...) maar verder... Noten niet, ho maar."

³¹ "Ik kan nauwelijks noten lezen maar ik kom er altijd wel uit." I have some reservations about the interpretation that the stress on staff notation in this quote is made vis-à-vis a 'cultural' norm; I do not want to exclude the possibility that not a cultural norm but the interviewer – me – is addressed here as a representative of the conservatoire, the place where notations are treated as sacrosanct artifacts.

³² I will not go into a detailed discussion of the perceptions of my interviewees of learning and teaching music. A more extensive discussion is found in Bisschop Boele, 2011.

³³ "Ik ben autodidact. Het zal niet echt technisch verantwoord zijn wat ik speel".

I15 (about young musicians in a contest): *“They already learnt a portion of the technique, right? You do need that; especially with certain instruments you can’t say: ‘I am going to start with it when I am the age of 14.’”*³⁴

For many of the interviewees, though, ‘doing music’ is not only a craft, a skill, or technique involving knowledge. Often they picture that the craftsmanship element of ‘doing music’ must be in balance with other elements, such as energy and, especially, expressivity:

I4 (about the elderly rock choir ‘Young at Heart’): *“That is actually quite contradictory because qualitatively speaking I think... You hear (...) the voices are fragile and old and that it often is out of tune simply, but I think it is great to listen to. The whole concept and the happening and especially the energy it radiates (...), I think that’s magnificent.”*³⁵

I25: *“I really like songs that tell a story, I realize that more and more. (...) Just telling a story, not only [imitates technical virtuosity] or singing nicely. Quality is not only... Technically I probably do not make a huge impression in the way others do, but I know how to tell a story.”*³⁶

I7: *“It is not about playing difficult pieces, it is about playing pieces from my heart.”*³⁷

I15 (about the piano playing of her father): *“Not difficult piano but³⁸ he had a beautiful touch.”*³⁹

Summarizing, interviewees stress the cultural code of instrumental craftsmanship in their interviews, involving a combination of skills and knowledge and often balanced by other elements such as expressivity. However, some of my interviewees do not go along with the idea that ‘doing music’ is quintessentially a craft aiming at perfection. They may be described as slightly rare ‘pockets of resistance’ in this respect, illustrating the shared and disputed character of culture:

I9 (about singing in shanty choirs): *“If someone comes, we don’t ask if he can sing; no, the question is whether he would like to sing. (...) We don’t have the*

³⁴ “Ze hadden al een stuk techniek geleerd, hè, dat heb je wel nodig; vooral bij bepaalde instrumenten, daar kun je niet zeggen: ‘Ik ga er op mijn veertiende nog eens mee beginnen.’”

³⁵ “Dat is eigenlijk heel tegenstrijdig want kwalitatief vind ik... Je hoort dat het (...) veel fragiele oudere stemmen zijn en dat het heel regelmatig ook gewoon vals is maar ik vind dat echt fantastisch om naar te luisteren. Het hele concept en het hele gebeuren en ook vooral de energie die er dan afstraalt (...), dat vind ik magnifiek.”

³⁶ “Ik houd heel erg van vertellende liedjes, daar kom ik steeds meer achter. (...) Gewoon een verhaal vertellen, niet alleen maar [imitates technical virtuosity] of leuk zingen. Kwaliteit is niet alleen... Technisch gezien maak ik vast niet heel veel indruk zoals sommigen dat kunnen, maar ik kan wel vertellen.”

³⁷ “Het gaat mij helemaal niet om moeilijke stukken te spelen, het gaat mij om stukken te spelen met mijn gevoel.”

³⁸ The use of the word ‘but’ is telling here – to my feeling it implies that the beautiful touch, which I tend to see in this context as an aspect of expressivity rather than of craftsmanship, compensates for the lack of technical difficulty of the piece which should be expected from a musician.

³⁹ “Niet moeilijke piano maar hij had een hele mooie aanslag.”

intention to reach a very high level, but to do as well as possible with the material at hand.”⁴⁰

I16: *“We are not professional musicians, most of us are not. Most Surinamese are not. (...) They just do it alongside other things. They like music, and they play. (...) With Surinamese and Javanese we don’t really, how would you say that, have a certain person who does something. (...) You just join in, or you just are present. Also when you are performing, you see someone simply sitting with a tambourine, he just is present sitting there [playing].*”⁴¹

8.2.4 Talent: defining the person as (un)musical

Above all music is playing an instrument: a craft combining skills and (more formal) knowledge, to be judged by level and directed at progress and instrumental proficiency. Many of the interviewees relate an assessment of their own musicality and the musicality of others to this implicit norm. Musicality in the interviews is always connected to the ability to ‘do music’:

I18: *“You see, I think my wife is rather musical, she has a nice voice, and she also plays the recorder.*”⁴²

I2: *“They were so highly gifted musically, they all played the violin. Well, I immediately went off the violin because I could not come close to that level.*”⁴³

Remarks on the perceived musicality of self and others are tied intrinsically to ideas about talent⁴⁴ and giftedness in the interviews. Musicality in its ultimate form is a talent, a gift, which may be envied in others – in musical ‘heroes’ – and a lack of which must be acknowledged explicitly:

I20: *“Steve Vai, Joe Satriani⁴⁵. They are some sort of heroes for me, people who really are able to make nearly every sound they want to on their instruments in the minutest detail really. I really value that, people who can play exceedingly well.*

⁴⁰ “We vragen ook niet iemand als die komt of die kan zingen; nee, de vraag is of hij graag wil zingen. (...) Niet de intentie om een heel hoog niveau te halen maar om het zo goed mogelijk te doen met het materiaal wat je hebt.” Of course, the phrase “to do as well as possible” does refer again to the norms of craftsmanship.

⁴¹ “Wij zijn geen professionele muzikanten, de meesten niet. De meeste Surinamers niet. (...) Ze doen het er gewoon bij. Ze houden van muziek en ze spelen. (...) Bij Surinamers en Javanen hebben we niet echt, hoe zeg je dat, een bepaald persoon die iets doet of zo. (...) Je valt gewoon in, of je bent er gewoon bij. Dat zie je ook als je bij een optreden bent, je ziet iemand die zit gewoon met zo’n tamboerijn, die zit er gewoon bij.”

⁴² “Kijk mijn vrouw is volgens mij wel aardig muzikaal, die is wel aardig bij stem ook, speelt ook blokfluit.”

⁴³ “Daar waren ze zo hoog muzikaal begaafd, daar speelden ze allemaal viool. Nou, toen was ik meteen op de viool afgeknapt want daar kon ik niet aan tippen.”

⁴⁴ For the centrality of the concept of talent specifically in the perceived ‘top of the musical pyramid’ – the conservatoire – see Kingsbury, 1988.

⁴⁵ Guitarists.

There is some admiration in it, a bit of jealousy, because me myself, I am not so gifted in that area.”⁴⁶

I17: *“But well, I wasn’t really a talented musician. I was interested in music, I listened a lot, but real talent, I knew that about myself, well, that’s not really the case. It’s more that I like it, and also I do not feel that need.*”⁴⁷

Musicality shows itself through certain signs, connected to the handling of musical instruments, for example knowing how to do things relatively easily compared to others, or also having a feeling for dance (an equally ‘bodily’ skill as playing an instrument):

I20: *“I am rather musical. (...) Give me an instrument and I can do something with it. For example I bought a tenor recorder lately on a whim as it were, I put my fingers on those holes and I figured out how it worked quite quickly. Mouth harp, guitar, piano, those are all things that come easy to me.*”⁴⁸

I1: *“My mother always said that it was a pity (...) that I did not want to have anything to do with [music] anymore, because she said: ‘Yes, your brother could never find the holes in the recorder and you could always do that at once, but you didn’t care for it.’ (...) I do have a feeling for music, I like it, and I do like dancing, and...”*⁴⁹

Musicality, ‘talent’, in many of the interviewees’ stories is seen as a gift rather literally – as something that, when received, creates an obligation to be used to the full. If musical talent is not used to the full it is seen as a waste:

I6: *“Then I suddenly liked the flute instead of the recorder, I then played the flute beside it for half a year, beside the recorder, and finally I chose the flute. That caused quite a commotion at the music school because I played the recorder really well, and (...) especially the piano teacher who accompanied me often was very angry that I switched to the flute because it was a waste of talent or something like that.*”⁵⁰

⁴⁶ “Steve Vai, Joe Satriani. Dat zijn toch een soort helden voor mij, die mensen die echt tot in de finesses hun instrument echt bijna ieder geluid kunnen laten maken wat ze er uit willen halen. Daar heb ik ook ontzettend veel waardering voor, voor de mensen die echt ontzettend goed kunnen spelen. Daar zit ook iets van bewondering in, een klein beetje jaloezie, want ja, zelf ben ik niet zo begaafd op dat gebied.”

⁴⁷ “Maar ja, ik was nou niet echt een getalenteerd musicus. Ik was wel geïnteresseerd in muziek, ik luisterde wel veel, maar echt talent dat wist ik van mezelf wel, ja dat zit er niet echt in. Ik vind het meer leuk en ik heb ook niet die behoefte.”

⁴⁸ “Ik ben vrij muzikaal. (...) Geef me een instrument en ik kan er wel wat mee. Ik heb bijvoorbeeld een tenorblokfluit in een opwelling gekocht zeg maar, ik zet mijn vingers op die gaten en ik had al snel door hoe dat werkt. Mondharmonica, gitaar, piano, dat zijn allemaal dingen die me redelijk gemakkelijk afgaan.”

⁴⁹ “Mijn moeder die zei ook altijd dat ze het heel jammer vond (...) dat ik er helemaal niks meer mee te maken wilde hebben, want ze zei wel van: ‘Ja, je broer die kon de gaatjes in de fluit nooit vinden en dat kon jij altijd in één keer, maar jij vond er niks aan.’ (...) Ik heb ook wel gevoel voor muziek, vind ik wel leuk, en dansen vind ik wel leuk, en...”

⁵⁰ “Toen vond ik dwarsfluit ineens heel leuk in plaats van blokfluit. Toen ben ik ook een half jaar dwarsfluit er bij gaan doen, naast de blokfluit, en toen uiteindelijk koos ik voor de blokfluit. Dat was een hele rel op de muziekschool want ik was heel goed in blokfluit spelen, en (...) vooral de pianofuf die mij vaak begeleidde was heel boos dat ik overstapte naar de dwarsfluit omdat dat weggegooid talent was of zo.”

In one case a demonstrated skill in ‘doing music’ is judged as virtually non-existent because the skill is not performed on the highest possible level; apparently someone can be playing but not ‘really playing’⁵¹:

I4: *“But I never really heard her play, as it were (...); I have never (...) heard her play what she could play at her own level.”*⁵²

With one of the interviewees, I15, a constant understating of her musicality is present in the interview, probably on the basis of a constant comparison with the professional classical music life in which she is highly active as an organizer⁵³. Although at home both her father and her mother played the piano and her mother sang, she answers in the negative when I conclude that there was a lot of music at home; she characterizes musical life in her own family (where all four children were musically active and two eventually went to the conservatoire) as

... *“not so special. Just ordinary. No, it could have been more.”*⁵⁴

And the impression she gives of her own musical activities are as if they are non-existent; only gradually it turns out that she sings a lot with her grandchildren, accompanying herself on the piano; but:

I15: *“No, in regards to that point I am not that developed actually. (...) It is not really... it has not got a very high level.”*⁵⁵

Summarizing, in the interviews persons are subjected to the cultural code of musicality on the basis of their musical abilities and – especially – their talent for the craftsmanship of playing an instrument.

8.2.5 Conclusion: the music specialist

In this section 8.2 I have discussed how a more or less general reservoir of ideas about how to be musical in this world is shown in the stories of my interviewees. The cultural codes I presented as being at the basis of those ideas were the following:

- Playing an instrument: the set of forms of musicking highest in rank is ‘doing music’, a set centered around the idea of the musical performance and encompassing for example playing an instrument, composing and – to a lesser extent – singing. Two other sets of musicking are the slightly lower-ranked ‘listening’ and a residual category containing forms of musicking which are seen as less directly related to ‘doing music’ or ‘listening’;
- Craftsmanship: ‘doing music’ – and specifically playing an instrument – essentially is a craft, in which skills are central. Those skills are combined with knowledge (amongst which knowledge of staff notation is a central one), balanced by such elements as expressivity, can be (and are constantly) judged on the basis

⁵¹ Cf. also the quote of I1 about ‘really drumming’ at the beginning of section 8.2.3.

⁵² “Maar ik heb haar nooit echt horen spelen zeg maar (...); ik (heb) haar nooit (...) horen spelen wat ze kon spelen op haar eigen niveau.”

⁵³ This is also a demonstration of the point that organizing is a form of musicking ranked in the third and lowest category (see section 8.2.2) and therefore, musically seen, considered as less relevant.

⁵⁴ “Niet zo heel bijzonder hoor. Maar gewoon, ja. Nee, het kan meer hoor.”

⁵⁵ “Nee, ik ben op dat punt eigenlijk niet ontwikkeld. (...) Het is niet echt... het heeft geen niveau.”

of the level of (instrumental) proficiency, and progress is defined as the development of those skills which is achieved in formal learning situations usually;

- Musicality: persons are defined in respect to the ability to ‘do the craft of music’ as more or less musical persons. Musicality is often defined in terms of giftedness or talent. Giftedness shows through specific signs and implies a strong commitment to not waste the gift of musicality, and individual giftedness is measured against the norms of musical ‘heroes’.

The picture presented above amounts to a picture where musicking in essence is a domain for the specialist: “a person who concentrates primarily on a particular subject or activity; a person highly skilled in a specific and restricted field”⁵⁶. In the next section I will present a particular, and in my eyes hegemonic, definition of the subject culture of the musical expert: the musical subject order of art music.

8.3 Struggling with the musical subject order of art music

8.3.1 Introduction

In this section I will look into the musical subject order of art music. I will do that in two stages. Firstly I will posit that the subject culture of art music holds a hegemonic position in many western countries and I will explain, on the basis of existing literature, what this subject order essentially expresses (section 8.3.2). Secondly I will show how the biographical story of one of my interviewees can be interpreted as a constant discussion with the cultural codes from this subject order (section 8.3.3).

8.3.2 The musical subject order of art music⁵⁷

Music is in essence a specialism requiring talent for the craft of playing an instrument for most of the interviewees, as we saw in the previous section. A particular formulation of this idea is what I consider to be the dominant view of what music essentially is in present late-modern Dutch society (and western societies in general) – an expression of the way Dutch society ‘officially’ looks at music. In essence, this view defines music as an art. Here I will refrain from showing that the musical subject culture of art music indeed is hegemonic in the Netherlands, but I will rely on descriptions found in the literature about the Netherlands and comparable countries⁵⁸; but it is this view that is formally expressed

⁵⁶ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/specialist?q=specialist>, consulted March 15, 2013.

⁵⁷ This section is based on Evert Bisschop Boele, ‘From Institutionalised Musicality to Idiosyncratic Musickership. Calling a Paradigm into Question.’ In: Adri de Vugt & Isolde Malmberg (Eds.), *European Perspectives on Music Education 2. Artistry*. Innsbruck: Helbling, 2013, specifically on pp. 51-53.

⁵⁸ See for research confirming the dominance of the view on music as ‘art music’ specifically in the domain of music education research e.g. Cavicchi, 2009; John Sloboda, ‘Emotion, Functionality and the Everyday Experience of Music. Where does Music Education Fit?’ *Music Education Research* 3/2 (2001); Heidi Westerlund, ‘Garage Rock Bands. A Future Model for Developing Musical Expertise?’ *International Journal of Music Education* 24/2 (2006); Gary Spruce & Francisca Matthews, ‘Musical Ideologies, Practices and Pedagogies.’ In: Chris Philpott & Gary Spruce (Eds.), *Debates in Music Teaching*. London: Sage, 2012; Thomas A. Regelski, ‘Amateurism in Music and its Rivals.’ *Action, Criticism and Theory for*

in government documents on culture, the arts and music as well as on music education⁵⁹; it is the basis of the arts policy system where the decisions on national, regional and local government grants are taken⁶⁰; it is constantly (re)formulated in the cultural appendices of Dutch national newspapers, and in radio and television broadcasting on arts and culture; and it is, finally, constantly replicated in our formal educational system⁶¹, and specifically, at the top of the pyramid of formal music education, within the conservatoire^{62 63}.

In essence, this subject order sees music as an ‘artistic object’⁶⁴. Central to this subject order are three ideas:

- music is a specialism, as expressed in the three cultural codes of instrumental performance, craftsmanship and musicality as presented in section 8.2;
- instrumental craftsmanship must be combined with expressivity: the ability of expressing the self, the essence of the musical piece, or the intention of the inventor of the piece;
- through this form of specialized expression, actual musical objects come to represent the ideal realm of the artistic in some way, often connected to the realm of beauty (cf. section 7.3.4).

In other words, this view of music states that the ideal musical social situation is the performance in which the talented musician, through the combination of instrumental craftsmanship and expressivity, brings a musical ‘work’ of beauty to life.⁶⁵

Thus it is a highly specific constellation of the uses and functions of music as described in general in the chapters 6 and 7 of this study. It focuses on specific elements within the uses of music: on the musician, on ‘doing music’ and specifically on performing and, related to that, on concentrated listening, on choosing and judging, on the playing of instruments (and the voice as an instrument), on audio-visual artifacts as carriers of musical objects (of ‘pieces’ – preferably ‘masterpieces’), on immaterial resources as talent (sometimes linked to genes), on tradition, on know-how and knowledge, and on the concert venue – the stage – as the central place. And it focuses specifically on the expressive as well as the (artistic-)transcendent functions music, seeing other functions

Music Education 6/3 (2007); and for a counter vision e.g. Margaret Handford & Brenda Watson, ‘Viewpoints.’ *Music Education Research* 5/2 (2003).

⁵⁹ Cf. Van den Hoogen, 2010.

⁶⁰ Cf. Van der Blij, 1995; Bisschop Boele, 2011.

⁶¹ Cf. Spruce & Matthews, 2012.

⁶² Cf. Kingsbury, 1988; Netti, 1995; Rosie Perkins, ‘Learning Cultures and the Conservatoires. An Ethnographically-Informed Case Study.’ *Music Education Research* 15 (2013).

⁶³ In this respect I think that Sloboda’s analysis that we live in post-modern times, in “a free, even anarchic cultural ‘market’ in which the conditions for one segment to acquire cultural dominance do not exist” (Sloboda, 2001, p. 251), is over-optimistic. Although the understanding of music in terms of an art may nowadays not be numerically dominant in many western countries, I would argue that it is ‘culturally’.

⁶⁴ Cf. in section 2.1 the opposite idea, expressed by Christopher Small, that music is not an object but human behavior.

⁶⁵ It may be added here that this subject order is historically based to a specific style, “a deeply normative idea of Europeanness in music based on the idealization of an extremely narrow selection of musical practices (principally Austro-German and nineteenth century)”. Stokes, 2008, p. 211.

(bonding, materializing, ‘presenting’, rooting, as well as regulating) as subordinate – as applications of the essence of music, rather than as part of the essence itself.

This musical subject order of art music forms an important part of the cultural background against which individuals perform their musical activities in daily life and against which my interviewees formulate their musical biographies. Although it is possible of course to largely ignore the definitions posed in this musical hegemonic subject culture and live a musical life largely in an alternative subject culture, many of the interviewees are in dialogue with this musical hegemonic subject culture in one way or another. In the following section, I will focus specifically on one of the interviewees where this unmistakably is the case and will show how the way she talks about her musical life and her musical self is deeply connected to the ideas of what ‘real’ musicality is – or should be.

8.3.3 *The ‘improper’ story of Belinda*

8.3.3.1 Introduction

Belinda grew up in a minister’s family where music was a self-evident part of education.⁶⁶ Both parents of Belinda had a musical background (her father used to play the violin, her mother the piano), and listening to classical music, enjoying the visit to a performance of Bach’s St. Matthew’s Passion every year, visiting home concerts of musical friends of the family, taking music lessons on violin and piano as well as in music theory and solfeggio were all obvious – and often obligatory – parts of her upbringing. As she says herself:

Belinda: *“I have been raised in going to concerts. (...) We simply had a classical upbringing, I think.”*⁶⁷

Over the years, Belinda has developed an intense relationship with listening to music. In her interview, a considerable amount of metaphors indicates how music touches her and what the effects of music are: ‘it fills me completely’, ‘being in love’, ‘listening with your heart’, ‘experiencing it in every cell of my body’, ‘it touches me too much’, ‘it sets me ablaze’, ‘going to pieces’...⁶⁸ She married a husband with a great love for and knowledge of music, at parties instruments were always picked up at some point and played together, and in her work as a psycho-therapist she used music intensively:

Belinda: *“I like it best to let mental concepts enter at a physically perceptible level (...) and music is part of that. (...) I worked (...) with sound a lot, purely to descend to the emotional drive of a human being. (...) That was the moment I felt like a conductor.”*⁶⁹

⁶⁶ For more information about her biography see her portrait in appendix II.

⁶⁷ “Ik ben opgeleid in naar concerten gaan. (...) We hebben gewoon een klassieke opvoeding gehad, denk ik.”

⁶⁸ In Dutch: ‘het vult me totaal’ – ‘verliefd zijn’ – ‘met je hart luisteren’ – ‘met iedere cel van mijn lichaam er in zijn’ – ‘het raakt me teveel’ – ‘in vuur en vlam zetten’ – ‘er stuk van zijn’.

⁶⁹ “Het leukste vind ik om mentale concepten op een fysiek beleefbaar niveau binnen te brengen (...) en daar hoort die muziek bij. (...) [Ik] werkte (...) heel veel met klank, puur om af te zakken naar de emotionele drive in een mens. (...) Dat was het moment dat ik me dan een dirigent voelde.”

I interviewed Belinda, a woman now in her 60s looking back on a life filled with music, twice. At the beginning of the second interview she describes her doubts about being interviewed by me at all:

Belinda: *“I thought music did not play a role in my life at all, and that I knew nothing about it. (...) I therefore immediately said to my friend [who asked her to be interviewed]: ‘How can I be of use to him?’”*⁷⁰

A life – private and professional – filled with music, and at the same time severe doubts about her musical personality as being of enough interest. To understand this apparent contradiction, four domains exposed recurrently in the interviews – though often implicit and in passing – are key: singing, playing instruments, knowing about music, and ‘using’⁷¹ music.

8.3.3.2 Singing

Belinda loves singing. She is part of a choir and in her work sang extensively herself. However, singing has been a source of constant worry in much of her life. At a very early moment in the first, narrative phase of the interview she says:

Belinda: *“I will tell you this first: actually I would have liked to sing very much, but I have got rather a trauma when it comes to singing. I always was the one who growled or scraped, or they couldn’t place me. (...) I am simply too low and with singing this really... I was at the academy of social work. We had a fantastic music teacher there (...) and he did not guide that skillfully. He simply couldn’t classify me, so it was always: ‘That scraping’, or: ‘That growling’, or: ‘Make less noise.’ I completely lost my enthusiasm there, so I then lodged in my head: I cannot sing.”*⁷²

Singing is connected to the ‘trauma’ pinpointed to this specific incident; an incident she comes back to unasked for at the beginning of the second interview, where she recounts going to a funeral the day before the second interview:

Belinda: *“By accident Psalm 8 was sung there, and all those images returned to me. Because that was the music where that teacher at the school of social work had said: ‘Stop that growling, you better keep quiet.’”*⁷³

The incident is not the reason for the ‘trauma’ – rather it is symptomatic for a range of experiences where Belinda discovers her relationship with singing is problematic, and is

⁷⁰ “Ik dacht dat muziek totaal geen rol speelde in mijn leven, en dat ik er helemaal niks van wist. (...) Ik zei ook meteen spontaan tegen [mijn vriendin]: ‘Wat kan hij nou aan mij hebben?’”

⁷¹ The word ‘use’ in this section does solely refer to its meaning as expressed in the interview, and does not reflect the meaning of the use – as against the function – of music as presented earlier in this study; hence the use of inverted commas.

⁷² “Dat vertel ik je eerst maar even: eigenlijk zou ik heel graag zelf gezongen hebben, maar ik heb een aardig trauma op zingen. Altijd was ik degene die bromde of kraste of ze konden me niet inplaatsen. (...) Ik zit gewoon te laag en dat heeft me echt met zingen... Ik heb de sociale academie gevolgd. Daar hadden we een enorme goeie muziekleraar (...) en die heeft dat niet handig begeleid. Die kon me gewoon niet indelen, dus dat was altijd: ‘Dat gekras’, of: ‘Dat gebrom’, of: ‘Doe het wat zachter.’ Ik ben daar totaal mijn enthousiasme kwijt geraakt, dus toen heb ik me gewoon vast in mijn hoofd gezet: zingen kan ik dus niet.”

⁷³ “Daar werd toevallig psalm 8 gezongen, en ik kreeg al die plaatjes weer terug. Want dat was de plek waar die [docent] op de sociale academie gezegd had: ‘Houd eens op met dat gebrom, houd jij je nou maar stil.’”

often seen as problematic by others. She talks about her being ‘out of tune’⁷⁴ (figuratively and literally) at singing occasions at her secondary school, and recounts how she disliked singing in church during her father’s services, which may have contributed to her singing ‘trauma’:

Belinda: *“Music, that slow, that massive ponderous body, I hate that immensely. It always came home with a sore throat and I always wanted to sing along. And that from childhood onwards.”*⁷⁵

Belinda wants to sing, but – according to her music teachers and others in her surroundings and to herself – she can’t sing, or actually: due to her voice’s character – which is ‘too low’ for a woman’s voice⁷⁶ and probably too unsteady to sing in tune constantly – she is not allowed (by others and by herself) to sing. Only gradually she allows herself to sing: at work she functions as the ‘bedding’ for the other voices when singing together (a feeling she loves once she has acknowledged that she actually is capable of doing it), and she also joins a choir. In that choir she has trouble finding out in which voice group she belongs (which makes her fear “things would go wrong all over again”⁷⁷) until she realizes she is not dependent on others anymore:

Belinda: *“I thought: ‘Well, I am simply standing in the wrong place.’ I had indicated that ten times already, but then I think: ‘Well, I’ll take care of it myself. Of course I am an adult now and determine how things are going myself.’”*⁷⁸

She decides to take her place among the basses of the choir:

Belinda: *“That conductor could not give me permission to be with the basses, and then I simply went there at some point, and those guys were very nice and they picked me up. And then he had to admit it went well suddenly. Suddenly it went well. Then he took voice tests with everyone⁷⁹ and it turned out I was the lowest bass. Then it turned out he could justify it for himself that I could stand with the basses. Yes, it did not fit with his ideas but it did fit my voice.”*⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Dutch: ‘detoneren’.

⁷⁵ “Muziek, dat trage, dat massale logge lichaam, daar heb ik een gloeiende hekel aan. Ik kwam altijd met keelpijn thuis en ik wou altijd maar meezingen. En dat van jongs af aan.”

⁷⁶ The fact that she mentions several times in the interview that she is not attracted to high instruments (violins) and voices (sopranos) but likes low instruments (celli) and voices (contraltos, men’s voices) may be connected to this.

⁷⁷ “Het gaat weer net zoals vroeger”.

⁷⁸ “Ik dacht: ‘Nou ja, ik sta gewoon niet goed.’ Dat had ik al tien keer aangegeven, maar dan denk ik: ‘Nou, dan regel ik het zelf. Inmiddels ben ik natuurlijk volwassen en bepaal zelf hoe het gaat.’”

⁷⁹ This action of the conductor can be interpreted as a factual check on whether Belinda indeed has a low voice. Such an interpretation however does not account for the fact that the conductor takes voice tests with all the choir members rather than just with Belinda. An alternative interpretation might focus on the conductor’s action as an attempt to ‘legalize’ the ‘illegal’ positioning of Belinda as a woman with the basses by taking recourse to a powerful ritual (the voice test) which reduces persons to ‘vocal apparatuses’, thus ‘de-gendering’ all choir members by reducing them to musical instruments and on that basis re-allocating between them the spatial positions in the choir, regardless of gender.

⁸⁰ “Die dirigent kon niet mij toestemming geven om bij de bassen te gaan, en toen ging ik er gewoon een keer staan, en die jongens die waren heel aardig en die pikten me op. En toen moest hij toegeven dat het opeens goed ging. Opeens ging het goed. Toen is hij iedereen stemtesten gaan afnemen en bleek ik inderdaad de laagste bas te zijn. Toen bleek ik voor hem verantwoord bij de bassen te kunnen staan. Ja, het klopte wel niet met zijn idee maar het klopte wel met mijn stem.”

Belinda describes this event as a ‘breakthrough’: the ‘trauma’ of singing turns into a ‘miracle’. Belinda describes how she finally allows herself to sing, how she even takes singing lessons, how her singing gradually gets better, her self-confidence grows, and how she enjoys singing in her choir.

8.3.3.3 Playing instruments

Belinda extensively describes her relation with playing an instrument – in line with the dominance of ‘doing music’ as the core of musicking as pictured in section 8.2.2, an idea powerfully reinforced in her ‘classical upbringing’. After she has described her singing experiences briefly at the beginning of the interview, she switches to playing an instrument:

Belinda: “*With musical instruments I am also not a success, also through circumstances.*”⁸¹

She describes how she went through instrumental music education following an all-too-well-known general scheme with an all-too-well-known (although in the case of her violin very explicit) finale: abandoning the instrument:

Belinda: “*I was at secondary school and I got the violin of my father. And I did not want a violin, I mean, I wanted a hockey stick and there I was with my violin case. I did the normal education: music school, solfeggio lessons, the recorder, and then I was ‘allowed’ to choose an instrument. Forget it; there was an instrument so I continued with that. I ended as second violinist but I became so nervous at performances that I moved the bow above the strings. Yes, it got on my wicks. I gave my violin away to a street musician (...), and he earns a living with it for twenty years already. I am very proud: my violin ended up well and I got rid of it. Yes, [sighs] it distresses me talking about it. So after that I had to – you hear it of course – to take piano lessons, that was obvious too. (...) Well, I did not amount to much; I simply can do the basic things. I must say: I have ‘deleted’ most of it. I don’t know anything anymore.*”⁸²

Her story is a story of obligations, of the ‘obvious’ and ‘normal’ things one ought to do, of failure and stress, of resistance, and of the resulting low self-esteem as an instrument player. It is telling that the norms against which Belinda measures herself are norms such

⁸¹ “Ook met muziekinstrumenten ben ik geen succes, dat ook weer door omstandigheden.” The fact that Belinda sees ‘circumstances’ as an explanation points to the fact that she does seem to see herself presently as essentially a musical person.

⁸² “Ik zat op de middelbare school en ik kreeg de viool van mijn vader. En ik wou geen viool, ik bedoel, ik wou een hockeystick en daar liep ik met mijn vioolkist. Ik heb de gewone opleiding gedaan: muziekschool, solfège-lessen, blokfluit, en toen ‘mocht’ ik een instrument kiezen. Mooi niet, er was een instrument dus daar ben ik verder mee gegaan. Ik heb het gebracht tot tweede violist maar ik werd zó zenuwachtig met de uitvoeringen dat ik met de stok boven de snaren ging spelen. Ja, ik kreeg er wat van. Ik heb mijn viool weggegeven aan een straatspeler (...), en die verdient al 20 jaar zijn kost ermee. Ja, ik ben heel trots: mijn viool is goed terechtgekomen en ik was er vanaf. Ja, [zucht] ik krijg het er helemaal benauwd van als ik er over praat. Dus daarna moest ik naar - je hoort het al - naar pianoles, dat was ook vanzelfsprekend. (...) Nou, ik heb het niet ver geschopt; ik kan gewoon de basisdingetjes. Ik moet zeggen: ik heb het meeste gedeletet. Ik weet niks meer.”

as being able to perform in public⁸³, being able to do more than ‘basic things’, and ‘knowing things’, norms derived from the musical subject order of art music as described in section 8.3.2. This becomes all the more obvious when she describes her experiences with a family they were friends with and concludes that playing an instrument is only worthwhile when done at the highest level:

Belinda: *“They were musically so highly gifted, they all played the violin. Well, I immediately went off the violin because I could not come near to that.”*⁸⁴

There is one experience with playing instruments which, however, has been worthwhile: playing bamboo flutes. The trajectory Belinda describes in that area has however a remarkable ending:

Belinda: *“The only thing I really liked in the area of music: I have been a member of the Piper’s Guild⁸⁵ and I made a bass, a tenor, an alto and a soprano bamboo recorder. And those recorders, I really was crazy about them. But I misused them musically, I used them to get through my moods. So when I was somewhat melancholy (...) then my flutes were really useful to me. Until one day, I was already 24 or 25 years old, I gave them away to an artist who adored them so much. I thought: ‘Those flutes are not meant for that, to help me through my moods.’ I really had a strong bond with my flutes and I really used them for my moods, I thought: ‘That is not a positive attitude for the music’, so I simply gave them away. I regretted that a lot, until today I really regret it. I was too stubborn and too proud to get them back.”*⁸⁶

Again, the norms against which Belinda measures herself are striking: using music as a regulative device (see section 7.4) is labeled as at odds with what music ‘really is for’⁸⁷ and therefore as ‘misuse’ – and it is remarkable that she describes playing the bamboo flutes as ‘the only thing I really liked in the area of music’, thus narrowing the area of music down to an area where only one form of behavior is truly musical: playing an instrument.

⁸³ A norm which comes back when she describes her husband as ‘really very musical’, but unable to sing solos at performances because he is too nervous – the word ‘but’ implying that usually ‘really very musical’ persons do sing solos in performances.

⁸⁴ Dutch version: see footnote 43 this chapter.

⁸⁵ The Dutch Piper’s Guild (‘Nederlandse Pijpersgilde’) is a society of people playing homemade bamboo flutes. See www.bamboefluiten.nl, consulted March 27, 2013.

⁸⁶ “Het enige wat ik op muziekgebied heel erg leuk gevonden heb: ik ben bij het Pijpersgilde geweest en daar heb ik een bas-, een tenor-, een alt- en een sopraanfluit gemaakt. En die fluiten, daar was ik ontzettend gek op. Maar ik misbruikte ze op muziek gebied, ik gebruikte ze om door mijn stemmingen heen te komen. Dus als ik wat melancholisch was (...) dan had ik ontzettend veel aan mijn fluiten. Tot op een dag, toen was ik toch zeker al 24, 25, toen heb ik ze ook weggegeven aan een kunstenaar die daar zo verzot op was. Ik dacht: ‘Nou, daar zijn de fluiten niet voor, om door mijn stemmingen [heen te komen].’ Ik had echt een binding met mijn fluiten en ik gebruikte ze echt voor mijn stemmingen, ik dacht: ‘Dat is geen positieve attitude voor de muziek’, dus ik heb ze gewoon weggegeven. Daar heb ik heel veel spijt van gehad, tot op vandaag heb ik er vreselijk veel spijt van. Ik was te koppig en te trots om ze terug te halen.”

⁸⁷ In terms of the functions as described in the previous chapter, the musical subject order of art music concentrates not on the regulative functions but on the connective functions of transcendence and expressivity.

8.3.3.4 Knowing about music

A truly musical person, in Belinda's interviews, is presented as someone with knowledge about musical pieces – as we saw in section 8.2.3 one of the central elements of the musical subject order of art music. Belinda is surrounded with such knowledgeable persons, such as her husband and some friends:

Belinda: *"Sometimes when something really touches me I share it with my husband, but he is the one knowledgeable in music, I still think."*⁸⁸

Belinda: *"I have very musical friends in my circles. For example the conductor of a professional orchestra, those people know so much, when I compare myself to them I think: 'I know nothing at all.'"*⁸⁹

Belinda contrasts herself with those knowledgeable persons. She is *not* knowledgeable, although she loves music:

Belinda: *"I am not a theoretician"⁹⁰, also in the area of music I know... Yes, I know the household names, but I never know how something is called. I get a lot of music from friends who are crazy about music and are really deeply into music, but I forget the names. But I do know exactly what I love."*⁹¹

As an illustration of her words the following quote may serve:

Belinda: *"I am very far from knowing something about it or being able to say something about it, or to showing you which names... Yes, I happen to know one pianist I really liked, Steve Garret, is that the right name? (...)"*

EBB: *"Keith Jarrett."*

Belinda: *"Yes, is he mainly on the piano?"*

EBB: *"It's a pianist."*

Belinda: *"You see, I don't even know, I can't even pronounce it. But his music, his piano music, well it can really bring me to pieces."*⁹²

'Being really deeply into music' is associated with 'knowing', rather than with 'loving', with which it is juxtaposed. A similar juxtaposition is found in various places in the interviews:

Belinda: *"I feel like an illiterate while I can enjoy it enormously."*⁹³

⁸⁸ "Soms als iets me heel erg raakt dan deel ik het met [mijn man], maar hij is de muziekkundige vind ik nog steeds."

⁸⁹ "Ik heb heel erg muzikale mensen in mijn omgeving. Bijvoorbeeld de dirigent van [een professioneel orkest], die mensen weten zoveel, als ik me daarmee vergelijk dan denk ik: 'Ik weet helemaal niks.'"

⁹⁰ Notice that Belinda relates her non-knowledgeability about music to a general character trait.

⁹¹ "Ik ben geen theoreticus, weet ook op muziekgebied... Ja, ik weet de doorsnee namen, maar ik weet nooit hoe iets heet. Ik krijg heel veel muziek aangeleverd van vrienden die gek op muziek zijn en zich helemaal erin verdiepen, maar ik vergeet de namen. Maar ik weet wel precies waar ik van houd."

⁹² Belinda: "Ik ben heel ver weg van er iets over weten of er iets over kunnen zeggen, of je laten zien welke namen... Ja, ik weet toevallig één pianist waar ik dol op was, Steve Garret, is dat de goeie naam? (...)"

EBB: "Keith Jarrett."

Belinda: "Ja, is die vooral op piano?"

EBB: "Het is een pianist."

Belinda: "Zie je, ik weet niet eens, ik kan het niet eens uitspreken. Maar zijn muziek, zijn pianomuziek, nou daar kan ik helemaal stuk van zijn."

Belinda: “Yes, if I go to a concert then – rrrrrr – it falls directly there, I never try to sort it out or to understand it, and I almost never read the little leaflets. We love medieval music but [my husband] reads all those leaflets and I am simply there experiencing it deep within my cells and enjoy it. And I don’t know who did it and what it’s called. (...) So I know nothing ‘of’ it and also nothing ‘about’ it.”⁹⁴

Eventually this results in Belinda characterizing herself – in extension of the epithet ‘illiterate’ above – as ‘primitive’⁹⁵:

Belinda: “I simply don’t know anything about it anymore, but I look at it in a primitive way.”⁹⁶

Belinda: “‘Gee, she is so primitive in it’, you might think because I don’t have affinity with theory at all.”⁹⁷

8.3.3.5 ‘Using’ music⁹⁸

The ideas about the norms of singing, playing an instrument or being knowledgeable about music and the juxtaposition against Belinda’s reality – singing in a too low voice, playing at a lower than topnotch level, not knowing names of musicians and pieces – is mirrored in ideas about what is a proper use of music and what is misuse. As Belinda already stated above:

Belinda: “Those recorders, I really was crazy about them. But I misused them musically, I used them to get through my moods.”⁹⁹

Music for Belinda has strong effects and on that basis Belinda describes that the regulative function of music¹⁰⁰ for her is eminent:

Belinda: “Music, yes, I have certain images with it. Music, it is in a certain compartment apparently. It is holy, that’s my association. You would say: music,

⁹³ “Ik voel me een analfabeet terwijl ik er enorm van kan genieten.”

⁹⁴ “Ja, als ik naar een concert ga dan – rrrrrr – valt dat regelrecht dáár, probeer ik nooit te ordenen of te snappen, of ik lees ook bijna nooit de papiertjes. We zijn dol op Middeleeuwse muziek maar [mijn man] leest al die papiertjes precies en ik ben gewoon vanuit mijn cellen aanwezig en geniet. En dan weet ik daarna niet wie het gedaan heeft en hoe het heette. (...) Ik weet er dus niks ‘van’, ik weet ook niks ‘over’.”

⁹⁵ The epithet ‘primitive’ seems to reflect a double emotion in Belinda’s interviews. On the one hand it seems to have the connotation of ‘uncivilized’ in the sense of not being attached to the musical subject order of art music; on the other hand it honors those aspects of the musicality of Belinda that might be described as lying on a deeper, more emotional and more ‘natural’ level – which may be the reason why in several instances Belinda refers to herself as having things in common with for example native American Indians, Africans and Afro-Americans, or Papuans.

⁹⁶ “Ik weet er gewoon niks meer van, maar ik bekijk het op een primitieve manier.”

⁹⁷ “‘Jeetje, wat zit dat mens er primitief in’, zou je kunnen denken omdat ik met de theorie helemaal niet iets heb.”

⁹⁸ The word ‘use’ in this section does solely refer to its meaning as expressed in the interview, and does not reflect the meaning of the use – as against the function – of music as presented earlier in this study.

⁹⁹ Dutch translation in footnote 86 of this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ A further analysis of the functions which stand central in Belinda’s perception of her musicality would probably show that the transcendental function of music (see section 7.3.4) serves as a connector between the strong ways music ‘touches’ her (see section 7.2.2) and the effects and regulative function of music (section 7.4).

and what are my images, then I would say: holy, healing, comforting. It tends to the functional again, I connect it to those kind of words.”¹⁰¹

But this description of the function of music in her life, connected to the ‘primitivism’ described briefly in the previous section, at the same time is described as ‘misuse’:

Belinda: *“But I look at it in a primitive way. Yes, yes, I do think that that is misuse.”*¹⁰²

Belinda: *“That is probably why I think it is misuse, that I experience it in a primitive and instinctive manner. (...) I think I misuse it because I use it in such an improper way for me, yes. I have used it like that in my work, I use it like that for myself.”*¹⁰³

The notion of the ‘improper way’ of ‘using’ music sums up not only this section, but all four sections on singing, playing instruments, knowing about music and ‘using’ music. Although Belinda describes her life as one in which music has a preeminent place, she has problems allowing herself to picture herself as a musical person. She may be a musical person, but then in an instinctive, primitive and – seen against the background of the norms of the musical subject order of art music – ‘improper’ way.

8.3.3.6 Trajectory – the remusicalization of the self

In the interviews, Belinda does not draw a static picture of herself as a musical person. Rather, she outlines a trajectory formed by a constant struggle between ‘improper’ and ‘proper’ forms of musicality in which eventually she manages to reconstruct herself after all as a musical person in several ways.

This trajectory may be seen as consisting of several phases. A first phase is the phase in which the wish to be musical clashes with what is perceived to be ‘properly musical’ – an ample number of examples figures in the sections above. After a number of ‘traumatic events’ in which Belinda is labeled as ‘improper’ and even ‘unmusical’, a phase is described in which elements of dropping out (‘I then lodged in my head: I cannot sing’) are combined with such elements as boycott (not playing along in the orchestra but moving the bow above the strings; giving away the violin and even the beloved bamboo flutes) and even outright rebellion:

Belinda: *“That [the occasion when the teacher disqualified her during hymn singing] was such a shock for me that afterwards I chucked everything out (...), all theory and everything, how it should be done and everything. And then I would*

¹⁰¹ “Muziek, ja, ik heb er toch bepaalde beelden op. Muziek, ik heb dat toch in een bepaald vakje zitten kennelijk. Dat is heilig, heb ik er als associatie bij. Je zou zeggen: muziek, en wat zijn mijn beelden, dan zou ik zeggen: heilig, helend, troostend. Het gaat toch weer naar het functionele toe, ik heb toch wel van dat soort woorden erbij.”

¹⁰² “Maar ik kijk het op een primitieve manier. Ja, ja, ik denk toch dat dat misbruik is.”

¹⁰³ “Daar zit waardoor ik denk dat het misbruik is vermoedelijk, dat ik het op zo'n primitieve gevoelsmatige manier ervaar. (...) Ik denk misbruik omdat ik het gebruik op een zo oneigenlijke manier voor mij, ja. Zo heb ik het ook in mijn werk gebruikt, zo gebruik ik het voor mij.”

simply sing an octave lower in church, and I would simply speed up the tempo. I was in rebellion then and I stayed in it also.”¹⁰⁴

Belinda: *“We always had a piano at home, we all played the piano. The thing I liked best was to play with it. (...) The first Brood¹⁰⁵ concert I experienced, him crawling over the piano and playing the back side, I loved that so much.*”¹⁰⁶

But after those phases of set-up and confrontation there emerge several forms of what might be considered conflict resolution.¹⁰⁷ The negative musical self-image built up is softened gradually by using four mechanisms: redefining, accepting, complying, and reformulating.

Redefining musicality is the most striking of the four mechanisms. It occurs when Belinda redefines herself as being a bass. This redefinition only succeeds because Belinda consciously acts against the hegemonic musical norms – in her own words, at some point in her life she felt ‘I am an adult and determine how things are going myself’. The result of this redefinition is described as a ‘relief’ and even a ‘miracle’.

Less of a miracle are the mechanisms of accepting and complying. Acceptance seems to take place where Belinda considers her attempts to play instruments as failed; although she had some positive experiences (the bamboo recorders, but also a short attempt to play the saxophone whilst being an au pair in France) she eventually abandons the idea of playing an instrument, and later in life neglects the opportunity to buy a saxophone and focuses on listening to music:

Belinda: *“Besides that my listening behavior has continued. Yes. That did continue.*”¹⁰⁸

But in her singing experience specifically there can also be seen a certain compliance to the societal norms of musicality. After redefining herself as a bass, Belinda suddenly notices she actually *can* sing in a choir, and is able to adopt many of the norms connected to singing in a choir, as when she recounts that she actually progresses in singing now, that she uses (in her own way) staff notation, or that she even has taken singing lessons in order to keep up with the choir.

¹⁰⁴ “Dat heeft zó'n diepe schok voor mij betekend dat ik daarna helemaal alles eruit gemikt heb (...), alle theorie en alles, hoe het hoort en alles. En ik ging toen dus rustig in de kerk een octaaf eronder hangen en rustig jende ik het tempo op. Toen was ik in de rebel en toen ben ik daar ook in gebleven.”

¹⁰⁵ Herman Brood, Dutch rock star.

¹⁰⁶ “We hebben altijd een piano in huis gehad, we hebben allemaal gespeeld. Het leukste vond ik de piano om er mee te spelen. (...) In mijn eerste concert wat ik van Brood meemaakte, dat hij over de piano kroop en op de achterkant speelde, dat vond ik zo enig.”

¹⁰⁷ I here use – linking up with the metaphor of the play as used earlier in section 6.1 – the simple model of the ‘three-act-structure’ as used in drama and screenplay writing: set-up, confrontation and resolution. See Syd Field, *Screenplay. The Foundations of Screenwriting*. Rev. Edition. New York: Bantam Dell, 2005. Cf. also William Labov’s slightly more extensive description of the ‘narrative form’ as described in Riessman, 2008, p. 81 ff, which defines the following elements: Abstract, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation, and Resolution.

¹⁰⁸ “Daarnaast is mijn luistergedrag wel gewoon doorgaan. Ja. Dat wel.”

Finally, there is a mechanism at work which I describe as ‘reformulation’. Where redefinition replaces existing definitions by new ones, reformulations seemingly stay within the boundaries of existing definitions but these are stretched, twisted or turned around in some way:

Belinda: *“But I look at it in a primitive way. Yes, yes, I do think that that is misuse. That is why I call it misuse, apparently. But for myself I call it use.”*¹⁰⁹

Another example is when Belinda talks about her psycho-therapeutic use of music, which she labels elsewhere in the interview as ‘misuse’. In the following passage she takes the opportunity¹¹⁰ to reformulate ‘music’ into ‘sound’ temporarily, a reformulation which seems to legitimize her taking up the word ‘music’ again in the next few sentences:

EBB: *“So in your profession you were really very, with sound and with music...”*

Belinda: *“With sound (...). More with sound and with mantra’s and using them... More directed towards penetrating the human psyche and all those hidden emotions. Nothing works as good as music or sound. I also use certain very moving types of classical music.”*¹¹¹

This trajectory of remusicalization of the self through redefining, accepting, complying and reformulating is not so much a story waiting to be told by the interviewee. Rather, for a part the story is explicitly told by the interviewee, for another part it stays implicit and is ‘excavated’ through my analysis of the interview, and for yet another part it is realized-when-told, showing how “[t]hrough sharing our stories, we obtain greater self-knowledge”¹¹². At various moments, but specifically at the end of the first interview and the beginning of the second interview (points where Belinda looks back on the first interview), she expresses that talking about her musical biography makes her realize that, in spite of her own self-evaluation as being unmusical, she might be ‘properly’ musical after all:

Belinda: *“Well, I thought music played no role whatsoever in my life and that I knew nothing about it. I do not know much about it but it turns out that music plays an enormous role in my life. (...) I think that’s very striking, I did not expect that at all. And suddenly I see it in a different light; (...) with my standards, my inner standards. From an upbringing which turns out to be not mine, but because of this I have disqualified myself because I have a completely different approach than the usual approach prevalent in my upbringing or my surroundings.”*¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ “Maar ik kijk het op een primitieve manier. Ja, ja, ik denk toch dat dat misbruik is. Daarom noem ik het misbruik kennelijk. Maar gebruik noem ik het voor mezelf.”

¹¹⁰ Offered by me as the interviewer, but falling back on her own talking about ‘sound’ earlier in the interview.

¹¹¹ EBB: “Dus in je beroep was je toch wel heel erg met klank en met muziek...”

Belinda: “Met klank (...). Meer met klank en mantra’s en die gebruiken... Meer gericht op in de psyche van de mens door te dringen en in al die verborgen emoties. Er is niks wat zo goed werkt als muziek of klank. Daar gebruik ik ook wel bepaalde soorten klassieke muziek bij, heel ontroerende.”

¹¹² Robert Atkinson, ‘The Life Story Interview.’ In: Gubrium & Holstein (Eds.), 2001, p. 127.

¹¹³ “Nou, ik dacht dat muziek totaal geen rol speelde in mijn leven en dat ik er helemaal niks van wist. Ik weet er ook niet veel van maar het blijkt dat muziek een enorme rol speelt in mijn leven. (...) Dat vind ik heel frappant, dat had ik dus helemaal niet verwacht. En ik kijk opeens met andere ogen er naar; (...) naar mijn maatstaf, mijn innerlijke maatstaf. Vanuit de opvoeding die helemaal niet van mij blijkt te zijn, maar

Attached to the realization of this trajectory is also a slight feeling of remorse:

Belinda: *“Well, I think that it is very important that people get help. I haven’t had any help at all. That strikes me. I have really actually... But I have been to a music school. They could have... I do not remember any help in this area. A pity, a pity. I hear it now that I am talking like this, I think: ‘A pity, I could have developed this.’ I actually maybe, I do rather like it, only I distort it of course; I then think I misuse it, while I do my own thing with it.”*¹¹⁴

8.3.3.7 Summary: hybridity

In this section 8.3.3, I have described one of my interviewees in some detail, asking myself the question how it is possible that a woman whose life is so filled with music can consider herself as a musically uninteresting person at the same time. I pictured the life of the interviewee as a trajectory in which a conflict between hegemonic ideas about musicality derived from the musical subject order of art music and the interviewee’s ‘(im)proper’ musical life lead to a struggle as well as a gradual remusicalization of the interviewee – a remusicalization taking place through the mechanisms of redefining, accepting, complying and reformulating.

It is tempting to describe such a trajectory as a clear-cut struggle between a heroine and her circumstances; between an individual and her society; between an oppressed and the oppressor(s); between agency and structure. As the rendering above shows, matters are more complicated than that. As Reckwitz points out, societies, subject cultures, subject definitions, cultural codes as well as individuals are all inherently hybrid. No simple framework can be detected, only the complexity of everyday life, where individuals seek their contingent ways amidst the forces of the shared and disputed ways of doing and talking that make up ‘their’ culture.

This hybridity may be illustrated by referring to the four mechanisms Belinda uses to remusicalize herself. Together they do not add up to a picture of an individual struggle with a hostile hegemonic musical subject definition. Rather, parts of that subject definition are adopted, parts of it are rejected and replaced by alternatives, and parts of it are reformulated in order to make a ‘fit’ with Belinda’s daily experiences and needs.

8.4 Summary

In this chapter, the third and final empirical-analytical chapter, I focused on the way interviewees talk about the uses and functions of music against the background of ‘culture’. Culture is seen, in compliance with Reckwitz’ formulation of a theory of

daardoor heb ik wel mezelf gediskwalificeerd omdat ik een hele andere aanpak heb dan in mijn opvoeding of in mijn omgeving gebruikelijk was.”

¹¹⁴ “Nou, ik denk dat het heel belangrijk is als mensen hulp krijgen. Ik heb helemaal geen hulp gehad. Dat is wat mij opvalt. Ik heb helemaal eigenlijk... Ik ben toch naar een muziekschool geweest. Ze zouden me hebben, toch... Ik herinner me niks van hulp op dit gebied. Zonde, zonde. Dat hoor ik nu ik zo zit te praten, dan denk ik nog: ‘Zonde, dit had ik kunnen uitbouwen. Ik hou er misschien best, ik hou er best van, alleen vervorm ik het natuurlijk; dan denk ik dat ik het misbruik, [terwijl] ik er mijn eigen ding mee doe.”

practice, as a web of cultural codes represented in shared as well as disputed ways of doing and talking.

In the interviews, three general – though not unanimously endorsed – cultural codes emerge, together defining the ‘music specialist’:

- the code of playing an instrument as the central form of musical behavior;
- the code of craftsmanship as the essential basis when playing an instrument;
- and the code of musicality, often defined in terms of talent.

These three general codes are combined with two further codes to form the highly specific musical subject order of art music, thus forming the following amalgam:

- music is a specialism; it is the craft of playing an instrument by talented individuals;
- this craftsmanship must be combined with expressivity;
- through this form of specialized expression musical objects come into being which represent the ideal realm of the artistic.

This highly specific musical subject order of art music acts as an implicit cultural norm in many of the stories of my interviewees. This is shown in the life story of one of the interviewees, who struggles to define herself as a musical person against the implicit norms of the musical subject order of art music. This ‘struggle’, however, is not a clear-cut struggle between two contrasting principles, but rather a hybrid process in which a remusicalization of the self takes place through the mechanisms of redefining, accepting, complying and reformulating the acting hegemonic cultural codes of musicality.

**PART III. TOWARDS A GROUNDED THEORY OF THE
USES AND FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC**

9. Conclusions, discussion, and implications and recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

This study focuses on the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century. I consider the study as an ethnomusicological study representing the sub-discipline of ethnomusicology-at-home. As a theoretical starting point I used Andreas Reckwitz' formulation of practice theory, and I imported methodological principles from the field of qualitative sociology. Central in the study is (in accordance with Reckwitz' formulation of practice theory) the individual. 30 theoretically sampled individuals spoke at length about their musical biographies in narrative-biographical interviews, which were analyzed in detail and eventually led to a sufficiently suggested grounded theory of the uses and functions of music in Groningen AD 2010.

The theory consists of three interrelated compartments. The first compartment contains a description of the uses of music as expressed by the interviewees. 'Use' refers to the 'customary exercise of music' in concrete musical social situations – social situations in which music, in any capacity, plays a role. The result of my study is a detailed description of the six elements of musical social situations. Those six elements are: *persons* performing *behavior* ('musicking'), handling *things* and using *immaterial resources* at a specific *place* and in a specific *period* (see figure 11). The study shows that these six elements together describe, in the stories of my interviewees, an endlessly varied landscape of idiosyncratic musical social situations, where individuals use music in a multitude of ways.

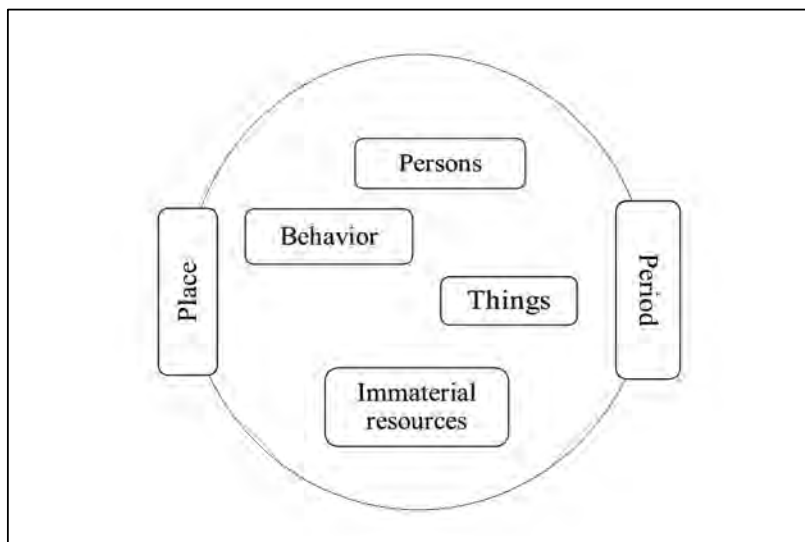


Fig. 11: The elements of a musical social situation

The second compartment of the theory contains a model showing the functions of the uses of music as depicted in the first compartment. I described three overarching functions of music: the affirmation of the self, the connection of the self to the not-self, and the regulation of the self. *Affirmation* of the self takes place because music touches the self in a ‘affirmative circle’, and the self in turn likes the music that touches it – an incomprehensible and rather unpredictable process on which basis the self chooses music, a process often accompanied by talk about liking and about judging music. In this process a musical self is affirmed and re-affirmed.

This musical self however is not a prisoner of its affirmative circle. Rather, the affirmative circle enables individuals to make *connections* to the not-self: apart from connecting to music they also connect to the ‘me’, to others, to the supernatural, to the material, to time and to place. The affirmative and connective functions of music lead to effects which may be used in a feed-back loop in which *regulation* of the self takes place (see figures 12 and 13, below and next page).

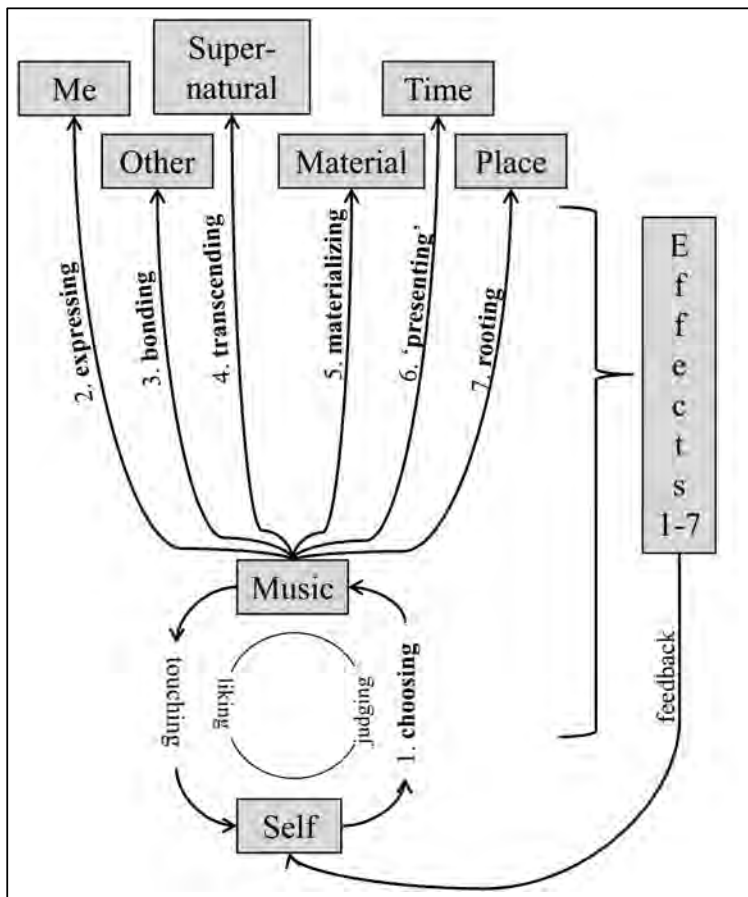


Fig. 12: The functions of music

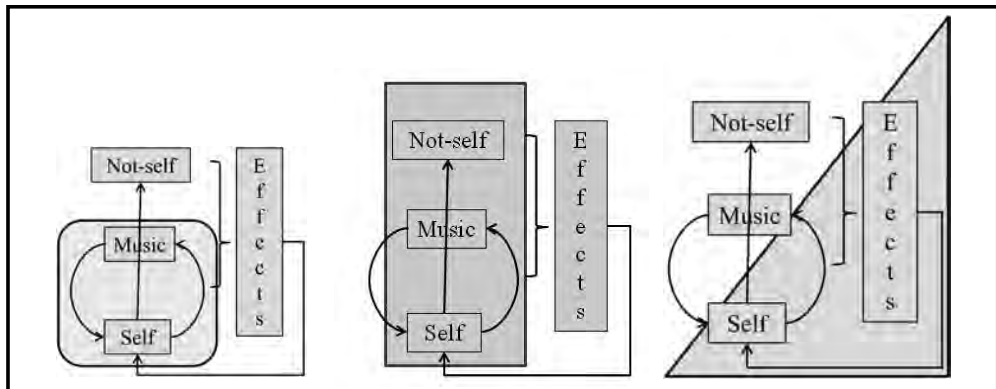


Fig. 13: The affirmative, connective and regulative functions of music

The uses and functions of music do not take place in a neutral domain. They are to be considered as ‘shared and disputed ways of doing and talking’, as expressing shared and disputed cultural codes which form the socially standardized *and* socially standardizing cultural contexts in which individuals function. This cultural context of the uses and functions of music is described in a third compartment of this study. I described how three cultural codes seem to be shared amongst many (though not all) of my interviewees, together forming the ‘supercode’¹ of the music specialist:

- the code of playing an instrument as the central form of musical behavior;
- the code of craftsmanship as the essential basis when playing an instrument;
- and the code of musicality, often defined in terms of talent.

These three more general codes are combined with two further codes to form the highly specific and culturally hegemonic musical subject culture of art music, thus forming the following amalgam:

- music is a specialism; it is the craft of playing an instrument by talented individuals;
- this craftsmanship must be combined with expressivity;
- through this form of specialized expression musical objects come into being which represent the ideal realm of the artistic.

In this attempt at developing a grounded theory of the uses and functions of music in Groningen AD 2010, I deliver an outline of how individuals become musical individuals. With that I am now able to answer the central research question of this study. The question was: what are the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century? I formulate the answer as follows: individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century use music in concrete musical social situations in a great variety of ways, by musicking, handling things and using immaterial resources at specific places and in specific periods; in doing so they, in various ways, affirm, connect and regulate their selves; and they do that in the context of a web of cultural codes leading to shared and disputed – and sometimes hegemonic – ways of doing and talking.

¹ Cf. the mention of supercodes in Reckwitz, 2006, e.g. on p. 516 and p. 639.

To combine the three compartments of the grounded theory mentioned above with the dynamics of the biography of the interviewees as well as with the fact that the theory has been developed on the basis of narrative-biographical interviews, the following figure 14 intends to visualize the final result of this study in one glance:

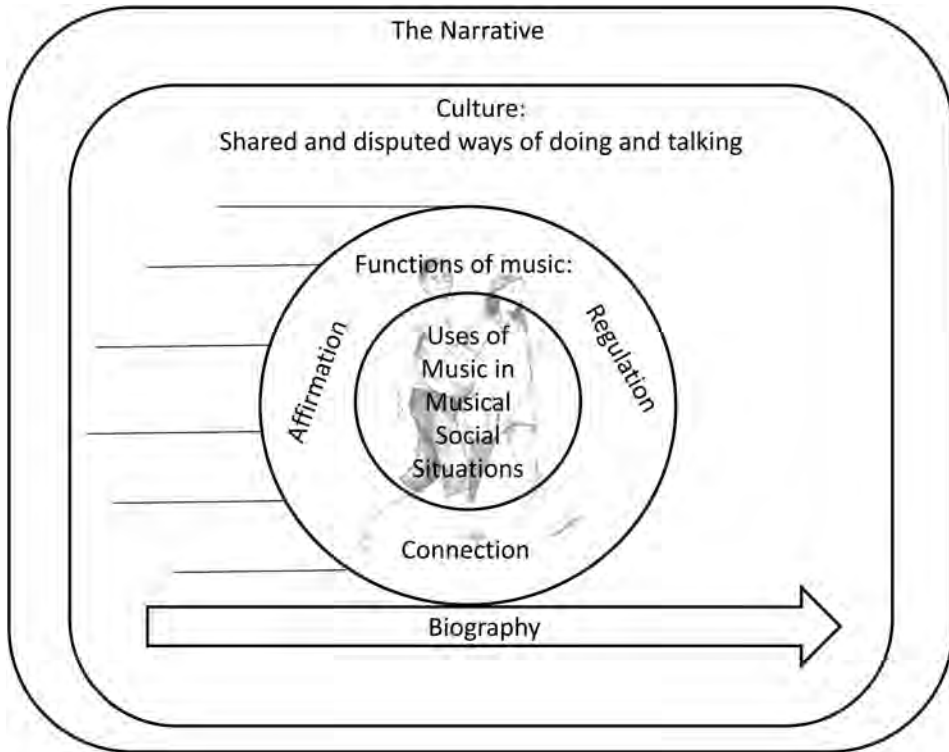


Fig. 14: Image of this study of the uses and functions of music in Groningen

9.2 Reflections and limitations

9.2.1 Evaluation of the theoretical backgrounds

This study used Reckwitz' formulation of a theory of practice² as theoretical background. Looking back, using this particular theory has led to at least four interrelated benefits for this study. To start with, Reckwitz expresses that he works with a “consciously ‘thin’ theory of the subject”³, and I paraphrased this in section 2.3.2 as using a ‘consciously thin theory of culture’ – a theory where the idiosyncratic, hybrid and contingent individual makes sense of his world through performing hybrid practices embedded in webs of hybrid cultural codes. This thin theory of the subject-in-culture leaves great interpretive room to perform the construction of grounded theory, and I used that room as honestly and as creatively as possible.

² Reckwitz, 2006.

³ Id., p. 40.

Secondly, the concept of the cultural code has proven to be a valuable heuristic device in this study, an analytical tool to search for culture as shared and disputed ways of doings and sayings. I was on the lookout continuously for (often implicit) cultural codes in the interviews which made it possible for my interviewees to make important distinctions between the important and the unimportant, or even the thinkable and the unthinkable⁴. That put me on the track of important distinctions such as performing/listening or musical/unmusical, or of enigmatic expressions such as ‘really playing’, and thus of discourses at work in the individual lives as presented by the interviewees in their interviews.

Thirdly, the concept of hegemony has been equally productive. It made me realize that culture indeed is a ‘web’ of practices of which some are shared and some are disputed, that practices presented as shared may form clusters striving for hegemony, and that the contestation of certain practices may well be the sign of a struggle against practice/discourse formations with a hegemonic character. Finally, the concept of hybridity has been very productive because – like the thin theory of the subject-in-culture as mentioned above – it prevented me from working with unifying reifications of cultures or persons but rather left me room to keep my eyes open for the idiosyncratic, the contingent and the temporal.

Reckwitz’ theory of practice has been a useful match in particular with the ethnomusicology-at-home character of this study. Because ‘at home’ in my case was in Groningen AD 2010, Reckwitz’ theory as a theory about post-modern modernity fitted excellently. The at-home character of the study made it necessary to make the familiar strange, as I stated in section 4.2.1, and Reckwitz’ theory fostered that. Specifically the thin theory of the subject-in-culture gave the interpretive space needed when one tries to distance oneself from one’s own society, whereas the idea of hegemonic tendencies made not only a descriptive but also a critical stance towards the empirical material and one’s own reality possible. As Timothy Rice recently argued, “ethnomusicologists often reference theory from outside the discipline for the authority and interdisciplinarity it appears to give to their work, but it is rarely the object of sustained argumentation”⁵. I hope my study contributes to a firmer grounding of ethnomusicological research in theory, specifically by showing the possible usefulness for using practice theory as formulated by Reckwitz in ethnomusicology-at-home as performed in modern western societies.

Some elements of Reckwitz’ theory of practice have, however, been of less direct use to me. Reckwitz’ historic description of the successive subject orders of modernity and of the transformational role of specific aesthetic subject cultures seem to be formulated on a level of abstraction that makes them hard to relate directly to the empirical material in this study. Specifically, the characterization of the present postmodern-modern subject order

⁴ See Reckwitz, 2006, p. 36.

⁵ Rice, 2010b, p. 101.

and its consumptive-creative subject is, although broadly speaking intuitively recognizable in many aspects, hard to pinpoint in specific passages in the interviews and certainly not dominantly recognizable in the majority (or even a substantial minority) of the interviews. The ‘micro-macro’ linkage problem as indicated in section 8.1 has therefore, if at all, been solved in this study only partly. Possibly Reckwitz’ idea of the inherent hybridity of subject orders and the characterization of individuals as disposition bundles is part of the explanation of this. It may, however, also be the case that a cultural analysis such as Reckwitz’, aiming at determining the dominant subject culture of a certain historic era in ‘the west’, is too far removed from the daily life of actual people at a specific time and place to be a concrete match. I will, however, in section 9.4.4 make yet another attempt to connect the findings of this study to this broader framework of what I see as a form of *Zeitgeist* analysis in Reckwitz’ work.

Summarizing, the choice for Reckwitz’ formulation of a theory of practice as a theoretical background for this study has brought the following benefits:

- an open interpretive space due to its ‘thin’ theory of the subject and of culture;
- the concept of the cultural code as a strong heuristic device;
- an eye for culture as a web of practices in which agreement *and* disagreement figure in struggles for hegemony;
- and an open eye for the idiosyncratic and contingent character of reality due to its focus on hybridity.

9.2.2 Evaluation of methodology and methods used – limitations of the research

I have characterized this study in section 1.1 as ‘an attempt at a methodologically underpinned and reflexive ethnomusicological study of musical life in a present-day western society’. In chapter 4 I presented the methodological aspects of this study. I stated that, because this study is an example of ethnomusicology-at-home, a methodological estrangement of the familiar is necessary. Because the methodology of ethnomusicology-at-home is somewhat underreflected, I turned to grounded theory⁶ as developed in qualitative social research for methodological inspiration. I specifically used the narrative interview as theorized by Fritz Schütze⁷ as the main data source, which is uncommon in ethnomusicology and related disciplines but which choice I defended with pragmatic as well as methodological arguments.

In sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 I already made many remarks concerning the specific methodology used in this study. Summarizing, those remarks showed that my interviewees were found using a theoretical sampling strategy; that the interviews conducted were narrative interviews, but with an added fourth phase in which interviewees gave a ‘guided tour’ through their music collection; that the transcripts/extended interview proceedings were analyzed in consecutive phases of initial

⁶ See Charmaz, 2006.

⁷ See for an overview Riemann, 2006.

(open) and focused coding; and that this eventually lead to the sufficiently suggested grounded theory as presented in this study.

In various ways the choice for grounded theory has been very helpful methodologically. The concept of theoretical sampling and of looking for contrast and variation amongst the interviewees, rather than for unity, has proven to be fruitful in this somewhat explorative study which aims at developing a sufficiently suggested theory covering an area which has not, in this way, been researched before. Also, it matches Reckwitz' notion of the inherent hybridity of social life; such hybridity makes it hard to pinpoint specifically the object under study by selecting individuals to be researched on the basis of a preconceived set of criteria, which is an inherent plea for theoretical sampling (see also section 9.4.1). The strict separation of analysis through coding and theorizing through memoing (done partly in my weblog) enabled me to remain close to the material at hand. That guaranteed a link to the empirical material, whilst at the same time I could continue further theorizing without letting that theorizing dominate the interpretation of the empirical material.

The choice for the narrative interview as my data source has been very fruitful. Indeed, the operation of Schütze's compulsions of storytelling and the power of the narrative mode guaranteed that a true distanciation between interviewee and interviewer took place within the interview situation, and I think it is precisely for that reason that it is methodologically justifiable to consider the resulting stories as specific forms of talk in interaction and thus as elements of social life, as Reckwitzian practices, rather than as explanations about social life to an interviewer.

In the analytical phase, the fact that I worked with interviews which could be written down in transcriptions and extended interview proceedings enabled me to conduct a micro-analysis with an exactness and a detail which would have been, I believe, virtually impossible had I restricted myself to participant observation in the classical fieldwork form⁸ as used in many ethnomusicological studies 'at home'. Through this exactness and detail I was able to get on the track of the cultural codes of the music specialist as presented in section 8.2, and I could show how the cultural codes of the subject order of art music (which I derived from existing literature; section 8.3) were reflected strongly in the stories of one of my interviewees (section 8.4).

The use of grounded theory also makes the limitations of this study clear. The study leads to a middle range theory about the uses and functions of music in Groningen AD 2010, a theory sufficiently suggested by 34 in-depth interviews with 30 interviewees, but limited empirically to that group only and to be extended theoretically to a wider group of people (for example the adult inhabitants of the province of Groningen AD 2010) only with caution. The generalizability of the present study therefore is limited, although the relationship to existing literature on the uses and functions of music (see section 9.3.1

⁸ Cf. Meyer & Schareika, 2009a.

below) does suggest that further generalization may be possible. To foster generalization, further research could benefit obviously from studying a larger population than the interviewees studied here, as well as from carrying out similar studies as the present study in other geographical areas.

9.3 Contribution to knowledge

9.3.1 Contributions to the study of the uses and functions of music

The theory presented above builds on the existing literature about the uses and functions of music as described in chapter 3. It also tries to add to that literature in several ways. In general, it emphasizes the importance of making a clear demarcation between the uses and functions of music, a demarcation neglected in some of the current literature.

By choosing a theoretical background which insists that the individual is central in modernity, by implication I focus on the uses and functions of music for the individual. This choice avoids unclearness concerning the question ‘whose’ uses and functions are described. Where for example in Alan Merriam’s still much-quoted work on the uses and functions of music⁹ the functions of music are sometimes functions for individuals, sometimes for groups of individuals, and sometimes for societies as a whole, in the set of functions presented here the functions of music are functions for individuals.

However, this choice does not lead to a disregard of the social element in the uses and functions of music, as this study does not presuppose a priori that there is a strict demarcation between the individual and the social (as much sociological and psychological theory seems to do) but rather sees the individual and the social as completely intertwined. Collective/societal functions of music therefore figure in the theoretical backgrounds of this study (where individuality is thoroughly social) as well as in the three overarching functions of music: affirmation of the self is heavily dependent on the social context of individuals (see e.g. the important place of persons in the description of social musical situations in section 6.2); one of the important forms of the connection to the ‘not-self’ is the connection to others (see section 7.3.3); and regulation through music is done not only by the interviewees themselves towards themselves, but also towards others or by others (see section 7.4).

When it concerns the uses of music, the present study differs from many studies in ethnomusicology, (social) psychology and sociology in not taking for granted that performing music and/or listening to music are the two most important forms of musicking. Rather, it tries to describe in a rather detached way and without valuation the six elements of which concrete musical social situations are made up, including all possible forms of musical behavior which find a place in them. It sees the valuation of performing and listening as the two most important forms of musicking not as a given but refers this valuation to the level of a culture-specific rating of various forms of musicking.

⁹ Merriam, 1964, ch. 11.

It does this on the basis of a grounded theory analysis of narrative-biographical interviews, which gives this decentering of playing and listening an empirical plausibility.

The model of the functions of music (affirmation, connection in its many ways, and regulation) adds to the existing literature by delivering an encompassing model based on the clear assumption that we are talking about functions for – again – individuals. It thus is possible to integrate much of the earlier work in this field; for example, the model does not use the tripartition cognitive/emotional/social as used by Hargreaves and North¹⁰ but incorporates all three domains; nor does it stress the regulative function of music as done in works by e.g. DeNora¹¹, but regulation finds its place within the suggested model. As for Clayton's recent summarizing attempt of 'the social and personal functions of music' based on extensive literature study¹², his four functions relate to my model as follows: 'regulation' and 'coordination of action' are part of the regulative function of my model, 'mediation between self and other' in my model is the connection to others, whereas 'symbolic representation' may be seen as a hypothesis describing the underlying semiotic mechanisms of the affirmative circle of my model.

The contribution of this study to earlier research on the uses and functions of music may therefore be summarized in the following four points:

- the grounded theory presented here works with a clear demarcation of uses vs. functions and with a clear starting point from the individual as functioning in late modern societies;
- the theory presents a descriptive overview of the six elements of the uses of music in concrete musical social situations, avoiding a partiality in favor of (instrumental) performance and/or listening as forms of musicking;
- the theory presents an encompassing model of the affirmative, connective and regulative functions of music, integrating the functions as demonstrated in earlier literature;
- the theory makes clear that valuations which may be considered as unproblematic in other studies (for example the central importance of playing an instrument, or the assumption that music is essentially a form of art) are not so much premises on which to base research but rather culture-specific valuations to be questioned.

9.3.2 Contributions to the field of ethnomusicology and ethnomusicology-at-home

This study is an example of ethnomusicology-at-home. In the introduction (see section 1.1) I stated that with this study I also have the intention to contribute to the discussion what ethnomusicology-at-home might be. This study makes a number of points in that respect. To start with, the discussion of ethnomusicology-at-home in section 4.2 makes it quite clear that the best characterization of the field of ethnomusicology-at-home is a characterization which relies not so much on the pinpointing of one or more geographic

¹⁰ Hargreaves & North, 1999, pp. 71-72; see for a slightly different tripartition Chamurro-Premuzic 2007.

¹¹ DeNora, 2000.

¹² Clayton, 2009; notice again the division of the social from the individual here.

areas or specific groups where the research is done but which is based on a specific relationship between the researcher and the research object; the fundamental question of ethnomusicology-at-home is a question of research methodology rather than of research object.

This fundamental question is the question of ‘estrangement’ – of how to make the familiar strange. In ethnomusicology-at-home, as yet this question seems to be underreflected. In this study, I contribute to a more reflective methodological stance in ethnomusicology-at-home by seeking inspiration in the methodological discussions as found in the qualitative social sciences such as qualitative sociology, a field which shares its ethnographic character with ethnomusicology. This leads to a questioning of the centrality of participant observation as defined in classical fieldwork and a turn towards ‘neo-classical fieldwork’¹³.

Specifically in this study, I reconsidered the secondary place which interviewing as a method of data collection holds in ethnomusicology. I argued, on the basis of the theoretical choices I made, that the interview may hold a primary place in data collection in ethnomusicology, but only if the interviews are carefully methodologically scrutinized. My explicit choice for the narrative interview is such a methodologically scrutinized choice. As a side-effect, those methodological choices question the validity of the equation in ethnomusicology of participant observation and the ‘performing researcher’ (and the ensuing focus on music performers) often found in ethnomusicology. As such, it contributes to discussions about how the object of study of ethnomusicology – music – should be understood.

The methodological choice for a grounded theory approach can be considered as a contribution to the field of ethnomusicology as well. As indicated in section 4.3, grounded theorizing hardly is explicitly mentioned as an inspiration within ethnomusicology, which is unjustified given the shared ethnographic character of the two. The theoretical choice for Reckwitz’ formulation of a theory of practice equally can be considered as a contribution to the field of ethnomusicology. Although practice theory is mentioned frequently as a possible theoretical background for studies in ethnomusicology, Reckwitz’ work as yet has received little to no attention¹⁴.

Finally, this study contributes to the discussion of the central topic of music and identity in ethnomusicology. As Timothy Rice recently stated, “[p]erhaps the most ubiquitous theme in our field [ethnomusicology; EBB] today concerns the relationship between music and identity”¹⁵; and further on: “We have (...) plenty of ethnomusicological theorizing about music’s contribution to individual and social identity, but we need noisier and more frequent theoretical conversations that flesh them out, critique them, and

¹³ Meyer & Schareika, 2009a.

¹⁴ A search on the search term ‘Reckwitz’ in the musicological database Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale performed May 1, 2013, showed no results.

¹⁵ Rice, 2010b, p. 123.

move them towards more fine-grained explanations and understandings of music's importance in human life.”¹⁶ I hope this study, pointing out how music helps individuals to affirm, connect and regulate their selves, serves that end.

Summarizing, the contribution of this study to ethnomusicology(-at-home) may be summarized as follows:

- this study contributes to more methodological reflection within ethnomusicology(-at-home) by importing methodological discussions from other qualitative social sciences working in an ethnographic manner;
- this study argues for a stronger place of the (narrative) interview as a means of data collection within ethnomusicology(-at-home);
- this study argues for a stronger incorporation of elements from grounded theory in ethnomusicology(-at-home);
- this study contributes to the central ethnomusicological topic of music and identity.

9.4 Four directions for further research

In this section, I will discuss some topics for further research suggested in the findings of this study but not followed through: possible directions for further thinking and further research, tentative and sometimes speculative. I will focus on four topics: typologizing the uses and functions of music in everyday life, musical discourses, musical subject cultures, and the musical subject order of art music.

9.4.1 Typologizing the uses and functions of music in everyday life

The uses of music are incredibly varied. In 34 interviews 30 interviewees told me innumerable things they did with music. They pictured small (and sometimes bigger) scenes in which music figured, scenes you could document on video and broadcast on TV as documentary pictures of ordinary lives – a girl on holiday cries in her bed in the evening because her father plays the violin downstairs; a boy comes home from school for the afternoon lunch and his mother listens to the radio while preparing lunch; a woman sings a psalm for her children during a thunderstorm; another woman gives away her handmade bamboo flutes she loves so much to an artist friend out of fear of doing the wrong things with them... not always huge dramas, but the material of which individual musical lives are made up.

The variation of uses within any of the musical lives portrayed in the interviews was huge, even for those interviewees who considered themselves as indifferent towards music. One might use the six elements (persons, behavior, et cetera) of the uses of music at some point to draw personal profiles which might eventually cluster into types of musickers, but I have not made an attempt at that and do not see salient regularities in the

¹⁶ Id., p. 124.

set of interviews used in my research¹⁷. Some remarks however on such regularities can be made; for example the observation of the importance of music from the earliest years (primary school and before) springs to the eye, slightly counterintuitive given the stress often laid on the importance of musical development in the teenage years and early adolescence¹⁸; and the great influence of partners on musical development (in the positive or the negative), something that might be an interesting field of research in itself.

The functions of music show an equal diversity. The model developed shows that three overarching functions play a role in virtually all interviewees' lives: affirmation, connection and regulation of the self. The musical self, affirmed in the affirmative circle, connects to the world around him in many forms: through choosing music, expressing the self, connecting to others, connecting to the supernatural, connecting to the material world, connecting to time, connecting to place. In the interviews, it becomes quite clear that there is no direct relationship between specific styles or genres and the various functions of music or specific forms of connectivity. Classical music¹⁹ is not the only music that lends itself for a transcendent connection with the realm of the artistic, and the Dutch schlager functions not only as a means for bonding with others. But there does seem to exist a certain prevalence: although classical music lovers use classical music also e.g. for social bonding and for connecting with the past, the discourse connected to the classical music genre seems to highlight the transcendent power of classical music to connect to the realm of the artistic; and although Dutch schlager lovers are perfectly able to talk about an artistic valuation within the Dutch schlager genre, in their discourse there seems to be a predilection for the power of this genre for social bonding.

This leads to a recommendation about determining the object of ethnomusicological study. Timothy Rice, in a recent article on ethnomusicological theory, states that “[o]ur local, idiographic studies [...] are based in some form of society or community”²⁰, and that those communities can be defined in four ways: geographically; by ethnic, racial, religious, and kinship groups; around a certain style, affinity, taste, or practice²¹; or organized as, or within, institutions²². Given the variety of the uses and functions of

¹⁷ Mirroring in that respect for example the findings of the ‘Music in Daily Life’-project – see Susan D. Crafts, Daniel Cavicchi & Charles Keil (Eds.), *My Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993. Like that project, I intend to present “what some people out there have to say for themselves” (p. 3); unlike that project, however, I do in this study not restrict myself to just a presentation of interviews, but offer an interpretive model – a grounded theory – which covers all the interviews in all their variety; but again, like that project, without an all-too-easy clustering of the interviewees into e.g. “subcultures” (p. 1).

¹⁸ See e.g. psychologist Douwe Draaisma on taste in popular music, as quoted in the national newspaper *De Volkskrant*, June 1, 2012, <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/3380/muziek/article/detail/3264310/2012/06/01/Zeg-me-uw-leefstijl-en-ik-vertel-u-uw-muzieksmaak.dhtml>.

¹⁹ Which is explicitly not to be equated with art music in this study.

²⁰ Rice, 2010b, p. 108.

²¹ ‘Practice’ here not taken in Reckwitz’ definition but rather as ‘activities’; Rice gives as examples the ‘practices’ of surfing or motorcycle racing.

²² Rice, 2010b, p. 109.

music within and between individuals as shown in this study²³, it seems to me that there is a certain danger of circularity and of the reification of the individual or of ‘culture’ in taking ethnic, racial, religious, and kinship groups, or styles, affinities, tastes or practices as a starting point. In both cases, such a choice leads to a choice of and perspective on the individuals studied which is based on ‘cultural’ characteristics ascribed to the individuals beforehand. Hence it may lead to a limited view on the flexibility and hybridity of the individuals studied. It may be more fruitful to start research from the more neutral and individual-independent level of a certain geographic area or a certain institution; within those areas or institutions, one may study cultural codes at work in the ways of doing and talking of all (or an a-select or theoretical sample of) individuals present. Of course it remains fruitful to study affinity groups or ‘scenes’ centered around certain styles or genres, as long as one keeps in mind that the members of the scenes are probably only part-time members, and that any scene should be looked at principally as being able to perform all the functions of music, and not just one or a few.

9.4.2 Musical discourses

This study focused on the ‘ways of talking’ about music of a sample of 30 interviewees from a wide variety of backgrounds. Those ways of talking about music may be seen as reflecting musical ‘discourses’. Building on the work of Michel Foucault, Reckwitz sees discourses as discursive practices in which cultural codes are represented; in discursive practices cultural codes are made explicit, in non-discursive practices cultural codes are shown implicitly²⁴. Discourses, Reckwitz says, may be tied to specific subject forms; they may express ideas about what a subject essentially ‘is’, and hence may be involved in the struggle of certain subject forms to become – or stay – hegemonic, thus connecting to Foucault’s analysis of discourse and power. The discussion in this study of the cultural codes of the music specialist (section 8.2) and the cultural codes of the subject order of art music (section 8.3) delivers first insights in how the explicitation of cultural codes may take the form of ‘musical discourses’, expressing what it means to be a musical subject.

A further study of musical life in the province of Groningen at present in terms of musical discourses might be worthwhile in itself. In such a study, the study of ‘ways of talking’ as they occur in narrative interviews might be combined with studying ways of talking in focus group settings, in ‘naturally occurring’ musical social situations through ‘participant audition’²⁵, in television or radio broadcasts, on the internet, and/or in documents such as policy documents from various institutions, newspaper and magazine articles, or scholarly works. Such a study of discursive musical practices might uncover

²³ Or, in Reckwitzian terms: the inherent hybridity of modern life on many levels, found back in the hybridity of cultural codes and subject cultures as well as in the subject’s functioning as a ‘bundle of dispositions’.

²⁴ For a short discussion of discourse, see Reckwitz, 2006, p. 43-44. Again (cf. section 2.3.1.3) Reckwitz is not completely clear here in his definition of practices; on the one hand he stresses that discourse is discursive practice, on the other hand he makes a distinction between practice and discourse. My distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices in this section should be read as my attempt to elucidate this unclarity.

²⁵ Meyer & Schareika, 2009b.

various discourses at work, and it might be combined with a study of non-discursive musical practices such as performing in concert settings, listening to live music performances, or organizing music festivals in order to show how discourses are shown in them implicitly.²⁶ In the interviews, some interesting elements come to the fore which might figure in such a study of musical discourses but which I have not mentioned yet. I would like to refer to two such elements here. The first one is an idea about the value of music; it is the idea that music is ‘inherently good’. This idea, found in art music circles but not confined to them, basically states that the sound of music or the playing of music – often: the sound of ‘good’ music, or the playing of ‘good’ music – has beneficial characteristics: it is healing, it enhances cognitive capacities, it fosters emotional growth or social connectivity, and so forth. This may be connected to the idea that music not only is an essentially human phenomenon in the sense that animals do not know music, but also that it is an essential human phenomenon in the sense that true humanity without music is unthinkable.²⁷

As a heuristic tool, we might formulate a dissenting but probably equally probable view considering music’s value. Music, in that view, is essentially neutral; evolutionary, music came into being ‘by accident’, and because it was not harmful to the species and could serve ‘a million household uses’ it stuck with us²⁸; and precisely the neutrality of music combined with its usability for a wide variety of functions – as shown for example in this study – explains the importance of music in people’s lives. From a standpoint of discourse, it would then be interesting to see how the inherent ‘goodness’ of music is (or is not) discursively expressed in various musical subject cultures in various ways, how this is connected to non-discursive practices, and how such discursive elements function in the struggle for dominance between various musical subject cultures.

The second interesting element that could offer an approach to a study of musical discourse is the idea of taste, and especially of ‘good taste’. As expressed in section 7.2, in the affirmative circle people are touched by music. On that basis they fortify their relationship with music by choosing music. This circle of touching and choosing is seconded by two separate ‘ways of talking’: ‘liking’ talk and ‘judging’ talk. In ‘liking’ talk interviewees state that they like certain music; music is nice, or beautiful. Sometimes (mostly metaphorical) explanations are offered for that valuation, but they usually fall short. In ‘judging’ talk, interviewees state that they judge certain music as good or interesting rather than nice or beautiful. The explanations offered in that domain are verbalizations and applications of the norms of ‘goodness’ or ‘interestingness’ of that particular interviewee, often embedded within a wider discourse attached to quality valuations in specific genres of music but also referring to more personal sets of criteria.

²⁶ Thus showing formations of non-discursive and discursive practices, or in Reckwitzian terms “practice/discourse-formations” (“Praxis-/Diskursformationen”; 2006, p. 44).

²⁷ This, then, may become connected to a search for the evolutionary origin of music and for the evolutionary benefits of music; see e.g. Schubert, 2009.

²⁸ I here echo an evolutionary thought which I first encountered in the work of Dutch writer Karel van het Reve, specifically in his novel *Een dag uit het leven van de reuzenkoeskoes*. [A day in the life of the giant glider.] Amsterdam: Van Oorschot, 1979.

What might be interesting is to study the degree to which ‘judging’ talk penetrates ‘liking’ talk. Put simply, in that process the idea that someone has a taste in music – someone likes certain music – is transferred into the idea that someone has a *good* taste in music – someone knows how to apply the correct quality criteria to the correct music and therefore likes that music. Connected to this are ideas that tastes of music can be rationally grounded, and that good taste can be learnt – music education becomes an education towards good taste in music, something the music teacher represents and the pupil should learn. It seems to me that those processes of shifts from taste to good taste may be connected to wider discourses in which the codes of culture not only express distinctions and classifications but also quite specifically define ‘others’ and ‘anti-subjects’²⁹ and may play an important role in the struggle of a subject culture to become a hegemonic subject order³⁰.

9.4.3 Musical subject cultures

Reckwitz points out that post-modern modern society is not a cultural whole, but rather a hybrid constellation in which various subject cultures exist next to each other. As pointed out in section 2.3.3, subject cultures may take various places within society: they may, seen historically, be residual, emergent, dominant or declining, and they may be, in terms of power, hegemonic, sub-hegemonic, non-hegemonic or anti-hegemonic. The same might be true of ‘musical subject cultures’ – ‘ways of doing and talking’ that show us what it means to be musical in this world. Research might be dedicated to identifying (for example by an analysis of formations of discursive and non-discursive practices as presented in section 9.4.2) not only the dominant subject order of art music (see section 8.3.2) but also to identify other musical subject cultures and try to point out which historical (residual, emergent...) or power (hegemonic, sub-hegemonic...) position they have in society.

Elements of possible other musical subject cultures already figure in this study. Apart from the dominant subject order of art music (which is not connected exclusively to the classical music genre, as might be shown by studying the comparability of discourses figuring in conservatoire departments of classical, jazz, pop or world music), there may be evidence for the existence of a non-hegemonic subject culture of ‘sociable music’ as found in for example Dutch schlager music circles (see the remarks on this topic in sections 7.3.2 and 7.3.3), an anti-hegemonic musical subject culture of ‘lay music’ as

²⁹ Reckwitz, 2006, pp. 84-85.

³⁰ Thus, of course, reflecting Bourdieu’s ideas on the role of culture in distinguishing social difference – cf. Joas & Knöbl, 2004, p. 551. It would be interesting to study how much of music research itself, seen as a specific ‘way of talking’, is implicitly adhering to the discourse of ‘good taste’ as expressed in e.g. the subject order of art music. Examples might be that when it comes to studying western culture, ethnomusicologists study conservatoires (representing the top of the professional-aesthetic pyramid of education; Nettl, 1995) rather than primary schools, and the Early Music World in Boston (Shelemay, 2001) rather than the one in Smalltown; and psychologists when wanting to show that an ecological view on music perception works apply it to popular music too but then take Jimi Hendrix’ ‘Star Spangled Banner’ (1969) as an example rather than for example Creedence Clearwater Revival’s ‘Bad Moon Rising’ from the same year (Clarke, 2005).

found in shanty choirs (see the remark in section 8.2.3)³¹, and a sub-hegemonic (or maybe ‘emergent’) musical subject culture of ‘commercial music’³².

9.4.4 The musical subject order of art music and Reckwitz’ post-modern subject order of the creative-consumptive subject

A fourth and final possible direction of further research might be the relationship between the musical subject order of art music as discussed in section 8.3, and Reckwitz’ description of the dominant subject order in current society, the post-modern modern subject order of the consumptive-creative subject. As explained in section 2.3.3.3, Reckwitz exemplifies the postmodern-modern subject order in the ‘creative class’, governed by the codes of the aesthetic/expressive and the economic/market-oriented.³³ How does this relate to the three codes I described in section 8.3 as governing the musical subject order of art music: the codes of the music specialist, the personal expressive, and the ideal artistic object of beauty?

My hypothesis here would be that if we would look for a direct connection between the general dominant subject culture as formulated by Reckwitz and the dominant musical subject culture of art music, we may be looking in the wrong direction. The musical subject order of art music may actually not be connected so much to the postmodern-modern subject order but rather to other, non-dominant subject cultures. I think an attempt to analyze the musical subject order of art music would reveal that the cultural codes in it owe much to two different subject cultures as described by Reckwitz. In the first place it is indebted to what Reckwitz calls the transformational aesthetic subject culture of romanticism (see section 2.3.3.4). Next to its aesthetic nature, specifically its attention for the artist’s self-expression would support such an analysis³⁴. In the second place it is indebted to Reckwitz’ late bourgeois-modern subject order where the bourgeois individual, as a member of the concert audience, fulfills its need of aesthetic experiences, leading Reckwitz to describe this and comparable places where aesthetic experiences are undergone as “a kind of institutionalized place of bourgeois production of yearning”³⁵.

Looking at the current hegemonic musical subject culture of art music as disconnected from the general hegemonic, post-modern modern subject order, might explain the trouble institutionalized music life in the Netherlands has in maintaining its public funding at present. One might observe that Dutch music policy making, as part of Dutch art policy making in general, is in transition towards a policy in accordance with the post-

³¹ Other examples might include subject cultures underpinning the ‘scenes’ of hardcore punk, folk music, or some ‘non-western’ traditions.

³² A musical subject culture which figured not extensively in my interviews but which might be traced as the ‘other’ of the subject order of art music in for example formal cultural policy documents or statements from art music’s institutions.

³³ For a further elaboration, see Andreas Reckwitz, *Die Erfindung der Kreativität. Zum Prozess gesellschaftlichen Ästhetisierung*. [‘The discovery of creativity. On the process of societal aesthetization.’] Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2012.

³⁴ See Reckwitz, 2006, pp. 226-228.

³⁵ “... eine Art institutionalisierte Stätte bürgerlicher Sehnsuchtsproduktion”; Reckwitz, 2006, p. 262.

modern modern subject order; a subject order which stresses the importance of the economic as well as of the expressive-subjective self creation, both elements which in the musical subject order of art music are of less importance. This analysis could be defended by for example pointing out the growing importance in Dutch policy making of the economic in the arts³⁶. Another observation seconding the analysis may be the fact that recently one of the national economic ‘top sectors’, the creative industry, states on its website explicitly that the creative industry is concerned with “creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship”³⁷ – and that in practice the music sector is nearly completely absent from the institutionalized creative industry³⁸.

9.5 Implications for the conservatoire

In the introduction of this study (see section 1.2.1), I pictured the general background against which this study has been undertaken; a background in which conservatoires ask themselves how they can prepare their students successfully for a life as a professional musician in the 21st century. I asked the question whether one of the central problems in that respect is not the relationship between the professional musician and his audiences – audiences which have to be won over from performance to performance, and which are often defined in terms of specific ‘target groups’ which have to become interested in the ‘products’ professional musicians have on offer.

In section 8.3.2, I pictured the musical subject order of art music, and posited that this subject order of art music is replicated in our formal music education system and, specifically, within conservatoires at the top of the formal music education pyramid. This subject order of art music stresses the importance of certain uses and functions of music and sees many others as less important. It focuses on the musician, on performing and concentrated listening as the central forms of musicking, on audio-visual artifacts as carriers of (master)pieces, on resources such as talent, tradition, know-how and knowledge, and on the stage as the central location of musicking. And it focuses on the connective functions of choosing (fostering ‘judging’ talk), expressing, and transcending to the realm of the artistic.

This musical discourse, dominant in conservatoires³⁹, forms a highly specific constellation of the uses and functions of music. It is essential to realize that this specific

³⁶ See Ministerie van OCW, ‘Meer dan kwaliteit. Een nieuwe visie op cultuurbeleid.’ [‘More than quality. A new vision on cultural policy.’] Den Haag: Ministerie van OCW, 2011, which right from the first page stresses entrepreneurship in culture.

³⁷ “... creativiteit, innovatie en ondernemerschap”; www.top-sectoren.nl/creatieveindustrie/, consulted May 1, 2013.

³⁸ Although formally, music falls within the definition of the creative industry, in practice it does not, as is shown by the recent decision – after questions in parliament – to include ‘pop and dance’, on the basis of its economic importance, within the creative industry top sector. www.ccaa.nl/page/65933/nl, consulted May 1, 2013.

³⁹ I am aware that this domination is not absolute, and that also within conservatoires debates about the dominance of the musical subject culture of art music occur. See for examples e.g. several articles in Odam & Bannan, 2005, and works such as Smilde 2009, Perkins 2011, or Biranda Ford, ‘What Are

constellation is tied to the musical subject order of art music; the dominant musical subject culture, which “is able to institutionalize its subject model as generally valid, universal, apparently without alternatives, and moreover attractive”⁴⁰. But it is equally important to realize that this subject culture in reality is, although attractive for some, precisely *not* generally valid, universal and without alternatives. Rather, dominant (musical) subject cultures are “as cultural products historically and qua location highly specific constellations”⁴¹. It is a constellation of the uses and functions of music which is a specific selection out of many possible selections, as the following figure may make clear at a glance where it comes to functions (see figure 15):

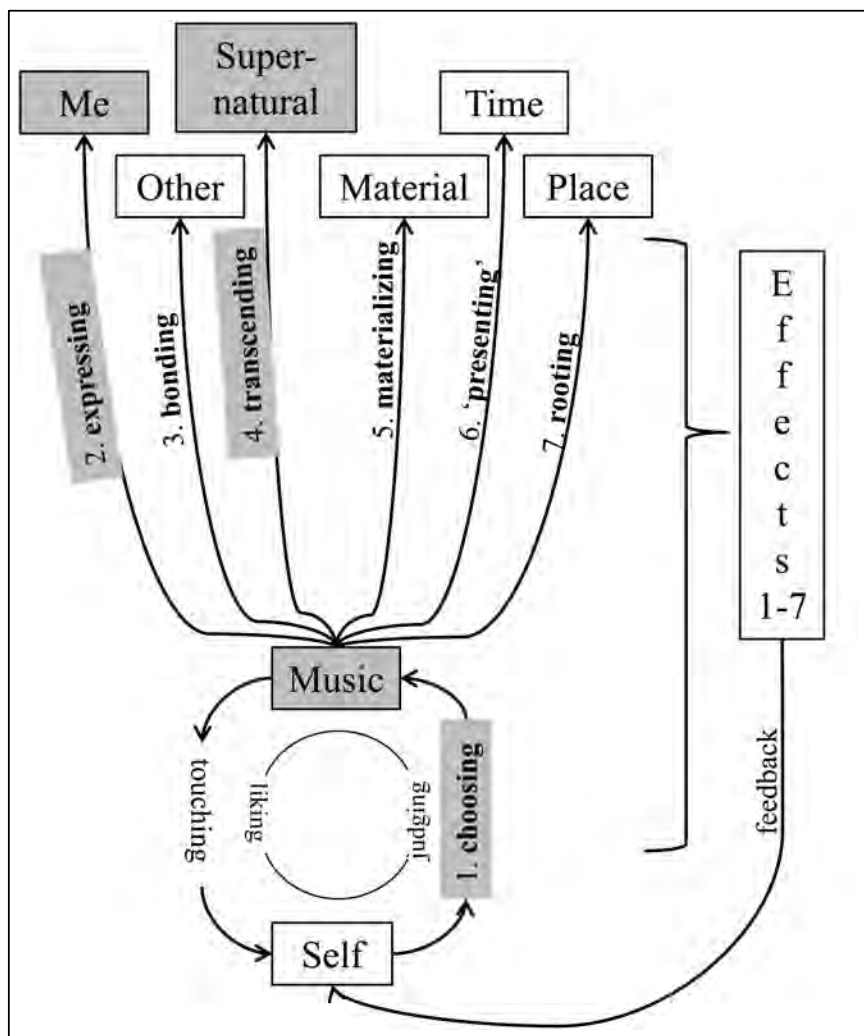


Fig. 15: Musical functions in the subject order of art music (grey)

Conservatoires For? Discourses of Purpose in the Contemporary Conservatoire.’ PhD Dissertation. London: University of London, 2010.

⁴⁰ “... ihr Subjektmodell als ein allgemeingültiges, universales, scheinbar alternativenloses und dabei attraktives zu institutionalisieren vermag”; Reckwitz, 2006, p. 69.

⁴¹ “... als Kulturelle Produkte historisch-lokal hochspezifischer Konstellationen”; Reckwitz, 2006, p. 631.

It is here that a renewed reflection about the possible audiences of the professional musician may start. The starting point may be the realization that, as a professional musician, one is raised in a valuable musical tradition, and has become a music specialist trained in instrumental craftsmanship geared towards expressivity in art works; but that this professionalism must be put to work in a broader societal context where many – though by no means necessarily all – possible members of the audience may value instrumental craftsmanship by a music specialist in itself (given the rather general acceptance of the ideas presented in section 8.2) but may feel that the connective functions figuring in ideas about expressivity in art works is not among the most relevant functions of music.

Rather than positing the universal value of expressivity in art works in an absolute way, (future) professional performing musicians may have to realize that this is one definition of musical reality⁴² amongst many; that different individuals may have entirely different definitions of reality, which moreover may shift within individuals over their lifetime as well as from moment to moment; and that paying attention to for example the ‘bonding’, ‘presenting’ and ‘rooting’ functions of music when deciding how, when and where they are going to play their music may offer possibilities to attract a wider audience. Thus an alternative way of thinking about the functions of music may open up (future) musicians for a more flexible relationship with their possible audiences.

Musicians might even take it one step further and stop thinking of their professional life in terms of only the opportunity to offer certain high-quality ‘products’⁴³. Instead, they might learn to consider themselves (also) as ‘service providers’; as trained professionals with a whole range of knowledge and skills which may be put in practice for an endless variety of goals, dependent on the wishes of the ‘other’⁴⁴. In that model, professional musicians need to acquire general core competencies which enable them to function as such service providers: the ability to ask and to listen; the ability to put one’s own preferences aside temporarily; the ability to see any individual musical ‘other’ as intrinsically worthwhile; the ability to postpone judgments about certain styles, genres, scenes, or forms of musicking; the ability to accept that, although they are different – and maybe even ‘strange’ – those styles, genres, scenes or forms of musicking must have their intrinsic values.⁴⁵

⁴² On the ‘definition of reality’ see Berger & Luckmann, 1966, e.g. p. 168.

⁴³ Including the idea that this product is a process, for example when a jazz musician offers an improvisation workshop to amateur musicians.

⁴⁴ I deliberately not use the word ‘customer’ here, as this tends too much towards a one-directional relationships in which customers ‘demand’ and producers ‘deliver’. I tend to see this new relationship between musicians and ‘audiences’ rather as a reciprocal communicative relationship in which individual identities meet.

⁴⁵ A more extensive study of such competencies can be found in e.g. Peter Renshaw, *Engaged Passions. Searches for Quality in Community Contexts*. Delft: Eburon, 2010. A slightly different perspective however seems to underlie this and similar publications where they base themselves on a definition of music as an intrinsically artistic phenomenon, stressing the basic importance of ‘artistic quality’. In my opinion this definition of music as an artistic phenomenon may – sometimes in very subtle ways – still be tied too much

Specifically, conservatoires might at least consider to do two things. The first is to take care that music students gain an awareness that the musical subject order of art music, within which they are being educated, is not the only definition of musical reality available, and that strict adherence to that definition of reality may stand in the way of reaching a wider audience and thus of building a career as a professional musician. A powerful way to do this is to ensure that students connect to musical styles, genres, scenes and forms of musicking which lie outside the definition of musical reality dominant in the conservatoire. Situations should be devised where music students are not only exposed to ‘shared ways of doing and talking’, but also to ‘disputed ways of doing and talking’ – situations where they are asked to meet ‘the other’ and to reconsider their musical ‘self’, where they are asked to do the – for them – musical ‘unthinkable’, in order to start a process of what might perhaps be called transformative learning, a learning process in which deeply embedded and often very personal frames of reference are transformed⁴⁶. Such situations – possibly in the form of projects where for example classical music performance students or jazz performance students are asked to become a ‘service provider’ for the residents of a specific residential home for the elderly for some time, or, more extreme, for a community of singers of Dutch schlager music – could complement or foster other curricular innovations developed in the conservatoires nowadays, such as Smilde’s ‘collaborative learning environment’ and ‘artistic, generic and educational laboratory’⁴⁷ or Perkins’ ‘creative, reflective and leadership places for learning’⁴⁸.

The second is that conservatoires may encourage their performance students to take into account conscious decisions about the individuals they wish to attract as a possible audience to all musical social situations they create in the framework of their studies. Again this would consist of a way of working in which ‘shared ways of doing and talking’ are questioned in order to make students aware that the variety of the uses and functions of music is enormous and that, by manipulating them in their own musicking behavior, they may speak to various people. Thus, students may, in the musical social situations they create, consciously build in opportunities for social bonding or for connecting with a specific time or place, they may question the performance-format of their performance, or they may play with ideas about how their musical product can function as a gift in a society where the gift of music no longer is related to the music carrier. A conscious questioning of the many aspects of the musical social situation created by calling into being a seemingly simple performance may lead students away

to the dominant musical subject order of art music and therefore may potentially still prevent a real openness towards the multiplicity of the uses and functions of music in everyday life.

⁴⁶ See e.g. Robert Kegan, ‘What “Form” Transforms? A Constructive-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning.’ In: Knud Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary Theories of Learning. Learning Theorists... In Their Own Words*. London: Routledge, 2009.

⁴⁷ Smilde, 2009, p. 256.

⁴⁸ Perkins, 2011, p. 212.

from accepting unquestioningly the standard performance format and may invite them to look for new ways of connecting to future audiences.⁴⁹

The two remarks above are specifically geared towards those students trained to become music performers. I am aware that conservatoires often train more than just performers; in the conservatoire where I work, the Prince Claus Conservatoire in Groningen, we also train conductors, composers, instrumental/vocal teachers as well as classroom music teachers. For each of those categories of students, different adjustments may be necessary in the curriculum in order to look for a new and wider relationship with possible audiences. I will not go into the details of possible amendments for all those categories of students; nor will I discuss the relevance of difference in styles here (classical music, jazz, pop/rock, various non-western musical styles and genres). In order to give one example of some different implications in another domain, I briefly turn towards the classroom music teacher student.

In classroom music teacher education, traditionally the goal of offering an introduction into the world of music has been standard. In the past this has led to a stress on introduction to the ‘canon’ of classical music; more recently attention shifted to for example the inclusion of jazz, rock/pop, folk and/or non-western music within this canon, or a shift towards an introduction to playing music rather than to knowing a musical canon, or to musical creativity (composition, improvisation) rather than playing or listening to pieces.⁵⁰ Different as they were, all those directions within music education had in common that no or hardly any attention was paid to the role music played in the everyday lives of the pupils concerned. Rather, music education was seen as a force for changing the everyday musical lives of pupils in a direction deemed as of great(er) value. With as a starting point the realization that this study shows how the variety of uses and functions on the individual level are endless but that musicking is inherently meaningful for many people, one might consider to turn that picture around. Rather than taking teaching the canon, playing an instrument, or creating music as an inherently good starting point, one might ask pupils to show each other the force of music in their own life; and from that point work towards a mutual understanding of the differences in musical lives and towards experimentation in order to broaden the possible repertoire of uses and functions of music for every individual, thus contributing to “the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different from one another”^{51, 52}.

⁴⁹ This might be extended to the standard examination format in conservatoires: the performance in front of a team of jurors.

⁵⁰ See for an early useful description of the various directions within music education in the Netherlands Jan de Vuyst, *Muziek in het begeleid basisonderwijs, wat houdt dat in? Een model voor het deelonderwijsleerplan muziek voor het begeleid basisonderwijs*. [‘Music in primary education, what does that mean? A model for the music curriculum in counseled primary education.’] Enschede: SLO, 1982.

⁵¹ Geertz, 1988, p. 147.

⁵² See for a further description of what I call ‘idiocultural music education’ Bisschop Boele, 2013; for some related opinions see e.g. Cavicchi 2009, or Marissa Silverman, ‘A Critical Ethnography of Democratic Music Listening.’ *British Journal of Music Education* 30/1 (2013).

Summarizing, on the basis of the present study conservatoires are recommended to encourage students to think of their future audiences in the broadest possible terms, taking into account the wide variety of uses and functions figuring in the daily lives of musicking individuals. They are encouraged to make students look upon themselves (also) as 'service providers', and as such to be open and non-judgmental in their relationships towards the musical 'other'. Conservatoires are recommended to translate this into their curricula by devising transformative projects for their students in which they meet 'musical others', and by encouraging their students to take their possible audiences into account consciously in any musical social situation they devise or find themselves in.

10. A final reflection

Not long before finishing the work on this study, one of the students from the Prince Claus Conservatoire where I work came to me. He said: “I’ve got a present for you. I found this CD in a record shop for a few Euros and I have got it already. I thought you would like to have it. It is one of my favorite CDs, one of the most beautiful CDs I have. I play it the most often of all my CDs. You see, it is a combination of medieval music and Kurdish music. It is published by a very small record company from Iran. My brother, who is in Iran regularly, has visited the company when he was there. It is a beautiful production, with a booklet and everything. Because I really liked the lessons on non-western music I got from you – it has really widened my listening experience – I thought this would be something for you.”

Of course I was surprised, and a bit flattered. I thanked him, and promised that I would listen to the CD soon. We talked a bit, I made the comparison with Jordi Savall’s *Hespèrion XX*¹, and then we split up. While I walked back to my office, I reminisced on this small ‘musical social situation’ – because that was what it was, of course. And I realized how, in this small scene from daily musical life, all the ingredients I have been writing about in this study come to the fore. The six elements of the uses of music are there: persons involved (the student and myself, but also the student’s brother, and – at a distance – Jordi Savall), musical behavior (talking about music, giving music as a gift), things (the CD), resources (money, curiosity, knowledge), period (the beginning of the 21st century with its specific characteristics such as the existence of the CD or a general availability of and interest in world music) and place (the conservatoire – but also Kurdistan). And where it concerns the functions of music we see the ‘affirmative circle’ and ‘liking music’ at work, but also such functions as bonding the self by connecting to others and materializing the self by connecting to things. And all this against the background of the codes of culture of the conservatoire, which allow students to talk about music and give presents to teachers – and teachers to listen to students and to accept small presents – as long as the framework is that of the music specialist, where music is a work caught on a CD, is labeled (medieval, Kurdish), excellent performers as professional role models are referred to (Jordi Savall), and the (expert) listening experience is important. And I realized how such musical social situations are situations where structure and agency are interconnected in such a way that, indeed, the webs of culture in which we enact our lives are producing us and are produced by us at the same time; or, in the words of Harold Garfinkel, are socially standardized and socially standardizing².

That is what this study has brought me in the first place: a deepened understanding of how music in modern Western society is a form of social practice. A social practice of importance to all of the widely different interviewees I spoke to, for many reasons but

¹ Incorrectly, as they are now known as *Hespèrion XXI*.

² Garfinkel, 1984 (1967), p. 36.

ultimately for its own sake: because it gives the opportunity to affirm, connect and regulate the self musically. Of course this study has also contributed to the other two aims mentioned in the introductory chapter (see section 1.2.3): by understanding music as a social practice I did contribute to the discussion on what it means to be a professional musician in our present society (see section 9.5), and I tried to contribute to the methodology of ethnomusicology-at-home (see section 9.3.2) . But it is the deepened understanding of music as a form of social practice in my own society that I see as the major point of this study.

It certainly is the major point for me. In the introduction I stressed that this study is the result of the interpretive work of me, the author, and that it is an attempt to write a plausible story. I do want to finish this study with some reflective words on the discourse and signature of this study and the resulting plausability.

This study is – by necessity – written from a personal perspective, a perspective which I think is best characterized as one of an informed and involved outsider. In my work in the past 15 years within all kinds of conservatoire settings, the double bind of involvement and outsidership has been a recurrent theme, a theme I have become more and more aware of – and at ease with. I am fascinated by music as a social practice, obviously; and I love the opportunities my work gives me to contribute to a setting in the conservatoire where future professional musicians are prepared for a life as musicians, contributing their musicking to society. At the same time I am more and more aware that the conservatoire is not a neutral place, not just a rationalized education factory where an efficient and effective training of musician takes place. It is a highly normative place; a place where students become engrained with the discourse of the musical subject order of art music, which, in Reckwitzian terms, may be seen as a once hegemonic but now probably declining (though by no means residual yet) musical subject culture; a subject culture struggling to maintain its hegemonic place in the changing overall cultural landscape of today's creative-consumptive subject order.

The personal doublette – to use yet another Reckwitzian term³ – of involvement and outsidership is at least partly the result of my personal background. It is only fair to acknowledge that my musical personality as formed by or expressed in my musical biography (my hopping around in various music scenes consecutively and, often, simultaneously) and my reflective tendencies fostered by my academic studies, will have determined parts of the course this study took and parts of the analyses I undertook and conclusions I drew. Nevertheless I hope I have, from this personal perspective, given a plausible answer to the questions raised in this study, the question that ultimately boils down to the Geertzian ‘what the hell is going on here?’; and I can only hope that I and others will be capable to deliver even more plausible stories in the future.

³ Reckwitz, 2006, p. 500.

With quoting Garfinkel, Reckwitz and Geertz in this final section, I have indicated three authors who I expect to remain major inspirations for my future work. Garfinkel as the representation of deep and radical thinking about looking at society and culture as ‘work’ of their ‘members’; Reckwitz as the representation of an analysis of culture as historically grown, shared and disputed ways of doing and talking; and Geertz as the ‘ethnographer’s anthropologist’ and as the model for the anthropologist-as-author – as a writer, expressing a discourse, with a signature.

This study has given me the opportunity to write my plausible story on the basis of my enduring fascination for music and the inspiration of these three, and many other, authors. I hope to be able to continue in that vein, contributing to a further deep and grounded understanding of music as a social practice; an understanding which, to finish with a paraphrase of Geertz again, may contribute to the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different from another in musical tastes, in forms of musicking, in musical interests, in musical values, or even in musical power.

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Summary

This study focuses on the uses and functions of music in the life of individuals in the province of Groningen at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The study is an ethnomusicological study representing the sub-discipline of ethnomusicology-at-home. It uses Andreas Reckwitz' formulation of practice theory as a theoretical starting point and introduces methodological principles from the field of qualitative sociology. Central in the study is the individual. 30 theoretically sampled individuals recounted their musical biographies in narrative-biographical interviews, which were analyzed in detail and eventually led to a sufficiently suggested grounded theory of the uses and functions of music in Groningen AD 2010.

The theory consists of three interrelated compartments. The first compartment contains a description of the uses of music as expressed by the interviewees. 'Use' refers to the 'customary exercise of music' in concrete musical social situations. The result of this study is a detailed description of the six elements of musical social situations. Those six elements are: *persons* performing *behavior* ('musicking'), handling *things* and using *immaterial resources* at a specific *place* and in a specific *period*. The study shows that these six elements together describe, in the stories of the interviewees, an endlessly varied landscape of idiosyncratic musical social situations, where individuals use music in a multitude of ways.

The second compartment of the theory contains a model showing the functions of the uses of music from the standpoint of the (by definition social) individual. The model describes three overarching functions of music: the affirmation of the self, the connection of the self to the not-self, and the regulation of the self. *Affirmation* of the self takes place because music touches the self by way of a 'affirmative circle', and the self in turn likes the music that touches it – an incomprehensible and rather unpredictable process for the interviewees on which basis the self chooses music, a process often accompanied by talk about liking and about judging music. In this process a musical self is affirmed and re-affirmed. The affirmative circle enables individuals to make *connections* to the not-self: apart from connecting to music they also connect to the 'me', to others, to the supernatural, to the material, to time and to place. The affirmative and connective functions of music lead to effects which may be used in a feed-back loop in which *regulation* of the self takes place.

The uses and functions of music are to be considered as 'shared and disputed ways of doing and talking', as expressing shared and disputed cultural codes which form the socially standardized *and* socially standardizing cultural contexts in which individuals function. This cultural context of the uses and functions of music is described in a third compartment of this study. The study describes how three cultural codes seem to be shared amongst many (though not all) of the interviewees: the codes of playing an instrument, craftsmanship, and musicality, together forming the supercode of the music specialist. These three more general codes are combined with two further codes to form

the highly specific and culturally hegemonic musical subject culture of art music, expressing that music is a specialism; it is the craft of playing an instrument by talented individuals; that this craftsmanship must be combined with expressivity; and that through this form of specialized expression musical objects come into being which represent the ideal realm of the artistic.

By discussing this attempt at a grounded theory of the uses and functions of music in Groningen AD 2010, a picture is delivered of how individuals become musical individuals. Through their musicking in the context of concrete musical social situations they use music for the functions of affirmation, connection and regulation of the self; and they do this in the context of a web of cultural codes labeling shared and disputed – and sometimes hegemonic – ways of doing and talking. An evaluation of the theory and methodology used in this study shows that both assist in further developing the field of ethnomusicology(-at-home); an evaluation of the results in the light of existing research shows that they contribute to further insights into the uses and functions of music. Four areas for further research are mentioned: typologizing the uses and functions of music, musical discourses, musical subject cultures, and the place of the musical subject order of art music in contemporary society.

The study ends with a description of the possible implications for conservatoires. Conservatoires are recommended to encourage students to think of their future audiences in the broadest possible terms, taking into account the wide variety of uses and functions of music figuring in the daily lives of musicking individuals. They are encouraged to make students look upon themselves (also) as service providers, and as such to be open and non-judgmental in their relationships towards the musical other. Conservatoires are recommended to translate this into their curricula by devising transformative projects in which students meet ‘musical others’, and by encouraging their students to take their possible audiences into account consciously in any musical social situation they devise or find themselves in.

Kurzfassung

Diese Studie beschäftigt sich mit der Nutzung und Funktion ('uses and functions') von Musik im Leben von Individuen in der Provinz Groningen am Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts. Diese Studie ist eine ethnomusikologische Studie und repräsentiert die Subdisziplin der 'ethnomusicology-at-home'. Es benutzt Andreas Reckwitz' Formulierung der Praxistheorie als theoretischen Anhaltspunkt und methodologischen Prinzipien aus dem Feld der qualitativen Soziologie. Im Kern der Studie steht das Individuum. Eine theoretische Stichprobe von 30 Individuen, die ihren musikalischen Lebenslauf in narrativ-biographischen Interviews aufführten welche im Detail analysiert wurden, ergab schließlich eine 'grounded theory' der Nutzung und Funktion von Musik in Groningen im Jahr 2010.

Die Theorie besteht aus drei zusammenhängenden Teilen. Der erste Teil beinhaltet Beschreibungen der Nutzung von Musik, wie sie von den Befragten zum Ausdruck gebracht wurden. 'Nutzung' bezieht sich auf 'the customary exercise of music' in konkreten musikalisch sozialen Situationen. Das Ergebniss dieser Studie ist eine detaillierte Beschreibung von sechs Elementen von musikalisch sozialen Situationen. Diese sechs Elemente sind: *Personen*, die musikalisches *Verhalten* ausüben ('musicking'), *Dinge* hantieren und *immaterielle Ressourcen* an spezifischen *Orten* und in spezifischen *Perioden* benutzen. Die Studie zeigt, dass diese sechs Elemente zusammen in den Biographien der Befragten unendlich verschiedene Landschaften individueller musikalisch sozialer Situationen widerspiegeln in denen Individuelle auf verschiedenste Art und Weise Musik nutzen.

Der zweite Teil der Theorie beinhaltet ein Modell, dass die Funktion von Musik vom Standpunkt des (als sozial definiertes) Individuums aus beschreibt. Das Modell beschreibt drei Allumfassende Funktionen von Musik: die Bestätigung des Ichs, die Verbindung des Ichs zum nicht-Ich, und die Regulierung des Ichs. Die *Bestätigung* des Ichs findet statt weil Musik in einem 'Bestätigungskreis' das Ich trifft, und das Ich reihum die Musik die es trifft gefällt – ein für den Befragten unbegreiflich und eher unberechenbarer Prozess auf dessen Fundament das Ich sich Musik auswählt, ein Prozess oft begleitet durch das Reden über 'mögen' und 'beurteilen' von Musik. In diesem Prozess wird das musikalische Ich bestätigt und erneut bestätigt. Dieser Bestätigungskreis ermöglicht den Individuen eine *Verbindung* zum nicht-Ich herzustellen; abgesehen von der Verbindung zur Musik können sie auch das Ich zu Anderen, zum Übernatürlichen, zum Materiellen, zur Zeit und zum Ort verbinden. Die bestätigenden und verbindenden Funktionen von Musik führen zu Effekten, die wohlmöglich in einer Rückkopplungsschlinge benutzt werden in welcher die *Regulierung* des Ichs stattfindet.

Die Nutzungen und Funktionen von Musik werden als 'geteilte und umstrittene Wege des Tuns und Redens' betrachtet, als Ausdruck von geteilten und umstrittenen kulturellen Codes, die die sozial standardisierte und sozial standardisierende kulturellen zusammenhängenden kulturellen Kontexte formen in denen Individuen funktionieren.

Diese kulturelle Kontexte der Nutzung und Funktion von Musik werden im dritten Teil dieser Studie beschrieben. Die Studie beschreibt wie drei kulturelle Codes zwischen den verschiedenen Befragten (jedoch nicht allen) geteilt werden: der Code ein Instrument zu spielen, der Code des Handwerks und der Code der Musikalität formen zusammen der Supercode des musikalischen Spezialisten. Diese drei zusätzlich-allgemeinen Codes werden mit zwei weiteren Codes kombiniert um die hochspezifischen und kulturell-hegemonischen musikalische Subjektkultur der Kunstmusik zu formen. Diese Subjektkultur drückt aus, das Musik eine Spezialdisziplin ist – das Handwerk von talentierten Individuen ein Instrument zu spielen; das dieses Handwerk mit Expressivität kombiniert werden muss; und das durch diese Form von spezialisierten Expressivität Objekte ins Leben gerufen werden, die den idealen Bereich des Künstlerischen repräsentieren.

In diesem Versuch einer ‘grounded theory’ der Nutzung und Funktion von Musik in Groningen im Jahre 2010 wurde skizziert, wie Individuen zu musikalischen Individuen werden. Während des Musizierens im Kontext musikalisch sozialer Situationen nutzen Individuen Musik aufgrund der Funktionen der Bestätigung, Verbindung und Regulierung des Ichs; und sie tun das im Kontext eines Netzes von kulturellen Codes, die geteilte und umstrittene – und manchmal hegemonische – Art des Tuns und Redens kennzeichnen. Eine Auswertung der Theorie und Methodologie, die in diesem Studium angewendet wurden zeigen, das sich beide die weitere Entwicklung des Feldes ‘ethnomusicology(-at-home)’ unterstützen; eine Auswertung der Ergebnisse im Licht der existierenden Forschung zeigt, dass sie zu weiteren Einblicken in die Nutzungen und Funktionen der Musik beitragen. Vier Bereiche für weitere Forschung werden erwähnt: Typologisierung von Nutzungen und Funktionen der Musik; musikalische Diskurse; musikalische Subjektkulturen; und der Ort der musikalischen Subjektordnung der Kunstmusik in gegenwärtiger Gesellschaft.

Die Studie schließt ab mit einer Beschreibung der möglichen Folgen für Musikhochschulen. Den Musikhochschulen wird empfohlen ihre Studenten dazu an zu regen über ihr zukünftiges Publikum im weitesten Sinne des Wortes nachzudenken, und dabei auch die verschiedenen Varianten der Nutzungen und Funktionen von Musik zu berücksichtigen, die das Musizieren des Individuums ausmachen. Musikhochschulen werden ermutigt die Studenten (auch) als Dienstleister zu verstehen, sie zu lernen als solche offen zu sein und ihre Beziehungen mit der musikalische ‘Andere’ nicht urteilend gegenüber zu stehen. Musikhochschulen wird empfohlen dies in ihre Kurrikula zu integrieren durch Entwicklung von transformativen Projekten in welchen Studenten musikalische ‘Andere’ treffen, und ihre Studenten zu fördern sich ihres potenziellen Publikums bewusst zu sein in allen musikalischen sozialen Situationen die sie antreffen oder in welchen sie sich selbst wieder finden.

Biography

Evert Bisschop Boele (Leeuwarden, 19-06-1964; Dutch nationality) studied music education (B Mus Ed) from 1982-1986 at the Maastricht conservatoire, Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, and ethnomusicology (MA) from 1991-1994 at the University of Amsterdam. He worked as a music teacher in a secondary school, as a music consultant at the national educational expertise centre LPC/CPS, as head of the music education department of the Prince Claus Conservatoire, Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, and as an advisor for the executive board of Hanze UAS. Currently he is associate professor of the research group Lifelong Learning in Music of the Prince Claus Conservatoire/Hanze Research Arts & Society. He coordinates the research group's research strand on healthy ageing through music and the arts, and carries out ethnographic research on the uses and functions of music in western society. He published on ethnomusicology, music education, conservatoire education and higher education policies in general.

Appendix I: Overview of the Interviewees

Interviewee	Type of music preference B = Broad; S = specific; L = Low or none	Preference of genre (overarching genres: C = Classical; P = Pop/Rock; J = Jazz; W = World Music; O = Other; if special interests genres are indicated)	Music making (N-F-A-P) N=Not; F=former; A = Amateur; P=professional	Age Group (2-3-4-5-6-7) (2=20-29; et cetera)	Formal education (l-m-h)
1	B/S	P; Hardrock/heavy metal	A	3	H
2	B	C - P - J - W - O	A	6	H
3	L	P	N	3	L
4	B	C - P - J - W - O	P	2	H
5	S/B	Classical; C - P - J	P	4	H
6	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; Classical	P	4	H
7	B/S	P - C; Folk	A	6	L
8	B	P	F	2	H
9	B/S	C - P; Folk, Choir	A	7	M
10	B	P	N	4	L
11	S/B	Punk/hardcore/grunge; P	A	3	H
12	B	P	A	4	L
13	B	C - P - J - W - O	P	4	H
14	L	P - O	N	6	L
15	S/B	Classical; C - P - J - W - O	A	6	H
16	B/S	P - W; Reggae	N	3	H
17	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; Latin	A	4	H
18	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; Jazz	N	6	H
19	B/S	P - J; Dance/trance/techno	N	3	H
20	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; Reggae	A	4	L
21	B/S	C - P - J - W - O	P	4	H
22	S/B	Dutch language; P	A	4	L
23	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; World/ethnic	N	5	H
24	S/B	Classical; C - P - J - W - O	P	5	H
25	S/B	Jazz; J - P	P	4	H
26	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; Contemporary classical	P	4	H
27	B/S	C - P - O; Religious/gospel	A	4	L
28	B/S	C - P - J - W - O; Rap/hiphop	A	3	M
29	B/S	P - J	P	6	L
30	S/B	Dutch language; P	N	3	L

Appendix II: Listener's Portraits

- 1. Arnold**
- 2. Belinda**
- 3. Carl**
- 4. David**
- 5. Esther**
- 6. Fiona**
- 7. Gwen**
- 8. Herman**
- 9. Ivan**
- 10. Jonathan**
- 11. Kenneth**
- 12. Lennart**
- 13. Miriam**
- 14. Nelly**
- 15. Olga**
- 16. Peter**
- 17. Quinten**
- 18. Robert**
- 19. Simon**
- 20. Thomas**
- 21. Tarik**
- 22. Ursula**
- 23. Vincent**
- 24. Wilco**
- 25. Xandra**
- 26. Yuri**
- 27. Zina**
- 28. Charles**
- 29. Lou**
- 30. Yolanda**

1. Arnold

Arnold (36) does not remember that much attention was paid to music at home in his youth, nor was there much singing going on. He does remember some children's songs, though, as well as a record with 'Sinterklaas'¹-songs and one with fairytales. Of course other records were present at home but he has no recollection of them. His mother was a fan of Tom Parker, so *The Young Messiah*, *The Young Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* and the likes were played a lot, especially when playing Risk with his nephews – "A-side, B-side, A-side, B-side, A-side B-side, that went on all the time". Years later it turned out that Arnold's father was a good church organ player, who could play the complete hymnal by heart, but Arnold never knew this as a child.

At the age of eight, Arnold was sent to a general music education course where he had to play the recorder, do handclapping et cetera. "After that I did not want to listen to music for like six years", Arnold recounts. At primary school and also in the church, there was singing, but Arnold was not interested.

When going to secondary school, Arnold's interest in music was revived by his class mates. They all listened to Top of the Pops on the radio, so Arnold confiscated the transistor radio at home and started to listen – and to like it. After some time he started recording the songs he liked on a double cassette deck while doing his school homework. He would keep a precise record of the songs he recorded, including the duration of the songs. However, at that time Arnold was generally more into drawing comics than into music. He did have music lessons in school for one year, but does not remember much of it apart from listening to Sting's 'Dream of the Blue Turtles' and looking at the movie 'Jesus Christ Superstar'.

For a period of two years he compiled a big cassette tape collection, but then his father told him he could not continue buying new tapes for him endlessly. So Arnold started to re-record his collection, deciding which songs he would keep and which ones would be deleted. Arnold says: "At some point it turned out that, let me see, rock songs had the tendency to stay and the poppy songs and the dance tracks were mostly on the nomination to be deleted." Also, class mates would introduce him – by way of cassette tapes especially put together for him - to unknown music they thought he might like, such as the music from the Norwegian band A-ha.

In 1989 Arnold got his first CD-player for his birthday. He describes that as a turning point: from then on he had to choose actively which music to put on, instead of reacting to what was played on the radio. The first CDs he bought were all from the Eagles. He also started to borrow and record CDs from the local library, starting at the beginning of the alphabet. He recalls that he gradually started listening to slightly louder music – from The Eagles via Dire Straits to Bon Jovi and Europe. Then friends turned his attention to Metallica and Iron Maiden – "it all became just a little bit more extreme", Arnold tells. Eventually he drifted into death metal; first the more melodious varieties, but gradually also those songs where singing turned into screaming and roaring. "I tolerated the roaring for some time", Arnold says, "and then at some point you notice that those guys do not just roar, but that there are many different types of roaring."

¹ Lit. Santa Claus, the Dutch equivalent of Father Christmas. On December 5, Dutch families celebrate the birthday of Sinterklaas who gives presents to children.

Much of his listening development has been influenced by the fact that he took up guitar playing when he was 18. Because he recognized the fact that much of the music he liked was guitar-based, he asked a guitar for his birthday. He took lessons at first, but it turned out that the teacher could teach him the things he did not want to learn whereas she could not teach him the things he wanted to learn. So Arnold started learning to play the guitar himself, developing a way of playing in which he ‘summarized’ songs he liked without sticking to one of the actual parts – he would combine song lines, guitar lines and bass lines in his own versions.

When he started playing in bands, he learned a lot from his fellow band members, and they were (and still are) crucial in feeding him with new music he might listen to. Music, and especially playing in a band, has become “a hobby that has gotten out of hand”, as he describes it. Rehearsing, performing, recording, going to live concerts of other musicians have all become important activities, although the main thing of playing in a band still is “standing on the stage together with your friends”.

But there are other things Arnold listens to. Around the year 2000 he bought a lot of the compilation CDs that were released with music from various decades, and in the 80’s and 90’s compilation CDs he recognizes a lot of the songs he recorded on tape while at secondary school. Arnold’s wife listens mostly to Dutch-language pop music, but Arnold also likes that because it reminds him of situations when he was young: “It gives a sort of skating rink or party tent feeling.” Sometimes he just chances upon something, for example a set with the complete Mozart recordings when he was visiting Berlin.

Going to live concerts and music festivals has also become an important activity. Much of it is related to his current or past musical taste – he recently visited concerts of Europe as well as of the Swedish melodic death metal band In Flames. But when going to the Lowlands festival for example, he loves to hear new things that he never heard before.

Arnold stresses the important role music has in his relationship with his wife. When meeting for the first time, they discovered that they both listened to music they thought no-one else would listen to, and since then their musical tastes have developed kind of parallel, of course with each their own predilections (he describes their tastes as “a Venn-diagram with a huge overlap”). Now they have a child, things have not changed radically but they go out together to musical events less often because one of them stays home to look after the baby.

Arnold’s CD collection is merged with his wife’s now. It is ordered alphabetically, by band and by release date. The complete collection is downstairs in a CD cabinet. Hard rock and related genres take about 50 percent of the collection. Then there is a fair amount of pop (like Anouk, Aha, or Madonna; also a lot of compilation CDs, e.g. from the 80’s, the 90’s etc) and some country (Dixie Chicks, Poco), classical music (Mozart, Beethoven, Paganini), and fusion-jazz (Steve Lukather). There is no world music, apart from folk-metal like e.g. Finntroll, and a small amount of Dutch-language music (Guus Meeuwis). Urban is not their taste: R&B is considered too smooth, hip-hop too spartan; Arnold occasionally listens to rock/hip-hop crossovers. Arnold’s cassette collection is still there, as well as a cassette deck, but it is not used anymore and is stored upstairs.

The impetus to buy Mozart actually came from the movie *Amadeus* (which was interesting for Arnold, being a history teacher by profession). As already described before, much of his music

collection grows more or less organically. Paganini for example was bought because a rock guitarist Arnold admired was compared to him, and Beethoven because this same rock guitarist played an adaptation of Beethoven's Fifth.

Of the various media, it has already been noted that the radio and the cassette deck have been important, as well as CDs. Television plays a less important role. Arnold listened to TMF and MTV but mainly used it "as a radio". Nowadays he hardly uses the television as a musical resource, but he occasionally watches documentaries about rock bands he likes. DVDs do not play an important role either.

The internet is mainly used as a reservoir of music. When Arnold reads about certain bands in the Dutch hardrock music magazine 'Aardschok'² he checks them out on the internet. Eventually, when he really likes the music, he buys the CD, because he likes the idea of the 'album' (and not the single song) and he likes the CD covers, the inlays et cetera. In a way, he uses internet as he used to use the library CD-collection when he was at secondary school.

Arnold uses his mobile phone as an iPod to listen to music while commuting to work, a 45-minute train journey. It contains what he calls his 'basic collection': current hard rock (e.g. In Flames), but also older material such as the Eagles and Def Leppard, as well as music from his own bands and individual songs he describes as "the best of loud and fast". Another important place to listen to music is the car; there he plays the CDs he really wants to listen to intensely at high volume.

It is not easy for Arnold to pinpoint the particularities of his musical taste. Arnold thinks of himself as a listener with a broad taste: "My wife and I, we have already in an early stage abolished terms like 'cool/not cool', or 'too loud'; we now just go for fun or no fun." Music must "touch the right nerve" but how that comes about he cannot explain. Sometimes he likes one artist very much but an artist who seems similar doesn't move him at all when listening to him the first time. "In a way, I collect all kinds of bits and pieces", he says. Arnold notices that although he likes loud music, with the Norwegian symphonic black metal band Dimmu Borgir as the most extreme example, he is moved mostly when he goes back to the more melodious sources of his musical taste, like the Eagles.

² Lit.: 'Earthquake'.

2. Belinda

Belinda (68) is from a ministers' family, which lived in lots of towns in the Netherlands. Her mother played the piano but quit eventually, her father owned a violin but she never heard him play. Listening to religious classical music, for instance to Bach's St. Matthew's Passion, was something that went without saying, and the family had lots of friends and acquaintances whom took active part in the music scene. Belinda has few positive memories of church music: she didn't like singing in church, or playing the flute beside the organ. She did love the singing in the Grote Kerk (main church) in Zwolle, and also went to the Catholic church regularly to listen to Gregorian chant.

Belinda went to the municipal music school for solfeggio- and recorder lessons. Afterwards she had to – against her own wishes – take violin lessons: “I did not want a violin, I mean, I wanted a hockey stick and there I was with my violin case.” She subsequently gave away the violin to a street musician: “I feel very proud, my violin ended up well and I got rid of it. Yes, [sighs] it distresses me talking about it.”

Then followed the obligatory piano lessons, which also weren't a success. Belinda left the school of music and went to play flute in the Pijpersgilde³. She made her own set of flutes and played them with a lot of satisfaction, although she characterizes this playing also as ‘improper use’ because she played her self out of melancholic moods: “Those flutes are not meant for that.” Later on she gave away the flutes to an artist friend, but she has regretted this ever since.

Of music in primary school she has no memories, she assumes that musically speaking she was the odd one out. She also remembers virtually nothing of music in secondary school. Though friends listened to Pat Boone for instance, but she herself wasn't very susceptible to musical trends. A lot of musical memories from that period are related to the church (for example to the VCJC⁴) or to families they were friends with. Around her 15th she even temporarily lived with friends, “they were musically so highly gifted, they all played the violin. Well, I immediately went off the violin because I could not come near to that”.

After secondary school Belinda went to Paris as an au-pair for a year. She describes this as an important turning point: she went to the theatre often and heard a lot of music, especially chansons: Georges Brassens, Edith Piaf. She spent a lot of time with black musicians, from one of them she learnt the basic principles of playing the saxophone (once she was home she didn't pursue this). She still has a great love for the French chanson, but is unable to pinpoint exactly where that love began: maybe through a friend from secondary school with whom she listened to music a lot?

Back in the Netherlands she first studied psychology for a year, than she switched to the School of Social Work after which she subsequently finished her psychology studies after all, mostly in America. From the School of Social Work she still vividly remembers an incident with her music teacher: they sang a rendition of Psalm 8, but the teacher felt that she couldn't sing: “So it was always: ‘That scraping’, or: ‘That growling’, or: ‘Make less noise.’ (...) So then I fixed in my

³ Society where people make and play their own bamboo flutes.

⁴ Abbreviation for ‘Vrijzinnige Christelijke Jeugd Centrale’: Liberal Christian Youth Centre.

head: I cannot sing.” This was also a turning point: afterwards she had a profound dislike of ‘what is proper’.

Belinda went into psychotherapeutic work and ultimately also became a psychotherapeutic instructor. In her practice she used a lot of music in due course: mantras, New Age, Taizé⁵. Ultimately it was more about the sound than about the music for her, it was functional use of music – music as a means “to set your deepest deep into vibration in yourself”. The training she gave also provided her with a lot of music because many students passed on their own music to her.

She refrained from making music herself in fact, apart from the singing in her practice. On her 50th birthday her combined friends gave her money for a saxophone but that wasn’t bought: Belinda went through a difficult time and also thought she wasn’t musical.

When she moved to Groningen (now some eight years ago) she started to sing in a choir – a gospel choir because she really loves gospels, but also the praise songs that the choir sings she finds moving. She took singing lessons with the then conductor but had a hard time finding her place in the choir. Until she went to stand with the bass singers on her own initiative and turned out to have the lowest bass in the choir. The conductor accepted this (after having subjected the entire choir to a voice test), and since then singing in the choir is a source of tremendous joy for her. She herself says that she is a ‘sing-a-longer’, but “I feel such a profound pleasure in singing and that it is in tune then”. She can’t really read musical notation, she has virtually forgotten everything but does follow the outlines of the notation in a, in her own words, ‘primitive fashion’.

Belinda has two children but she hasn’t passed on making music to her children. They would have been allowed to go to music lessons but she and her husband didn’t stimulate them in this. In hindsight she regrets this.

Belinda listens to music in moderation but very intensely. “When I listen I listen, and then it fills me up so completely that I have a limited absorption capacity.” She remembers an impressive Pink Floyd concert she went to with a friend, after which she relived the concert in her dreams for nights. Afterwards she started to divide her musical consumption: “It just touches me too much.”

Once or twice a month she goes to a concert, mostly which her husband, in the vicinity of or in Amsterdam, sometimes in the city of Groningen. Often classical music, but also orthodox church songs in the small church of Zeerijp⁶ or to the Soweto Gospel Choir, or to cabaret performances. When she doesn’t like a concert she leaves the hall, however that rarely happens – “in nearly everything beauty can be found”, this she also learnt through her visits to modern classical concerts (a.o. Schönberg) in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

She herself rarely puts on music, certainly not as background, also not in the car. However she does listen along with her husband, he is a very active music listener who also knows very much about music: “He is the music-expert, I feel.” A lot of classical music is listened to, but also other

⁵ Music from the ecumenical monastic order of Taizé, France. Songs are simple phrases, usually lines from psalms or scripture repeated over and over and sometimes also sung in canon.

⁶ Village north of the city of Groningen with a medieval brick church.

music. She loves jazz but does little with this. Her musical consumption according to her is strongly related to her mood of the moment.

The music collection consists of CDs, cassettes and LPs (but the record player is broken). In addition to this she has a small MP3 player containing a small varied music collection (chansons, gospel, jazz). A part of her CD collection came into the house through friends and acquaintances who make copies of music Belinda loves.

The living room is the heart of the music collection but there is also a lot of music lying around throughout the house and in the car. The music collection is varied but every spot does have a different identity: largely classical in the living room, largely pop in the sun lounge, largely New Age in the car. In addition there are quite a number of musical instruments in the house: piano, flute, guitars, djembes and other percussion instruments. Therefore at parties music is often made in a spontaneous fashion. At these the Chinese carillon in the garden is used also.

Belinda says about her musical preference: “I do not like very complicated (...) music. When it is very complicated, however beautiful it is – after a while I walk away from it. It tears me apart, I can’t keep it out. If I could only listen with my head it would be much easier but I can’t.” She enjoys concerts the most, she can’t stand music as background, and she doesn’t listen to music on TV. She loves singing a lot, and the low (male) voices more than the high (female) voices – she thinks the Dutch contralto Aafje Heynis is marvelous.

She describes herself as extremely sensitive to noise. A recent stay in Costa Rica confirmed this, she had great trouble handling the cacophony of sound. Did she have to shut it out of listen to it? “I didn’t know the jungle made so much racket.” She hardly listened to music there, although she did bring her MP3 player.

Music has a holy, healing, comforting connotation for her. Looking back she concludes that she imposed an inner standard on herself based on an intellectual tenet, a standard “which turns out to be not mine, but because of it I have disqualified myself”. She uses music in a ‘primitive instinctive fashion’, and therefore felt she wasn’t suitable for an interview really. She describes her own development: “I think that music came into me more and more and that I know less and less about it. (...) I feel I am an illiterate while I enjoy it enormously.”

3. Carl

Carl (33) grew up in a family with a younger brother and (later on) with an elder foster brother. Music hardly played a role in family life. His parents worked in a bar in Groningen and played 70s music at home at any time. “This was totally not my thing.” He remembers getting a walkman with music cassettes with 70s music for Sinterklaas: “Well, that walkman was not listened to much.”

Carl only started to interest himself in music when his foster brother who was always occupied with music entered the house when he was six: he brought along a stereo and lots of CDs and LPs. Carl started listening to music which was hot at the time: dance, trance, some rock. When he earned some money at 14, while working at a farm, Carl bought his own stereo and CDs: Happy Hardcore, but also for example Modern Talking and Era. Carl did not pay attention to the lyrics as a rule, the point for him was the music itself mostly. Sometime he used music to close himself off from the rest of the family.

At primary school there was singing but this did not interest Carl much. At secondary school CD covers were made in the music lessons – “That was not my idea of a music lesson, no” – At school parties a lot of dance was played, a friend of his was DJ (he still plays karaoke songs at the local pub these days). Carl does not like to dance himself: “Please let me sit at the bar, I cannot dance.”

When he got older, his taste shifted more in the direction of rock music from the 80s. ‘Gabberhouse’⁷ and that kind of music disappeared from view. Now he listens occasionally to good dance music and also to rock - Guns `n` Roses for example. What he listens to depends on his mood.

Carl would like to go to a concert some time, to Tiesto or Armin van Buren. This has not come to pass up till now. Carl had a friend who worked in a discotheque in a nearby village and he did not work with turntables but with CD players; if ever Carl were to do something with music then it would be something like this.

Carl listens to music closely in the car when driving from one customer to another; “When I really need to empty my head.” He listens to anything on hand: Radio 538, Veronica, of a homemade standard CD with MP3s on it. He does have his preferences, though: Dutch-language or country are not his favorites, and he hates rap.

At home he hardly ever listens to music, also not on TV – also programmes such as Idols he does not find interesting. In the living room there is a TV with a speaker set, the radio is not connected and is not in use. In the past he used to play by way of satellite dish to VH1 Classic, all day long 80s music video clips. Sometimes he listens to music through his computer – he uses YouTube to test computers at work but then listens the whole song right on through to the end, and sometimes at night when he is at home he searches for a video clip on YouTube. He does download music through the internet but is mostly for friends. He himself listens to 80s music and also some current music but sparingly (Lady Gaga for instance). But his limited music collection is still in boxes in the attic – Carl does not know exactly where.

⁷ Hardcore house

His wife listens to her music on an MP3player with headphones, the music computer also has not got speakers but a headphone; they do not listen to music together therefore, Carl also does not know the exact musical tastes of his wife. Before Carl listened to music at home more, but under the influence of his wife, who likes the quiet, this has decreased.

Carl does not make music himself. At home there was an organ they received through an uncle, he did try some things on it. His foster brother played on it on occasion and also bought a keyboard himself and later an electric guitar. He never tried that himself. He does play videogames such as Guitar Hero and DJ Hero with as an interface a fake guitar or fake turntable, also over the internet with friends.

His phone does not have a musical ringtone but an old-fashioned ring. It is not as if Carl despises music, but he mostly uses it as background. "A movie without music, that is rubbish."

4. David

David's (26) earliest musical memory is that he listened to audio books: Peter and the Wolf and 'Paulus de Boskabouter' ('Paul the Forest Hobgoblin'). He doesn't actually remember the music that such but he recollects the images and the mood.

David grew up in a small village just outside the province of Groningen in the 'Veenkoloniën' (former mooring area). For his father music didn't play an important role, however it did for his mother. David had three elder brothers and a younger sister. With the brother closest to him in age he had the most contact, they were a team together, and from him he learned a lot musically speaking, for example certain pop music.

Initially his parents listened to classical music exclusively, the great composers. Later the family broadened their musical world: they also listened to Radio 2, and from David's 16th to the Top 2000 as played on the radio between Christmas and New Year. At a certain point they also started to listen to South-American and related music a lot: Buena Vista Social Club, Manu Chao. To David's surprise his parents, who had a fairly well-defined taste, liked that too.

David was also influenced by friends of course. From secondary school onwards he discovered quite heavy rock through his then best friend (although he now describes this as 'not my style'). Through the conductor of the choir he played in, he came into contact with Supertramp, and also bands such as Dire Straits and Queen caught on. He says about himself: "I never was the type of person who himself (...) went in search of things, what I encountered I absorbed." He explains this from the fact that he is so profoundly and imaginatively into making music that he has little room left to invest in listening to music besides this.

David's mother played piano "but I have never really heard her play so to speak (...); I (have) never (...) heard her play what she could play at her own level". David's father wasn't musically active, David really remembers only one thing: the recording of a song in Groningen dialect for the birthday of an aunt. His father had a hard time at the recording, "especially because he couldn't (...) get over the fact that it really didn't matter at all, whether you sing in tune or out of tune". By the way the family was creative: on birthdays a song was always practiced, "we have even 'lowered' ourselves to Frans Bauer⁸ [laughs], even though you can really party to that".

All the children went to music lessons, in this David was the most enthusiastic: "I was the only one really who always played and the one they even had to get to stop playing." His mother always performed the pieces he had to play for him, David played by ear a lot and reading musical notes was 'fake' for a long time. David had classical piano lessons until about 15 years of age, after that another two years jazz/pop.

From about his sixth David remembers that he made music programmes on cassettes together with his brother. They used a lot of music from the 60s and 70s, music that continues to appeal to him even now. Through his brother he later also started to listen to rock: Nirvana for instance. From music at primary school David recalls the musical Christmas assemblies where music was played. He does assume that he also played an active role there but does not recall this really. At

⁸ Contemporary popular Dutch-language singer.

the annual school musical he sang a small role sometime. For the rest, music didn't play an important part as a school subject.

At secondary school David did receive music lessons, he even took it as a final examination subject. The group of pupils displayed a great difference in proficiency and the subject matter was of an introductory nature: “No, it doesn't feel as if I got a lot out of it.” The annual talent shows (one for classical and one for pop) at secondary school played a prominent part. David did play them regularly but didn't advertise himself as an active musician, his music teacher at the outset didn't even know that he played the piano well. He did accompany a number of fellow students and in this way got to know the mainstream pop repertoire well.

From his 13th he accompanied a Christian choir that played gospel and related music: Chi Coltrane, Simon & Garfunkel, the Oslo Gospel Choir. He was a member of the choir until his 23rd first as a pianist, later as a conductor. He wasn't interested in the church (at his final exam at the conservatoire he played a critical song he wrote himself about religion), he is interested in the music. From secondary school onward David started to write his own pop songs, under the influence of among others Daniel Lohues (singer/guitar player singing in the local dialect of the neighboring province of Drenthe) whom he came into contact with through his elder brother. These pursuits weren't related to his piano lessons – his piano teacher didn't know much about pop.

After secondary school David sat an entrance examination for the conservatoire: at first for jazz piano, for this he wasn't admitted. Subsequently David went to Brazil for a couple of months quite impulsively. There he came into contact with the great rhythmical diversity that the music there is known for. When he returned he sat the exam for the conservatoire again, this time successfully for the course Composition, Music & Studioproducties (CMS). During his studies he became acquainted with an enormous variety in music: modern classical music (Ligeti for example), big band jazz, soundtracks, country, Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder. He absorbed everything, was immensely wide oriented – even so widely that because of his lack of focus he was almost turned away from the course.

CMS taught him to listen. So much so “that I find it very hard to enjoy music, that I start to analyze everything I hear (...) (With) all music that I hear I instantly have my opinions so to speak (...) at the ready, I have my criticism ready and that says nothing about whether I dislike that music, but just about the fact I analyze it from the outset and then also want to voice my opinion (...). In the course this has been encouraged heavily.” Gradually that critical listening is starting to have a decreasing role when he puts on music for himself, but he often still listens to for example the way of recording, to the way of playing etc. Enjoyment has a high threshold, David says “that it really has to appeal to me will I be able to enjoy something and that lots of music is just about ok but that it... I don't know how this works, but maybe a sort of saturation, I don't know what it is exactly”.

From his CMS period, and still, he has a loathing of the ‘jazz-finicking’ of many jazz musicians. Many young jazz musicians who study at the conservatoire are preoccupied with playing as many notes as possible. Jazz musicians who also have a classical background, often have a far more interesting sound and often are less preoccupied with the playing of many notes.

Naturally the musical influence of his brother has waned with the progressing years. In its place have come other preferences, although the core remains fairly constant: soul, gospel, classical, Lohues, recently also someone as Bobby McFerrin and African world music. A recent discovery is also the seniors choir from the film 'Young at Heart': "This really is very contradictory because qualitatively speaking I feel, well yes, you hear that they are (...) very fragile older voices and that it very regularly is also simply out of tune but I find it really fantastic to listen to, the whole concept and the whole thing and also especially the vitality that it exudes (...), I find that magnificent."

David himself organizes a concert series in which modern classical music is being programmed in a pop venue: 'The Third Half'. The idea is to draw a younger audience that doesn't come and see this music normally. That happens by way of programming shorter pieces. David himself also feels that the long pieces are exhausting: "I find that it's too much, (...) after a while I'm fed up, really fed up: well my head is reeling, now I want to listen to something else." David has a conflicting relationship with classical music: he is opposed against the atmosphere around it which he calls 'elitist' (he gets prickly about the fact "that you have to sit still and aren't allowed to applaud when you (...) feel the need to"), but at the same time classical music is an enduring musical source of inspiration.

David's music collection is very diverse. Two media are of importance: CDs, and especially the computer. David doesn't have an iPod and hardly ever uses his mobile phone for music (he did however compose his own ringtone). DVDs play a modest role, he owns one LP but doesn't have a record player (yet). His CD collection is a more or less 'historic' collection that he hardly ever plays (what he plays from this he has stored on the computer). The CDs run from jazz, pop, blues, classical, Latin, hand-me-downs, recordings where he himself or friends have contributed to etc. The hard disk drive of his computer contains several hundred gigabytes of music: material that he used to listen to, recent material, also a lot of 'reference material' in preparation for his own projects. When he plays music it is through the computer. Sometimes he listens specifically, sometimes also randomly, sometimes he also chooses associatively or he arrives at new music by way of references on YouTube or Facebook.

In the coming years David expects that he will focus more strongly on the development of his own musical theatre style, and less on the accompanying of others. Classical music will remain an important influence. Soon he hopes to be able to get to work again as a conductor or pianist in several choirs, he had to quit due to injuries.

5. Esther

Esther (47) comes from a musical family from the west of the country. Her father was violinist and later violist in several symphony orchestras. At home he practiced a lot with different ensembles. Esther remembers a holiday in Brabant where at night while lying in bed she heard Bach sonatas being played on the violin and piano – an exceptional experience, “Wonderful, but I wasn’t able to sleep because of it”. Often music had a profound impact on her, in her youth she could put on an LP with Schubert’s Fantasia for piano four-hands (D 960) and cry while listening, and that piece continues to make a profound impression on her. At home they listened relatively little to records, however she did receive classical LPs for her birthday from her father. In her youth she did hear pop music through friends but she didn’t go out looking for it.

Esther’s mother was a dancer. In Esther’s earliest memories music is always connected to dance (dance in any case is inextricably linked to music, and she understands people who make that connection very well – think of the audience at performances by André Rieu - although perhaps not everyone has that tendency). From her sixth Esther danced, from her tenth she went to the Royal Conservatoire to study dance. Dance came first and foremost for her in that period, although she remembers quite well that she had a greater sensitivity for music than many other ballet students.

From her sixth Esther took recorder lessons. She liked playing the recorder immensely, had a nice teacher and played together a lot. At her 12th she also started with piano lessons, she traded the recorder in for the hobo at her 15th. Music was always in second place compared to dance, however she was musically active; in the intermissions between dance performances she regularly played a musical intermezzo together with the accompanying pianist. In regular school music was also taught, but that hardly made an impression: from primary school she hardly remembers anything, at the conservatoire there was a friendly enthusiastic music teacher but she doesn’t have any specific memories.

At her 18th it became clear that she had back problems and she had to forget about the idea of having a dance career. That was a dramatic blow. As she says herself she had to ‘close a door’ – and opened a new one: she was successful in getting admitted to study hobo at the Royal Conservatoire. That was a big transition: in comparison to the very disciplined dance world she found musicians to be quite lazy. She also had to brush up her knowledge: “For a very long time I had the feeling that I didn’t know much of anything. I didn’t know anything, anything really. I didn’t know how many symphonies Beethoven had written, anyway, I didn’t really know anything. I knew, I had been admitted solely on account of my ears but for the rest. (...) I was tremendously, yes, a tremendous layman actually when it came to knowledge in fact. (...) For a long time I thought: Oh, I hope no one figures out that I do not know anything at all actually.”

In her 3rd year at the conservatoire she auditioned successfully for a professional symphony orchestra. She played a lot with professional ensembles playing modern classical music, where she learned to listen to modern music – there was a feeling there of ‘We understand it, it is good music’. At the time she already had doubts herself, and now it is more out in the open: some modern music is too pretentious to be of interest, and some modern music is more fun to play than to listen to. When her orchestra had to merge, she switched to another orchestra farther away from home. She kept on living in Groningen with her family and travelled a lot. Recently she switched back to the orchestra she played in before.

Esther's husband is a musician too, all their children are musically active and listen a lot too. Esther thinks they do have good taste, they listen to songs a lot, the eldest son listens more analytically and therefore wants to hear music where 'something happens'. Her children listen and play a broader repertoire than she herself did. She tries to put no pressure on them, although she would really like it if they would start to appreciate classical music later on. But she doesn't want to push them, she knows how delicate this can be.

Esther thinks everyone has a feeling for music, you can see this in how children react to music. She thinks the fact that mostly older people listen to classical music isn't really the problem – though the supply of new older people who are interested in classical music can stall in the future. Primary schools neglect their duties, she feels; children should be taught how to sing there but that isn't happening: "They can't sing really because they don't sing."

Esther visits few concerts, she's away regularly in the evenings and doesn't have the time or the inclination to go out a lot besides that. Now and again she does take her children to children's concerts. She regularly listens to CDs or to the radio but also values silence very much. When there is music on she has to listen to it, combining music with something else is impossible, except when driving the car. Then she regularly listens to CDs or she listens to Radio 4, but when she has to focus or when the road gets busy the music is switched off. She doesn't listen to music on an MP3 player or on her mobile phone. She mainly listens to classical music, sometimes to jazz or, through her children, to pop.

The CD collection is stored in the living room and is varied: a lot of classical music, but also some jazz, pop (Joe Jackson, the Beatles; "I feel: you have good and bad music. Something that is good obviously stands the test of time, and that runs from The Beatles up to Bach, it doesn't matter."), children's CDs, etc. Lots of CDs are from projects she or her husband has worked on. Not everything is played, there are CDs there which were bought with a specific purpose in mind, for example to prepare for a project. These days, Esther also uses YouTube so as to not having to buy everything immediately. But if the music is beautiful she buys the CD, and the quality of the rendition is an important criterion in this, because a bad rendition distracts from the listening experience. Besides the CD collection there still is an extensive LP collection with wonderful recordings upstairs but these aren't played – the record player is broken.

6. Fiona

The earliest memory Fiona (48) has of music is that the radio in the kitchen played Beatles songs. She was 3 then. And still Fiona listens to the Beatles. Fiona's parents sang a lot: children's songs, socialistic songs, scouting songs. Fiona's mother sang in choirs and later on took singing lessons. Fiona's father was whistling the entire day. It appears that Fiona's great-grandmother was a concert pianist. Both her brothers played violin and horn for a short period, but didn't play music as enthusiastically as Fiona would do. The family was Catholic but not very active in church. Fiona does remember Christmas services where she together with her mother sang the second part at the top of their voices in the first row.

At some point a record player came into the house. Fiona remembers children's records of Peter and the Wolf, 'Alfred J. Kwak'⁹, and 'Elfje Twaalfje'¹⁰; they were listened to closely. Besides these there wasn't a lot of music being played; sometimes the radio was on, and there was singing. Concerts were hardly ever gone to, she remembers a performance by Dutch singer Herman van Veen but more because of the atmosphere than the music specifically.

Fiona went to a Catholic primary school where music was important. There was a music teacher who sang a lot but also played music and composed with the children. On Friday morning there was a children's mass in which music was made, pupils also wrote small plays and pieces of music in which proverbs were portrayed, and the annual musicals were of their own making.

When the family moved to another town Fiona went to ballet dancing lessons. She was a good dancer but was also fascinated by the pianist. When her parents noticed this Fiona was allowed to go to music lessons. At first this was a boring 'note-learning-class' (music lessons at primary school were much more fun, that "was more about music than theory so to speak") but as soon as possible she switched to recorder lessons. She had a very inspiring teacher, and played in ensembles a lot together with other children. She also did this with pupils from primary school.

When she was nine she traded the recorder in for the flute, against the will of her recorder teacher and her piano accompanist; the latter –important for her musical development because she stimulated her to really listen to classical music – spoke of 'wasted talent'. She chose the flute because then she would be able to play in orchestras. The first flute teacher she had wasn't as inspiring as her recorder teacher, but the second was; she encouraged her to play in ensembles and later in youth orchestras and stimulated her to go to the conservatoire. About her main inspiration Fiona says that for her the flute wasn't a goal in itself but a means: "As long as I have listened to records, it is not about me listening to as many things as possible really but for me it is about the things that really touch me, that can tell me a story."

At secondary school pop music started to become more important. At her 12th Fiona got a cassette recorder and she taped popular pop songs. Now and again she bought LPs – her first was Santana's *Moonflower*. She also listened a lot to a soul radio programme on Thursday evenings, and during holidays she also always listened to the local music. She went to pop concerts now and

⁹ Dutch-Japanese cartoon character created by Dutch musician, performer and author Herman van Veen.

¹⁰ 'Little Elf Twelve', a character in books and LPs for children by Dutch singer, actress, writer and performer Martine Bijl.

again (Herman Brood, Gruppo Sportivo, New Adventures¹¹) for the atmosphere and liked to dance. But she never became an enormous ‘music consumer’ – making music was more important for her.

Music itself played a lot less important role in secondary school than at primary school: the music lessons were geared to children with no musical knowledge, the songs which were sung weren’t interesting, the school orchestra wasn’t very good. Fiona dropped music as a subject as soon as possible. However she was active for a long time in the drama club, at the start musically but later also on stage; a lot of cabaret was being done.

During secondary school Fiona joined youth orchestras. They were an important source of inspiration for her. She still remembers well the first piece they played: Stravinsky’s ‘Firebird’. They also played for instance Mahler’s ‘Kindertotenlieder’ with mezzo-soprano Jard van Nes as soloist, they toured with the then young violinist Jaap van Zweden and recorded records now and again. She loved the rehearsal weeks: hard work but also lots of fun with her peers of course. She learnt a lot of classic repertoire, and also started listening to classical records and to classical Radio 4.

Fiona went to the conservatoire to study flute. Of course she heard a lot of classical music. Important and inspiring for her were not so much the flute lessons, but the lessons on music history by well-known Dutch musicologist Otto Hamburg and in particular the ensemble lessons by conductor Wim ten Have in which she learnt to listen to her own music making analytically. In those days she got to know organist Liuwe Tamminga – he would later move to Bologna and perform a lot of early music there, Fiona visited regularly there and Liuwe Tamminga still remains an important musical friend.

Of great importance also for her was the connection with flautist Paul Verhey, soloist of the Concertgebouw orchestra – besides being a tremendous flautist also ‘a comprehensive musician’. During her studies she met him already at the flute weeks in contemporary music centre ‘De IJsbreker’ in Amsterdam, and to the present day she has stayed in touch – first by following lessons with him, now more as a friend. In particular the searching for personal expression through the instrument instead of the focus on *one* specific style appealed to her.

During her time at the conservatoire Fiona worked in a café where a lot of live jazz was played. It was an inspiring place for her: people such as saxophone players Alan Laurillard, Frans Vermeerssen and Johan Huizing played there often, and there was a lot of experimenting with stylistic cross overs. Sometimes she herself also played with them. She also regularly went to other cafés where she for instance heard soprano Miranda van Kralingen sing jazz, and she got acquainted with big band music.

After the conservatoire she started teaching at the local music school, where she still works as a flute teacher. Moreover she plays in various ensembles in the most wide-ranging styles. She played in regional and nationally operating symphony orchestras, a woodwind quintet, a chamber orchestra for 20th century classical music (which she co-founded herself), in ad-hoc ensembles, in opera orchestras and in orchestras accompanying professional pianists. She also did a lot of modern classical music, “I often didn’t like the music but it was great fun to do”.

¹¹ Dutch rock bands active mainly in the 1970s and -80s.

As a listener Fiona characterizes herself as an omnivore, however an omnivore that enjoys silence: she doesn't continually play music. When she listens than please to music that touches her– technical quality is of less importance, in the making of music as in the performance: “Not that I [have] nice expensive speakers or a stereo set or something, that doesn't mean as much to me, it is solely about the music for me; in the concert hall half of people cough through it also.”

Fiona (just like her husband) still listens to LPs a lot besides CDs – the LP collection is upstairs, one can't play CDs there. The CD and LP collection has no system to it, there is no particular order. Generally speaking half of the collection is classical, besides this a lot of pop and all kinds of other music. They also listen to music in the car, preferably classical, sometimes to the radio and on longer journeys also to CDs. Fiona doesn't have an MP3 player. Background music is really only played during chores (washing-up, painting). She enjoys listening to the Top 2000 but doesn't keep up with modern pop music, although she regularly hears some of it through her children (9 and 13) and her students. She goes to concerts relatively little, when she goes then friends often play.

When she has time for herself she prefers to listen to opera – like another person enjoys reading a book. One of her first LPs was Puccini's 'La Bohème' with Pavarotti – wonderful and old-fashioned, “When he holds a high note for about half an hour or something, than I always get the giggles in such a frightful way, but I do like it very much”. Also Mahler (the Christmas matinees conducted by Haitink) and Monteverdi are favorites. Besides this she enjoys listening to Tom Waits and Anthony and the Johnsons, but the collection also consists of Dutch composer, hip-hop artist and trumpet player Kytman, the dramatic Sicilian singer Etta Scolo, Al Jarreau and Mongolian throat singing (a CD which was also listened to a lot by her children).

She cites a number of important musical 'moments' in her life: hearing the Beatles when she was little, playing in youth orchestras, hearing and experiencing the history in Bologna, flautist Jacques Zoon who played an utterly romantic but passionate Bach at a lunch concert, or who lost the thread in Debussy's *Syrinx* and improvised the middle section with jazz- and funk elements.

Her listening seems a continuing juxtaposition between aesthetics and emotion: “I have Schwarzkopf with [Strauss'] 'Letzte Lieder', I have Jessye Norman with the 'Letzte Lieder', I like Schwarzkopf more but (...) Jessye Norman touches me more or something. It is a bit tawdry sentiment but still, [laughs] I do not know. I haven't decided yet which one I – suppose I would want to play it at my funeral which one I would like to play, I am in two minds about it still. It is a bit like civilization opposed to (...) – I think it will be a kind of battle between the popular culture and the superior culture, a bit like, a bit, it's not that bad but it does have some elements of it.”

7. Gwen

Gwen (63) comes from a Dutch Reformed family. She had three sisters, a brother and a half-brother. One of her earliest memories is that her mother always sang hymns during thunderstorms. That gave her an ambivalent feeling: security and fear at the same time. Her mother took organ lessons at an advanced age and also became a soapbox preacher: with a small choir they visited the poorer neighborhoods, spread their faith there and sang beautiful solemn hymns. Gwen went along regularly, and this music continues to touch her – the melody in particular, not so much the words; Gwen has left the church in the meantime. But in her youth they went to church twice on Sunday, and there was a lot of singing, Gwen enjoyed that.

When they first had a gramophone in the house one of her brothers brought the single ‘Zeg kleine ree’ (‘Say little doe’) from female duo The Selvera’s along, where they listened to very attentively. Later also records by for example Dutch-language religious singers ‘Gert en Hermien’ came into the house. She loved that music, that changed later on when she got to know the people behind the music – her musical taste goes further than just the music needing to be beautiful, everything has to be just right, also the personalities of the singers among other things.

Gwen has a far less clear picture of her father than of her mother. He was the dominant but introverted man of whom she doesn’t know what he liked. He did have conflicts regularly with her oldest sister about her musical taste amongst other things: she loved jazz and classical music, listened on Saturdays to more liberal radio stations, and read books he disapproved of. One of her brothers loved the Tielman Brothers¹², furthermore she doesn’t really remember what music her brothers and sisters listened to.

At primary school they sang every day, and certainly on the Friday afternoon. Singing was her favorite subject, she vaguely remembers that she sang alone in front of the class one time and felt she did this well, and that there was a teacher who used a musical instrument in class. Now and again they went to school concerts, Peter and the Wolf and demonstrations of instruments – the pupils didn’t like that and she went along with this. She also remembers learning solmisation at school, but that she found this difficult, “so I thought to myself, well, I’ll never learn this”. But the desire to learn to play an instrument ran deep so it turned out later on.

Music lessons were absolutely out of the question in the working-class family. Gwen remembers that she, when she was 8 or 9, was jealous of a friend who received church-organ lessons. Gwen pretended sometimes that she could also play organ by moving her fingers along to the music. Through that same friend Gwen became a fan of ‘The Sound of Music’ – she says that with her often her enthusiasm grew when someone else was enthusiastic.

Gwen went to a domestic science school. Music wasn’t taught there. Now and again during her time in secondary school she went to concerts in the local reformed youth club to listen to Dutch up-and-coming celebrities such as André van Duin and Anneke Grönloh. One got to know children from other churches there, that was great, “then one was raised up out of your family a little bit.” The atmosphere in the family was strict by the way, to compensate for this she could be found outside a lot, in nature.

¹² Dutch East Indies (Indo) band, the first Indo band to be successful internationally, popular in the 50s and 60s.

Gwen married when she was 21. In the early days of their marriage they listened to music often, they bought records and over the years her husband saved up for a wonderful stereo set. The collection was varied: Nana Mouskouri, marching music, fairytales for the children, Dutch politically committed singer Boudewijn de Groot. Her husband loved Buddy Holly, Simon & Garfunkel, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles; on occasion they also listened to classical music, Beethoven for example.

They bought a piano and the children (Gwen had three sons and a daughter) received piano lessons. Gwen practiced with them, at first only the right hand, later also the left, but she lagged behind quickly. The children quit with their lessons when they were about 12 years old, after that the piano stood unused in the house for years. Some of them however continued in music: a son plays piano, another guitar, the third son and the daughter aren't musically active but do listen to music a lot.

They moved to another village and lived on a farm there. They kept horses, they were doing well; Gwen stayed at home, her husband was busy working in an elevator factory. When their eldest son was 18 (the other children were 16, 10 and 3) her husband died in a car accident. That was a tremendous blow, Gwen became a single mother with four children. At the same time, she realized afterwards, that was also a turning point: now it was her turn, and in the period after that followed a tremendous personal growth. She took life in her own hands, educated herself in the field of alternative medicine, and took piano lessons. She had the feeling while doing that that learning to play the piano was a natural thing for her, as if she already knew how to do it.

During that period she discovered the music of Vicki Brown (who she had heard live before) and also developed her love for Irish music further. Where this love comes from she doesn't know – sometimes she feels that it must be from an earlier life. Her first contact was through an LP with marching music which also featured bagpipes, which touched her immediately. But especially the Irish flute releases feelings of homesickness, melancholy and the recognition of herself. Irish music is 'her' music, above all other music.

After a while she moved to Groningen. After a couple of years of larking about she decided to take up music lessons again. Her love of the Irish flute led to the fact that she, three years ago now, took transverse flute lesson at the school of music. Again this was easy for her. She was 60 when she started but the notion that people of that age can't learn to play an instrument anymore wasn't true in her case at least. She practices virtually every day, goes to lessons gladly and plays, despite the stress that it causes, in public regularly: "I like the part of just standing there and playing best of course, but you know, those nerves, that is so – so dreadful." The most important thing for her isn't virtuosity but expressing her feelings in the music she plays.

Gwen has a small music collection. The CDs that she owns are important for her – "everything has to be just right" but then she also holds her music dear, and therefore she doesn't need an awful lot, she keeps on playing many of her CDs again and again. The collection consists of Irish music, spiritual music such as mantras and New Age, and some country, pop and gospel. The focus is on vocal music, on individual voices, and that has been the case for a long time. She also uses certain music in therapeutic sessions. She plays music not as background but to really listen to – and she also loves silence very much.

The computer is used as a musical source, mostly to look up music on You Tube. Sometimes she asks one of her sons to burn music on a CD, she doesn't do this herself. On television she sometimes watches André Rieu, she loves the enthusiasm he exudes. She also watches various talent shows. She never watches music stations, and says she could easily live without television. She never listens to the radio, except in the car – then she listens to local dialect songs or to classical Radio 4. She goes to concerts now and again: for example to the annual open air concert of the North Netherlands Orchestra, or to concerts of Boudewijn de Groot, folk group Rapalje, the New London Chorale, the Dubliners or singer-songwriter Daniel Lohues.

Her musical taste is focused on 'her music'. She doesn't feel that it is very broad, and she compares it to her circle of friends: she doesn't have, as some people do, a large extended circle of friends, but just a small number of very good friends.

8. Herman

Herman (28) was born in a small village in the south of the province of Friesland. His father was a farmer, his mother a politically active housewife. The couple had five children. At home music was not made actively, however children's songs were sung. Furthermore at primary school they sang from a spiritual songbook. Herman always got good grades, about which he amazes himself: "I wonder whether this could still happen now." Also musicals and plays with music were regularly performed at primary school. The family went to church every week, there was singing there and Herman sang along too. Church songs weren't sung at home, nor were the songs from primary school sung. These days Herman exclusively sings in the car, often unconsciously.

Although his parents didn't make music, all children had to take music lessons, presumably at the insistence of his mother who admired musically active people and did not have this opportunity herself. They received recorder lessons/general music education first, afterwards they moved on to instruments that were used in the local wind orchestra. Herman played cornet and later trombone, and kept this up until he left the parental home at age twenty. The wind orchestra gave concerts regularly at the local church, but did not participate in competitions. Since then the wind orchestra has ceased to exist, it has merged with another local wind orchestra. Herman felt, just as his brothers and sisters, that playing was an obligation, but does look back on the experience with pleasure in retrospect. Herman also took organ lessons for some time with a cousin of his grandfather, at that time listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the longest playing church organ player in the world. During his days as a student he also learnt to play the guitar a little bit, but he admits to being not very ambitious: as soon as he has mastered the basics of something he quits.

At home his father in particular listened to music a lot, he hardly ever watched television. Of his mother's musical taste Herman remembers little. Herman's oldest memories are of the Dire Straits, his father's favorite band and still one of Herman's favorites. Besides this his father for example listened to Dutch rock group Focus and to Enya. He didn't listen to contemporary pop music. In the cow house his father listened to the music/amusement radio station Radio 2. For Herman lots of musical memories are connected to very concrete occurrences: for example he listened to Yesterday by the Beatles when he played the computer game "The Incredible Machine", and this song still reminds him of this. Furthermore Herman remembers LPs of contemporary children's choir 'Kinderen voor Kinderen' and LPs with fairytales.

When Herman was 11 he bought his first stereo set, and he got his first CD at Sinterklaas – 'Greatest Hits 1993'. Also very soon afterwards 'No Limit' by 2 Unlimited arrived. This was the house-period ('Happy hardcore'), dancing consisted of 'hakkûh'¹³ and slow dancing. At the time Herman did not really like house, but when he hears it now he likes it, "It makes me happy". When Herman did his homework he listened, also influenced by a younger cousin and good friend, to the hit parade, besides this he also listened to hard rock: NOFX, A Green Day, Metallica, Guns N' Roses, and also to Nirvana for example. Herman regularly went to village festivals with friends and there they listened to live band such as 'farmrock' bands Normaal and Jovink en de Voederbietels, middle-of-the-road pop band BZN or Dutch-language rock band De Dijk – 'party tent music'. He liked the cover bands most, they were able to draw the largest crowds. Herman didn't go to concerts for which he had to pay, just three months ago he went to a

¹³ Style of dancing typical to happy hardcore, consisting of lots of small quick steps.

paid Ed Kowalczyk concert for the first time in the local concert hall. Soon he will go to European showcase festival Eurosonic with his girlfriend, in the past he also used to go to a local jazz café, he was fascinated by the technical skills of the musicians then and not so much by the music itself.

At secondary school Herman had music lessons. He remembers that they sang 'I Saw the Light' and 'Mr. Blue' by René Klijn, who would later die of AIDS. Moreover they learnt to play a little on the instruments used in pop music during the music lessons and regularly they had to rehearse songs in groups of about six pupils: 'Lemon Tree' by Fool's Garden, songs by Boyzone. It did not always lead to good results but in hindsight was a nice way to be taught – Herman sometimes watches people making music together in a band with some envy.

During his days as a student Herman devoted a lot of time to the downloading of MP3s through Napster, he hardly ever bought CDs himself. The music he downloaded was varied: lots of Dire Straits, but also for example Dutch-language rock and pop by Blöf, Acda & De Munnik en De Dijk. His circle of friends also listened to Dutch 'schlager' songs which were sang along with at the top of their voices: Benny Neijman, Frans Bauer. When studying he sometimes listened to trance music also. During that time he also started to visit the yearly liberation commemoration festivals in Zwolle (the best line-up is there); he remembers excellent concerts of Blöf, De Dijk and Postmen.

Since Herman started working, five years ago, he has gradually started to buy more CDs. Now he's buying the CDs that he has always wanted to have bit by bit. By now the collection consists of about forty CDs, among which the Dire Straits naturally, but also Dutch-language singer Guus Meeuwis, Jovink en de Voederbietels, and Queen. Some of these CDs he describes as rather dark: Moby, Radiohead, Coldplay. He loves it when there is some experimenting with the instrumentation: a trumpet which is added or other non-standard instruments.

He listens in the living room, or in the car – sometimes to the car radio, also to CDs; there he listens to Dutch-language music a lot, at times he uses music in the car to stay awake. He doesn't listen to music any more on the computer, he did burn his MP3 collection on a number of CDs but he hardly ever listens to these. On the radio he listens to Dutch-language or pop/rock stations.

There is an MP3player in the house, one he and his girlfriend took with them on a long trip a year ago. At that time they put a large collection of music on it, ranging from Jason Mraz and Acda & De Munnik to U2 and from folk band Pater Moeskroen to Dutch language schlager singer André Hazes; and besides these a collection of Christmas songs to have some Christmas spirit during the Christmas holidays. These days Herman sometimes uses the MP3 player in the train to shut out the conversations of other passengers. By now a great deal of the music on the MP3 player reminds him of their long trip.

9. Ivan

The earliest musical memory of Ivan (72) is that he heard German soldiers singing who were billeted in the building of his primary school during the occupation. He and his friends liked that – of course the fact that they were growing up during wartime did not mean anything to them at that age. After the war he remembers that they listened to Dutch-language singer of Jewish descent Max van Praag on the radio for example. Lyrics of songs that were played on the radio from that time were published in anthologies such as ‘Het Zingende Boertje’ (‘The Singing Farmer’).

In the family there was hardly ever any singing. In Ivan’s mother’s family no one had any musical talent, Ivan’s father now and again played popular tunes on the mouth organ. Ivan learnt to play that himself also, he received pointers from his father. He does remember that at his sister’s wedding his grandfather sang traditional song ‘Het luie wijf’ (‘the lazy wife’).

From primary school he remembers a teacher who sang with the class and who also played violin. At primary school there was a lot of singing: “Every class had their singing period, and then not all at the same time, (...) but in those years you always heard a class singing somewhere on a certain day.” For him the singing period was one of the highlights of the school week. The repertoire consisted of old Dutch songs, sometimes sung in two voices. At technical school, where he went afterwards to follow courses in metalwork, no music lessons were taught.

Once Ivan had started working he had little time for music – he worked and followed courses in the evenings. At his job music hardly played a part; he remembers that in the beginning two young colleagues would sometimes sing ‘Seven Lonely Days’ (Georgia Gibbs) during quiet periods. Later on the radio in the factory was used as a means of recreation, until copyright legislation put a stop to that.

Gradually he developed an interest in light opera because his future wife was training to be a kindergarten teacher and followed music lessons there. Until his 25th he went, together with his wife, to many light opera performances at the theatre of Groningen. They had a season ticket for years, until they had children. With this he was an exception, in his circle going to light opera wasn’t very common. Concerts of other music styles were sporadically gone to, for instance he remembers Mireille Mathieu.

Another important influence was ballroom dancing. He went to lots of dances with his wife. In the beginning the dance music was played by live orchestras; they played a mixture of everything. Later on they also bought records with dance music to practice at home; and even later, when they moved to another village, they started a dance club in the village, where a couple of times a year they hired a live band. Ivan says: “Well, in fact I have always been involved with music in some way or another. It has always drawn me.” The record collection grew: lots of light opera, but also for example Papa Bue’s Viking Jazz Band, and some classical music – as long as it was melodious, because Ivan loves that.

Around his 30th Ivan took electronic organ lessons because he really wanted to do something with music. He received his lesson in a store in Groningen where he had bought the instrument, but he had no time to practice. He learnt to play a little but quit after a year with the lessons and traded the organ with his father-in-law for welding apparatus a couple of years later. His father-in-law

was very musical (“But he never developed this, eh, in those days that simply wasn’t in the cards”) and still played it for years and years.

After retiring Ivan became more intensively involved in music. He very much wanted to sing in a shanty choir but all the choirs in the surrounding area were full. Together with a few fellow-villagers and a friend who played diatonic button-accordion he founded a still existing, now 50 people strong new choir which is always clad in historical costumes. In the meantime he has stopped being a board member but he still sings along; three rehearsals a month and one to two concerts a month. Shanty choirs are popular because a lot of older people feel the need to sing repertoire from their past, and also because they are very welcoming: “We never ask anyone who comes whether he can sing; no, the question is whether he likes to sing with pleasure. It isn’t the intention to attain a very high level but to do it as well as is possible with the material you have there.”

In the meantime Ivan started to play diatonic button-accordion himself, he took lessons for five years and he plays one of his three instruments daily with a great deal of pleasure; a blend of music – Irish, Norwegian, French, Dutch, just what takes his fancy. The shanty choir and the diatonic button-accordion have had some influence on his listening: out of curiosity he regularly listens to CDs of other choirs, he also goes to concerts now and again, and to get to know repertoire he also watches YouTube.

At home Ivan listens to music a lot, especially to the northern German station NDR because they play the melodious music that he loves and that is not enough on offer on Dutch radio, “Still on the light side and delightfully melodious”. The radio is on virtually the whole day. Besides this Ivan and his wife listen to CDs regularly, also during long trips by car and when they are out travelling with the camper van. When they are travelling they regularly buy CDs with music from the country they’re visiting at that time. MP3 players do not play a part in their life, downloading music doesn’t happen either. On television they watch NDR often, they have a couple of music programmes that match Ivan’s taste.

The CD collection is a mixture of mainly vocal music: shanty music, pop ‘Best of’ CDs, deceased Groningen dialect singer Ede Staal, Andrea Bocelli, Pavarotti, Zuccherò, choir music, Dutch-language music, Irish music, South-African singer Laurika Rauch... The LP collection is still there but it isn’t played anymore.

In retrospect Ivan says that it is a pity he didn’t start making music earlier. When you get older, it becomes more difficult; the circumstances weren’t right, when you start working at your 15th than you have few opportunities. “It is what it is, but it isn’t worse for it in any case.” His children weren’t raised musically, his daughter did participate in a musical theatre/cabaret group at work, and just recently he heard the end result of a singing workshop of his 12 year old granddaughter. It sounded beautiful, “so something must be in the genes somewhere”.

10. Jonathan

Jonathan (45) grew up in the north of the city of Groningen with Dutch-language music: Hepie en Hepie, Corrie Konings, and later Frans Bauer. His parents listened to the radio all day long and sang along with it sometimes. Jonathan's first records were of Dutch-language schlager music because of this. He does not remember that there was a lot of singing at home, also no children's songs, and he does not describe himself as musical: "I do not like singing at all, I cannot stay in tune." Instruments were not played at home or in the neighborhood. From primary school he remembers that they did have music lessons, but not what happened in them. He was not interested in it.

From his 10th until about his 15th Jonathan was an illegal radio show host. He made radio shows with Dutch-language music for his illegal radio station, his listeners could phone in and put in requests. When he was 15 he was caught, his equipment was confiscated and he had to appear in juvenile court. Afterwards he quit with the illegal radio show 'business'. In the attic the collection of singles from that period is still stored and also the LPs Jonathan and his wife bought later on. At secondary school (Jonathan went to the technical school, specializing in car engineering) there was not much talk about music, and about the illegal radio station Jonathan kept quiet because there was a threat to get caught if he talked about it. There were no music lessons at technical school. Jonathan however did play music as a DJ at the local youth centre for some time.

Around his 18th Jonathan by chance came into contact with the music of UB40: in a car stopped by the police and which had been abandoned by the drivers, a cassette by UB40 played, Jonathan took this cassette home and became totally mad about the music. He bought all the records and later all their CDs, and they still are his favorite band which he listens to a lot. He likes the fact that they make reggae covers of popular songs, and thinks the singer is really good. Besides their history appeals to him: from being unemployed to being a world-class band. The only concert Jonathan ever went to was a UB40 concert in Amsterdam. Dutch-language schlager music disappeared from view, he only very rarely listens to Dutch-language Radio Continu "when I am in a corny mood", and also to Dutch-language singers such as André Hazes and to Marco Borsato, whom his wife is a fan of. Meeting his wife led to a shift in his musical taste to quieter music, although Jonathan also thinks this is caused by him growing older.

Jonathan listens to the radio a lot, especially to Radio Veronica with music of the 80s and 90s. In the car the radio is on a lot, when he is in the car together with his wife they listen to Dutch-language stations though not all repertoire is equally liked. When he is working as a layer of parquet floors Jonathan listens a lot to pop/rock radio stations such as Radio Veronica or Waterstad FM through earphones, sometimes also to music on his iPhone. "Without music I am almost unable to work. And sometimes it seems as if one is not really listening to it but unconsciously one starts to hum along, and lo and behold, one hour has passed again."

Besides the radio, his CDs and computer are important sources of music. Jonathan does not think his CD collection is large, some 100 CDs, many of whom are his wife's. The collection contains amongst others a shelf of UB40, Marco Borsato, but also Gloria Estefan, Eros Ramazzotti, 'Hollandse Hits' ('Dutch Hits'), André Hazes, the Jackson Five, Earth Wind & Fire and Whitney Houston. Some CDs are homemade with downloads from the internet. Jonathan also regularly burns CDs for friends and family, for his parents for instance Dutch-language music. Jonathan and his wife also listen to CDs in the car, there are always a couple there, in the van he uses for

work there are mostly copies because of the likelihood of damage to them. At the moment for example there are CDs of Marco Borsato, De Toppers and (of course) UB40 in the car. Jonathan uses his iPhone as a radio, moreover there is a lot of downloaded music on it, which he also regularly refreshes. The music on his iPhone is as diverse as his CD collection: André Hazes, Eliza Doolittle, Eminem, Ilse de Lange, Lady Gaga, Marco Borsato, Nick en Simon, Shakira.

The television is not an important source of music, on it they rather watch movies than TMF or MTV or music programmes. In any case Jonathan does not listen to music much in the evenings, he has listened to music the whole day already, worked hard and wants to relax then. Nowadays he does this by watching movies or playing computer games. Often he listens to quiet music then in the background.

About going to concerts Jonathan says that these have become very expensive. Going to a concert the two of them easily costs 150 euro, which is a waste of money: "One can just as easily listen to it at home, the only thing is that it is not live then; yes, but if I record it it is. Then I'll just wait for the DVD to be released and then download that or buy it. But no, going to a concert, no." This is compounded by the fact that Jonathan does not like big crowds and commitments. He also does not go to concerts in the village: these are organized in the village hall for instance, or also by the local royalist society, but Jonathan does not go to them. However he does believe that at some point in the future he and his wife will probably go to a concert by De Toppers.

11. Kenneth

The first thing Kenneth (37) mentions when asked about his oldest musical memories is ‘Rock the Casbah’ (1982) of The Clash – “the first louder song that I liked”. From before that he does remember other music: Michael Jackson, David Bowie, watching TopPop (the Dutch Top of the Pops) with the entire family, listening to pop compilation LPs while the children were doing handicrafts. There actually wasn’t any singing being done in the family, Kenneth remembers little about children’s songs, except that he hated contemporary children’s choir Kinderen voor Kinderen. At the Christian primary school there was singing, psalms and hymns, “I have to say that I did not even find that extremely tedious, you know, now I come to think of it”. He also had recorder lessons at primary school, he did not like that. At home no instruments were played but his parents did encourage him to take music lessons, from his tenth till his twelfth he went to guitar lessons. He still sees that as a good foundation for his subsequent musical activities.

The radio was an important source of music in those days. From about his twelfth Kenneth recorded songs from the radio with a cassette player. Also through his (elder) sisters music came into the home. His eldest sister had an LP by ZZ Top (at the time a very popular band), that he played when she was out. She also liked Bruce Springsteen, so somewhat louder music, but music was just louder during that period, says Kenneth. Through a friend of his mother Kenneth came into contact with Iron Maiden and other metal bands, and until 16 or 17 that was the music he listened to – especially on cassettes, because he did not have the money for LPs and later CDs.

The friend of his mother also gave him a bass guitar as a present. That was perhaps the most important event in his musical life, says Kenneth now. Playing yourself, listening to music to learn to play it, trying to play what you hear – that led to a much greater interest in music. “I think that I also would have liked it otherwise, but I feel that because I make music myself that I just experience it differently, you listen to it differently. Not that you’re, that you can judge it better or something, it is just sheer preference, but then you just experience it quite differently, then you are just more into it.”

At secondary school he played in the school band for a year but he did not like it really, it was not his music that was being played. During the music lessons at school different things were done: playing, singing, listening, sometimes a guest lecture where for example someone explained how a CD was recorded. He did not find it inspiring. His fellow pupils at school weren’t a big influence either; he had a rather different preference, listened to hard rock shows on the radio and on television watched underground youth culture documentaries. He calls secondary school a musical low point – he was annoyed by the average taste and that fellow pupils only exhibited ‘follower’ behavior, and did not like metal unless it was a hit single.

At his 18th Kenneth went to Groningen for his studies. Through a friend he ended up in hardcore punk. Until that time he did not like that, but the friend was a connoisseur and introduced him to the best bits, bands that weren’t played on the radio. He started to play in a punk band – the first time he played music that he liked – and buying hardcore punk, for example if his all-time favorite band Heroin. He became part of the underground scene; he found his music in American fanzines, through a friend who bought a lot of LPs, through ‘tape-trading’ (the exchanging of music cassettes) and through concerts. Part of the attraction of the hardcore punk scene was also that it had a politically-aware, radical-left quality. It was a time in which underground was exclusive; when his friend imported a single from America and he liked it so much that he also

bought one for himself, then they could be the only two people in the Netherlands who had music of this band. That changed with the arrival of the internet, now everything is easily found.

Even though Kenneth's music collection is dominated by hardcore punk and he also plays in a punk band he now sees the punk scene less as exclusively 'his' scene. "That is something from your youth really, I can claim that I'm still punk and hardcore but well, I'm in an office five days a week, so I find it a bit ludicrous to say that I'm terribly hardcore. But I still know what is going on." After his 18th Kenneth also slowly started to appreciate other music: now he also plays alternative rap, guitar music, slow music, drum and bass. He buys about 50 percent loud music and 50 percent other music. He also likes variation: first grind core, then drum and bass and then the Local Natives that he got to know at the local performing arts festival, or Rue Royale. Often he checks on the internet first whether he likes the music, but if he likes it he buys it, also because he finds the quality of music on MP3 much too low: okay for in the car but not on the stereo set in the living room, people who only listen to MP3s miss out, "I feel you're not doing it right then".

Kenneth goes to concerts regularly, on average once a week – a much nicer way to go out than just having a beer somewhere. He mainly goes to rock venue Vera, but also to jazz café De Spieghel and rock venue Het Viaduct for example. Besides this a specific bar is the focal point for the punk scene in Groningen for the most part. In the past he also went to concerts in squats but there is much less going on there now. He also goes to very quiet concerts, of Rue Royale for example just recently, but generally he does not appreciate the atmosphere there – that one has to creep to the toilet on one's toes. He loves the very small concerts best really, with 50 people in the audience and a good band in a bar. In the past he also went to concerts outside Groningen, a weekend to Bremen with friends for example, but because he regularly plays outside Groningen with his band (they play every three weeks on average) he likes to go to concerts in Groningen. But occasionally he visits concerts further away.

At home he listens to music in the living room: LPs and CDs, and also MP3s via the iPod that he connects to the stereo set. He doesn't play cassettes any more, what he found worthwhile he has downloaded anew from the internet, "the MP3 is the cassette tape of the present". He hardly ever listens through headphones or earphones – his hearing has gotten worse, until his 25th he always played without ear protectors, that was the practice then, and that is taking its toll. Television and DVD hardly play a role; he only has a couple of DVDs with concerts on them (but feels that this is a fun way of watching music), and where television is concerned: "There isn't any music being played on television anymore, is there?" Despite of not being a jazz fan he does think that the jazz musicians he sometimes see at TV hard at work with all kinds of weird combinations are inspiring. In the car he plays his own CDs compiled with MP3 downloads. No hardcore, that is too distracting, but drum and bass does work very well for instance. He also listens to the radio, alternative music station Kink FM and Radio 1 for the news. Kink regularly plays band such as Pearl Jam, it is 'his' station indeed, "I mean, I do love loud music but that does not mean that I have to have that infernal racket in my ears for the whole day."

The music collection of Kenneth (LPs, CDs and MP3s) is arranged in alphabetical order. He doesn't distinguish any categories because most categories would contain very little: jazz and classical music are (as good as) absent for instance. He has about 200 LPs and singles, most of which are punk or related. He still buys additional music and also trades a lot for LPs of his own band, and actually listens closely to new music all the time. He enjoys playing singles a lot: because you have to change every four minutes you do not have time to do anything else and you

listen very closely. Between the LPs and singles stand also Roberta Flack and Donna Summer from the collection of an uncle, and also a collection with the 9 Symphonies of Beethoven – he still has never listened to that. The CD collection comprises the larger bands, very loud but also all kinds of other music. He has a preference for LPs, they last a lot longer.

His own concerts, but also the concerts he likes most, are fast and loud. They themselves do not play longer than half an hour: no breaks between the songs, no introductions, no introducing of band members. Just playing vigorously, there are people who do not actually like hardcore punk but do come to concerts for the intensity of the experience – who stand listening there with their fingers in their ears.

12. Lennart

The earliest musical memories of Lennart (45) are memories from primary school. Every week or every month, he does not recall exactly, on Friday pupils put on a show. He remembers singing a well-known Dutch pop song, his first live performance ever.

In his youth Lennart was not actively making music. Now he thinks this is a pity, he had quite liked to learn to play piano. Around his 15th he tried for a while to learn to play the guitar but it was not a success, he did not have the patience for it. At home his father (who now sings in a shanty choir) and his mother sang little, although his grandmother was a member of a choir. They did listen to music a lot at home, his father listened to the Eagles and John Denver for instance, he had a broad musical taste and for example listens a lot to Andrea Bocelli now.

When Lennart was 12 Elvis Presley died. Lennart was captivated by Presley and his music, and started collecting pictures and records. He bought his own stereo with a cassette recorder and started to sing Elvis songs for himself. This has never changed. For years he practiced just for himself, not only Presley songs but also songs by others, often by means of karaoke cassettes. He was his own teacher: he recorded his own singing, listened scrupulously to the recording and in this way further improved himself more and more. He did not focus exclusively on Elvis, but for example listened also to Neil Diamond, the Beatles, Queen; and he still has a broad musical taste which extends itself from soul and rhythm 'n' blues through Toto, Pink, Marco Borsato to the musical preferences of his children: Waylon, Jason Mraz, Bruno Mars, James Blunt.

After primary school he went to secondary school, the Lower Commercial School, and later on to the Intermediate Commercial School. He had to quit this school because he contracted glandular fever and after that went to work in his father's printing business. From Lower Commercial School he remembers that there was a music teacher, but who this was and what happened in class he does not remember. There was music in the background in the printing office all the time, and that was the case in all the jobs Lennart had afterwards: for example in the timber frame construction business and in furniture fitting. Now Lennart works as a handyman at a health care provider, which requires a more social attitude, he visits people in their homes, and of course there he is not always able to put music on.

Lennart always kept on singing, at home and also in the karaoke cafés with friends. His love for Presley music has led to him singing in public as a Presley imitator since some five years. He has a show of two sections of twenty minutes approximately, with accompaniment tracks and in Elvis costume. He does not give a damn about people who tell him not to wear the costume: "Well yes, I have that costume and Elvis also had that costume, it is part of it I believe." The performance itself gives him lots of satisfaction. Whether there are 5 or 500 people, he gives himself completely.

He performs very regularly, for example in a local live music café, but also at weddings, street parties, garden parties and other types of parties. A couple of years ago he auditioned for a TV talent show but this was not a success. He sang 'In the Ghetto', but this was too little 'show' for the programme, but he also feels, critical as he is of himself, that it was not a good performance. Now he has come into contact with a local professional rock musician and he finds it an exciting prospect to maybe perform with live musicians some time. In public he does not do any other

stuff besides Elvis; this is what he wants, and there are so many others already who do the Dutch-language repertoire.

At one time he had singing lessons but he quit after ten lessons. In part this was because his singing teacher felt his voice was not suited to Elvis imitation as such: "That irritated me, I thought: you want me to quit singing Elvis, and then I thought: yes but I do not want to." Why he is so touched by Elvis, Lennart finds hard to put into words, he thought his voice matched Elvis', "one wanted to be like that too, so to speak, I can't give any further explanation for it". Throughout the years he has started to admire Elvis more and more, through CDs, DVDs, books etc. he has only gained more sympathy for him. He does admit that the death of well-known singers always move him: Elvis, but also Michael Jackson or Dutch-language singer André Hazes, "well, then I cry, Hazes, then I cry, yes, and Michael too, sure. They couldn't handle the pressure."

Lennart listens to a wide variety of music himself. When he is at home the radio or the television is on – everything except metal and punk. On television he watches music documentaries and musicals. He also has a couple of music DVDs he watches regularly, besides Elvis Presley for example DVDs of the Bee Gees, Pink, Katie Melua or Michael Jackson. He hardly ever listens to CDs, he uses them mostly at his shows where he also acts as a DJ. His CD collection is varied: Marco Borsato, Heart, Toto, Neil Diamond, Robbie Williams, Guus Meeuwis, and samplers such as 'Years of Soul'. He uses his computer to compile his accompaniment tracks, and not to download music. On his iPod there is stored, among other things, a collection of 150 Elvis songs which he received from a known Elvis imitator from The Hague – 1/3 of the 430 songs Elvis recorded.

13. Miriam

To the question to recount her musical biography and to start at the beginning, “maybe already before you were born”, Miriam (45) reacts with “I think that it starts there”. She talks about the musical family she grew up in and that she undoubtedly was exposed to music even before her birth. Her mother, of Indonesian descent, was a piano teacher, as were an aunt and an uncle. Her father, of Surinamese descent, was hardly ever home. Her mother raised the children alone, but they did listen to Latin-American music and they also went to Surinamese dances. At parties there was always music, and at the children’s birthday parties they played musical games: guessing which television tune her mother played on the piano, for instance.

Miriam was the eldest of four sisters. They all played instruments, and her sisters are still active musically. Singing played a prominent role in the house (she remembers that she sang her little sisters to sleep). At an early age she started to play the recorder, later on the small Irish harp and she also familiarized herself with the piano. From recorder lessons she remembers the learning of rhythms by way of words. She also played her harp for years in a youth orchestra. In addition – under the influence of her mother – dance played a big role. She took dance lessons and as soon as good music was put on in the house there was dancing or singing. When the radio was on they listened to classical music, but for the major part the music in the house was made by mother and daughters themselves.

Her feel for music, especially for vocals, was very intense. She remembers an occurrence when she was six or seven years old: her mother accompanied a Hungarian friend who sang songs, she was moved to tears. From primary school Miriam remembers that she played in a small orchestra which was led by one of the teachers. Every week a specialist music teacher came in the classroom with whom they sang, clapped rhythms and played musical games. There also was a folk dance group in which she danced. The transition to secondary school changed little for her. She took music as an examination subject. She still preferred classical music and world music, and with her peers she also made music, for instance at Christmas performances at secondary school. She wasn’t really into pop music then, nor at a later stage; she remembers that she went to a certain pop festival several times but that she didn’t like the large scale of it then. Now she is mainly focused on small-scale events: “I feel that is music then, that you, well, can really feel someone.” The voice, she says, is a very subtle instrument, and you have to be able to feel that in the musical setting. But it is also a matter of knowing better what you want; therefore she feels concerts now are also too long as a rule.

At the end of secondary school Miriam took singing lessons and started her preparation for the conservatoire. While she is unable to completely explain the choice for singing it feels like a logical one, also because it for example is related to her interest in drama, also a combination of body and voice. She describes how at the conservatoire she had to turn from singing naturally to knowledge about the ‘how and what’ of singing. She entered herself for classical singing, which was her main reference point; however at home her preferences were much more widely varied. She talks about how it felt (because of the then focus on resonance for example) as if in classical music your voice suddenly ‘had to do something else’.

Therefore she has mixed memories of her time at the conservatoire. She studied in Groningen for a period of time, but “at a certain point when it wasn’t going very well; then people said: you are starting to sing ‘recorder-like’, that I still remember, I think: oh, that is wrong”. She went looking

for another teacher and ultimately found a teacher in Amsterdam. At a certain point this teacher said: “You have to sing as you speak.” Then Miriam realized that she didn’t really know how she spoke, and that this is the case with many singers. That gave her the idea to study speech therapy, in order that she could teach herself how to sing. Ultimately she finished her speech therapy studies and she didn’t sit her final exam at the conservatoire.

In hindsight she thinks that she just as well, or even better, might have studied jazz rather than classical, but “that was less in line with expectations, apparently. Yes. In such a manner my background had that much influence, I think, that I was more classically focused. (...) You get into it by chance.” And naturally she loves classical music: “I feel I should choose really but I can’t, I just can’t. No.” Miriam continued to sing besides to her speech therapist practice, in project choirs and now also as ceremonial singer. In that role she sings songs to order for special occasion such as births, birthdays or weddings. As a speech therapist/voice coach she focuses on learning to listen to you own voice. This is really hard for singers. Although they are focused on their singing voice they hardly ever know how they speak themselves, whereas there is a major relation between the two. In order to keep on developing herself she goes to Germany every two months to take classes in applied voice physiology.

Miriam’s CD collection is fairly large and very varied. A relatively random selection: Natascha Atlas, Katie Melua, soprano Elly Ameling, Groningen dialect singer Ede Staal, Rod Stewart, Bach-cantatas, Ella Fitzgerald, Miriam Makeba and the Swingle Singers (she was raised on the last two at home). The collection is more or less arranged by genre. An important part consists of vocal music, again with a lot of women from the pop/jazz genres. Lots of CDs were given to her by friends, and she owns a considerable number of CDs because she sings one or more songs on them. She also still has cassettes and LPs but she doesn’t play these. In addition she has some DVDs in which music plays a part.

Miriam doesn’t go to concerts much. Sometimes she goes to CD-presentations or to performances of students. As it happens at the time of the interview she went to more concerts just recently, but that is a coincidence. Miriam listens to the radio regularly, in particular to Classic FM. In the car she also listens to classical music by way of the radio, she doesn’t have a CD-player in the car. On television she watches dedicated music programmes sometimes. Musically speaking the computer hardly plays a role, once in a while she checks something students send her on YouTube.

Miriam describes herself as a broad listener. She likes classical music, jazz, pop, world music – Sephardic music, for example. She also has her dislikes – Indian music for example isn’t her thing. However she can’t just listen to one style, she listens to what suits her, and that is very varied. Dance is an important source of inspiration for her musical taste. She takes oriental dance now, has also danced tango and flamenco and is into Biodanza. From time to time she also has to listen very specifically in order to find music that she can use in her practice.

Over the years her listening habits have changed. The mystical side has become more important, although she uses that definition with caution: “Well, you have to use words but I find this rather difficult, what is that for ‘New Agey’ stuff? But to me it isn’t New Agey, a theoretical, scientific, a physical something it is, it are the laws of nature. Yes. And also the healing side therefore, of music, and of the voice as, well, as instrument.”

14. Nelly

Nelly (62) is from a large, Dutch orthodox Christian reformed family of 15 children. At home little music was heard, except psalms and hymns. As a child Nelly sang in a children's choir and later on in a girl's choir, both affiliated to the church, and also at primary school the music was Christian: after prayers psalms were sung, every week one psalm had to be learnt by heart. Her father also regularly sang psalms at home, and he really liked the men's choirs of which he later also had cassettes. There was a radio, but it was not turned on a lot – mother did not like noise much.

During secondary school Nelly liked singers such as Adamo, Dutch-language pop star Rob de Nijs and Johnny Lion. Her parents were OK with this; Nelly was the first child (she was the youngest by one) that brought home popular music, she grew up in the sixties. She remembers having posters of Adamo on the walls of her room when she was around 12 years old. At secondary school she did not receive music lessons.

Nelly married young and had children early. Her husband was not reformed and came from a better off family (their father was a sailor), there was a radio, a record-player and a television in the house. He liked Pink Floyd and guitar music, Nelly also listened to this. In the beginning they did buy records, Dutch-language ones (the early Gerard Joling records) and French-language ones – although Nelly did not do well in French at school she did like French music. They did not sing a lot with their children, although music was played often in the house. Later on her son liked rap, and now he has a large music collection.

Nelly listens to the radio all day long, the regional radio station – to dispel the silence and to hear the local news. She thinks the music which is played there is alright. If her daughter comes to visit a pop radio station is put on but when she is gone she changes the radio back to the regional station. With her daughter she sometimes also listens to pieces from the Top 2000, or to a Pink Floyd CD or to other guitar music.

Nelly has a modest CD collection (20 to 30 CDs) but she does not listen to them – of the four years she has lived in her current flat she has not yet played one CD. This is due mostly to lack of time, "I think the radio is just as easy don't you, it also has music on it". The collection encompasses among others regional dialect singer Alex Vissering, Kenny Rogers, Charles Aznavour, Adamo, Marco Borsato, popular pianist Jan Vayne, and several popular compilation CDs and some Christmas music. Nelly does not have any LPs anymore.

On television Nelly sometimes watches music talent shows, but she mainly likes game shows. She comes from a family in which lots of games were played, and in her own family she continued with this tradition. Recently Nelly started with computer lessons, she does not use the computer for musical purposes.

Nelly is not musically active herself. She goes to church and there is a church choir there but she does not sing in it. "No I do not do such things. I have not got such a good voice anymore. (...) It is not practiced I think." She does not go to concerts much, except for a musical she goes to with her daughter once a year since about four years. They like the combination of song, theatre, and the whole atmosphere around it.

Music does not play a big role in her life – it more of a habit of wanting to have something to listen to. To the question whether she would be able to do without music she says: “Without music maybe so but I do have to have something around me. (...) If I am awake I always put on the radio immediately. Even if they are only talking, I cannot stand silence very well, I do not like that at all.”

15. Olga

The earliest memories Olga (63) has of music go back until she was about four years old. She heard her father playing the piano in the evenings, not very difficult pieces but with an attractive touch which conveyed warmth. Her mother also played the piano and accompanied sometimes, and listened to classical music a lot. Her mother went to concerts often (every year to the St. Mathew's Passion in any case) and now and again – though less often than her two sisters – Olga went along. There was a lot of singing at home by the children, often songs they heard on the radio when the maid listened to popular music radio programmes. She remembers that they sang songs of Caterina Valente and imitated the German accent that went with it. They also always sang in the car. Olga went to church but considers this as unimportant for her musical development.

So there was a lot of music present in her family. Olga speaks of her maternal grandmother who was a concert pianist and of her paternal grandmother who played violin. She has no musical memories of these two. She attributes part of her musicality to the Jewish background of her father: "My father comes from a very Jewish family and therefore I always had the feeling that there was a lot of music in that family. Also my grandmother played violin therefore music was indeed an important part of the upbringing. I also find that often when I ask musicians I work with something about their background and then often it is revealed that they have Jewish blood. Therefore I find I am very interested in that." Yet Olga describes the musical situation as "a little mediocre, because we had piano lessons as was proper but we did not make much of it really. Musically speaking we did not develop ourselves very much, that one can say: we learnt a skill". She also does not think that that music was played a lot at home, or that they were 'super cultured' in that respect. Olga still plays piano, for example children's songs for her grandson, but "that is not very highbrow".

Of primary and secondary school she remembers little about music. At primary school school concerts were gone to, and in some classes there was a lot of singing, sometimes Olga also sang solo. At secondary school they had music lessons by a well-known church organ player. A nice man, but the pupils gave him a hard time. Olga met her husband during secondary school. He played the piano, but has not continued doing that; there always was a piano in the house but the children played on it more than her husband. "When you don't play very often then you lose your proficiency, then you are startled by your touch and then it starts to become less fun all of a sudden." After secondary school Olga went to the academy of social work whereas her husband finished secondary school and went into military service. She remembers little of the musical life in those days, although she did have lots of musical friends. She sometimes went to youth camps of the Dutch Christian Students Society, there was a lot of singing there and as a matter of course she also participated in this.

When she had children life became busier also musically. Her children went to a Rudolf Steiner school – why they choose this school she does not remember anymore – and music played an important role there. All her children received piano lessons ("That was part of the package"), subsequently other instruments also came into view: violin (through a teacher of the Steiner school who was eager to teach her eldest daughter), clarinet, guitar, singing. The children had lots of friends whom were also musically active. As mother of four children who all made music – of whom the eldest very quickly played a high level and later on also the youngest daughter, ultimately they went to the conservatoire via the preparatory year – music started to play an

increasingly greater role in her own life: she went to concerts and competitions, accompanied her children musically, and also became a board member of a youth orchestra.

Because she was active in music more and more through her children she developed her musical preferences. She discovered that she liked certain music and liked other music less, and “that I was allowed to have my own opinion. My husband is a tremendous Beethoven aficionado, always has been, who knew everything, but I knew nothing. In the beginning I could not distinguish one thing from another, he would put on some music then and would say: guess who this is. Then I wouldn’t know: very distressing. And that still happens to me sometimes. But now I know bit by bit what I like for example, so that is an area where I developed myself I feel”.

The family lived in America for a couple of years. There was a lot of attention being paid to music, also in school concerts and school choirs. The children received their instrumental music lessons at an outstanding music school. There, and also in people’s homes, a lot of concerts were given. Back in the Netherlands the family first lived in the west of the country but later moved to Groningen. In Groningen Olga became the secretary of a classical concert society. She continues to do this, and her being a member of the board has developed her even further musically. “Often there is talk of music in a very nice fashion, about the way in which it is performed, and of course we have a lot of people at the [society] who are very talented, who know an awful lot, who play at a high level, therefore you are all ears, then you hear things. I really love this. And especially at [out society] the people who come there really enjoy finding like-minded people.”

Olga listens to music by way of the radio: Radio 4, concert broadcasts as well as discussion programmes on classical music. But also classical CDs are regularly played. Also a lot of music is listened to in the car, and especially in the apartment in France – at home in the Netherlands there is often not enough peace and quiet. Approximately once or twice a month she goes to concerts. She goes to the concerts of her music society of course, but also to concerts of friends, of the children, and nowadays she goes to the opera regularly with her husband. And with her own choir, in which she sings since some five years, she regularly performs in public.

The CD collection contains a lot of classical music but also for example Charles Aznavour, Jacques Brel, Oscar Peterson, and ‘The Best of Morocco’. The extensive LP collection has been gotten rid of, but some of these have been bought again on CD in the meantime. Not everything is played, Olga and her husband lead a busy life: “We shouldn’t pose as if we are superior people when we’re not. It is always very nice to have some sort of front, look at all that we are doing. But we do so much already, therefore there is not always time to listen to music a lot.”

16. Peter

Peter (39) spent the first four years of his life in Paramaribo, Surinam. His oldest memory of music is of the instruments that he saw at home as his father played in a band as a percussionist. Now and again band members came over and music was made. The family moved to the Netherlands just after the Surinam independence. At home Peter heard *bigi pokoe* (Surinam dance music), Javanese pop and, in particular at his grandmothers' also, classical Javanese music. In addition his father listened to black pop music from the 60s and 70s a lot: Otis Redding, Percy Sledge, and also to reggae. From his sisters and brother he picked up funk and soul: Earth Wind & Fire, The Average White Band.

For a while a Javanese-Surinamese gamelan stood in the attic but it wasn't played on. Peter's father was a very active member of a Javanese-Surinamese association and founded the cultural society in the city of Groningen. Peter danced *Sriempie*, the classical Javanese dance, from about his ninth till his fifteenth, also at cultural festivals in for example The Hague. He learned to dance at the Surinam society in Groningen. He still immediately recognizes the accompanying classical-Javanese music, and on YouTube he sometimes still watches *Sriempie* films. Just recently his elder sister danced a special *Sriempie* dance learned especially for this occasion at a wedding together with his children. Also he often comes into contact with traditional Javanese-Surinamese music and dance at parties, festivals and football tournaments, among which the Horse Dance (*Jarang Kepang*).

In addition in his youth Peter heard European-American pop music that was popular then. By way of music TV programmes such as *TopPop* and *Countdown* and later *Sky* (the first music video station) he listened to for example ABBA, Dutch-language ska-group *Doe Maar* (when this is on the radio he still turns up the music), *Musical Youth*, and later *Madonna*, *Bruce Springsteen*, house music (he mainly listened the more mellow genres), and hip-hop and rap such as *Grandmaster Flash* and *The Furious Five*. He recalls that there were different cliques of pupils in secondary school: for instance students who were into new wave more (the *Cure*, *U2*) and wore grey and black clothing, and the 'home boys' who listened to rap and also did break dancing. He belonged to this latter clique more but hung out with everyone.

From the music lessons at primary school he remembers that there was a music teacher, that there was singing and sometimes also playing on instruments (triangle!). At secondary school music was also taught, he recalls that pop music was also dealt with there (*Toto*, *Foreigner*, *Lonely Heart* by *Yes* – the teacher taught them about the recurring rhythm in that song, and Peter still remembers the teacher with his bass whenever he hears the song). But also classical music formed a part of the lessons; the music teacher wanted to acquaint you with lots of different music, Peter was fine with that. He remembers from those days also the one and only classical concert he ever went to.

Peter's interests run wide. When he for instance goes to the commemorative Liberation Festival he listens to different genres, although he often ends up at the reggae stage eventually. And when they play Irish folk in the shopping street he also listens for a while – and watches the crowd. Most of the music he listens to has a black background: soul, R&B, reggae; rap however is the music of his youth mostly. The first music genre with a white background that he liked was grunge. In addition he also likes salsa, as a consequence of his experience in listening to Surinamese dance music.

Peter is inquisitive by nature, often he asks his children or friends which music is playing when he doesn't know it. The fact that nowadays music is always combined with images also leads to more varied listening habits with him. He wouldn't listen to opera very quickly but if it is televised in a talent show he watches sometimes. However, he doesn't listen to classical music really, though he is conscious of the fact that it is used in many films as background.

At home Peter listens to music a lot. Generally speaking he uses the computer, and not the radio, the TV or CDs. Then he compiles a playlist in MP3 format from his extensive music collection. Sometimes he also just listens to the content of an entire folder or CD. In the car he listens to a station with a varied selection of pop music. He also burns compilation CDs on his computer to use in the car. When he makes a new compilation generally there are a lot of similar tracks on it as were on the old one. He uses a lot of YouTube besides. An iPod or other portable listening device isn't used anymore, in the past it was. Now and again Peter goes to live concerts, reggae concerts mostly though he also hears live music in a local pub sometimes. He also goes to the Liberation Festival, when there is a salsa weekend he also goes into town to listen to bands. At the annual 'Pasar Malam'¹⁴ in Groningen he hears among other things Indonesian kroncong which reminds him of his grandmother.

When Peter buys CDs – which he rarely does – than most of the time recordings of live concerts. He does love music DVDs (Buena Vista Social Club) and music shows on TV, documentaries on artists for example. There are still LPs in the house, and also a record player, but they aren't used anymore. They are stored, some of them aren't available on CD. At his mother's house there are a lot of cassettes which should be digitalized some time. Peter plays no instruments, nor do his wife and children; he does have a djembe and guitar at home. His CD collection is fairly small and isn't played much because music is mainly played by way of the computer. Sometimes songs from these CDs are put on the computer. There is a fair amount of CDs among these he burned himself. The collection contains among others Dutch-Moluccan group Massada, Michael Jackson, Jamiroquai, REM, Bob Marley, remixes by Dutch DJ Ben Liebrand, Javanese-Surinamese singer Ragmad, Gloria Estefan, Surinamese band Trafassi, Marco Borsato, and R&B CDs.

On the computer there is stored a large quantity of music, categorized in folders by artist/genre. Among others:

- Reggae, for example Alpha Blondy, Aswad, Black Uhuru;
- Latin: Celia Cruz, Oscar d'Leon, Estefan, Marc Antony, Son by 4, Salsa Bachata;
- Soul: Otis Redding, Drifters, D Ross, B White, O Jays, Temptations;
- Sranang Pokoe: Surinam music of from example Max Neijman, Trafassi, La Caz, Ghabiang Boys, La Rouge;
- Rap/hip-hop: BeastieBoys, IceT, Tupack etc;
- Alternative rock: U2, Stones, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam, Oasis, Sound Garden, Neil Young Harvest Moon, Jamiroquai;
- a couple of folders compiled by Peter himself, for example 'Old Classics': Donna Summer, Chaka Khan, Tavares, Bee Gees, Gloria Gaynor, Chic.

¹⁴ Lit. 'evening market'; Dutch-Indonesian festival, a meeting place where people can meet (other) people of Indonesian descent and experience Indonesian culture and food.

17. Quinten

Quinten (45) comes from a family in which music wasn't made actively but the radio was on a lot. His parents listened to James Last, Rock 'n Roll. On the radio one also heard The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. Quinten himself mainly listened to the Top 40: "Mud, that type of questionable music." At some point he got a record player, "then things went wrong" –one becomes able to bring music into the house and start listening more intensively because of this. From that moment on all his pocket money went into the buying of LPs and CDs. The first LP was by The Beatles, after that he bought Neil Young and Bob Dylan. Through a friends' brother he came into contact with louder music: Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, early hard rock. Also Supertramp and Genesis came along, to dance to in the discotheque, and when he was about 16 he started to go to live concerts of Dutch bands: Herman Brood, New Adventures, Gruppo Sportivo. He describes his listening habit as phases: LPs of Neil Young for a while, then a new kick comes along again. That kick is important: "It is an emotion really that I feel when I listen to music."

Quinten did have music lessons himself from when he was about ten years old: recorder and later electronic organ. His mother had played that instrument in the past and his father found the more technical aspects of the instrument interesting. There actually wasn't a relationship between the music he listened to and the music he played. He played the standard music school repertoire, and also didn't have any ideas about what he wanted to achieve with his music making. He quit at 16, he didn't enjoy it anymore. Technically he was fairly proficient and his teacher did try and introduce pop songs in the lesson but Quinten just didn't feel like it anymore, and he also didn't like the sound of the electronic organ; he liked piano far better.

He remembers little of the music lessons in primary school – some singing, that was it. At his secondary school he had the opportunity to learn to play tenor saxophone in the school orchestra, he really enjoyed that: lessons at the school of music and going on tours with the school orchestra. "That the opportunity was there, that you could just do it. Not that I rose to great heights on the instrument, but still." On such a tour he discovered the music of Jethro Tull at a host family, once he was home he started to listen intensively to them. "Around Christmas I sometimes still play them. Well; nostalgia, so to say."

When he started to go to university glam rock came into vogue: David Bowie, Roxy Music, and also artists as Lou Reed. Those were the first artists of whom he started to collect the music in a systematic way, also their earlier work. Nowadays that type of collecting is no longer necessary, you download the complete discography of an artist in an hour, "a pity really". Also punk became popular; "Rather 'interesting', but I didn't like it actually". That was different with new wave. He listened a lot to bands such as Joy Division and New Order, particularly when he was switching to another course of study – he had a lot of spare time, read music magazine 'Oor' ('Ear') a lot and built up a large collection of new wave, also with less well-known bands as Legendary Pink Dots en Tuxedo Moon. He also listened a lot to the Talking Heads and he discovered (through a German concert that he heard on the radio) Peter Hammill and the Van der Graaff Generator', of whom he became a big fan and collected everything.

He describes this period of his life as not so happy. That changed when he had decided to start a new course of study in order to become a music librarian. He wanted, after breaking off his economy studies, to choose a course now where he was intrinsically motivated for and picked a course that trained oneself for a profession in which you could be involved with music without

having to be a professional musician. “I wasn’t a very talented musician really. However I was interested in music, I listened a lot indeed, but real talent, I did know that of myself, well that isn’t really in the cards, I kind of liked it and I also didn’t feel that drive.” He went out a lot, listened to happier music: a lot of electronic dance music, extended remixes, Heaven 17, The Associates. Furthermore he felt he had to fill in the gaps in his musical knowledge and therefore he took singing lessons and started to listen to classical music. He started with Eric Satie (who he knew from pop music), and after that also Gustav Mahler, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern – the theme in his musical taste is ‘drama’ therefore that fitted better than Mozart or Bach; he feels Bach is utterly annoying music. Through Webern he came into contact with Luigi Nono and Charles Berio, and through an internship at the Dutch contemporary composition organization Donemus he discovered Dutch composers such as Willem Pijper and Matthijs Vermeulen.

After graduation he kept on working as a salesman in a classical music store in Groningen for a while – a nice job in which you had to ‘read’ the musical tastes of the costumer. When that worked it gave a marvelous feeling of success. Afterwards he became a music librarian. He married and went on to become the head of the music department at work. During that time he heard an awful lot of music professionally. With his then wife he had little in common musically anymore, and to Peter Hammill, where he used to listen to a lot at the time, he doesn’t listen to any more now – that became far too emotionally connected to a past life – “when women become part of music...”

When David Byrne, frontman of the Talking Heads, went solo he followed that. In this way he also came into contact with the compilation CDs of Cuban and Brazilian music which Byrne made. Gradually he was drawn into Latin music. When he discovered at a Latin night that a large part of the audience not only listened but also danced he decided to take dancing lessons with his wife at the time. They took two salsa courses but then their daughter was born, things got busy at work and they quit dancing salsa. Quinten describes this period in his life as a listener as “not very interesting” – he listened to more mellow music such as Björk and REM.

When he divorced in 2000 he discovered that he had completely missed out on grunge and therefore started a catch-up operation: Nirvana, but also the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Smashing Pumpkins and Rammstein. He also discovered Radiohead, where he still listens to a lot, Tool and Mars Volta, and later Porcupine Tree, his favorite band. He started to become more engaged in piano playing (“just to enjoy myself, without any further ambition”), and also bought a guitar where he learnt to play ‘two songs’ on.

And he started to dance salsa again – he felt the need for doing his ‘own things’, he had gotten round to this far too little, and moreover it was a way to meet new friends. Initially he also listened to Latin at home a lot, but now he listens to Latin only when he’s dancing really – about twice a week. An exception is the more sophisticated New York style, he dances to this and also listens to it at home. And the same thing is true for zouk¹⁵, which he dances frequently now and of which he also has a large music collection at home which he particularly plays in the car a lot.

For Quinten ‘holiday music’ holds a special place. With his current family (himself, his wife, his daughter and the two children of his wife) they went for holidays with the car for several years.

¹⁵ Musical style from the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

For every holiday he put together a holiday music collection: popular music, music which the children liked, music from the country they were visiting, new music he discovered on the internet. “That really is a music listening experience for all of us.”

Quinten’s music collection is stored on CDs basically – what he downloads he burns on CDs in good quality (mostly FLAC) – except for dance music, of which a lot is stored on his computer. Quinten doesn’t use an MP3 player, and also hardly listens to music at work: when it is interesting music he is distracted by it, when it is uninteresting music he is irritated by it. In the car he plays music now and again, so loud that it drowns out the engine. Two or three times a week Quinten goes out, to go dancing mainly. The CD collection is in the living room. All LPs plus the computer are in the study upstairs, as are the cassettes which aren’t listened to anymore now. When an LP needs to be played this is done downstairs, the record player is there.

The music collection consists of several parts: the very varied main collection which is categorized by alphabet, moreover there are special sections on downbeat/triphop-like music, Belgian music, salsa, world music, classical and jazz, and zouk compilations. The CDs which are most played aren’t stored in the CD cabinet but are located on the record player, so they don’t need to be looked for. A limited amount of DVDs is stored in the cupboard, in particular live concerts. The entire CD collection runs to about 800 CDs, half of which is catalogued on the internet by now in his personal Discogs¹⁶-discography.

About the way in which his listening habits manifest themselves he says: “You either like something or really don’t, and I form an opinion fairly quickly about something. One which is modified sometimes but not so very often. It also has very much to do with emotion but also with state of mind, and in which stage of life you are or whether music touches you. As long as it doesn’t touch me it doesn’t work for me and then I also have no interest in it. If I find it interesting musically speaking it doesn’t have to appeal to me directly, then you can get me to listen to it. So if someone writes about it for example, then I think: that sounds as if I could start to like it. Sometimes you like it then, and then you become crazy about it and subsequently I immerse myself in it.”

¹⁶ A website and database in which information on released audio recordings can be found, discussed sold and bought. <http://www.discogs.com/>

18. Robert

Robert (67) didn't hear a lot of music in his youth. At home the radio was on sometimes, then they occasionally listened to German songs, later he himself listened to Elvis Presley. No music was made, music was of no importance, he doesn't remember ever having been to a concert. In the back of his mind are vague memories of devotional music. It is unclear to him where his love of books, films and music comes from; at home learning was deemed important, but more as a means to make a good living. At primary school he wasn't allowed to sing along with songs from the second grade onwards because he didn't sing well and that confused the other children. Since that time he hasn't tried it anymore. At Sunday school some activities were music related, he remembers making bamboo flutes, he was able to do that better than playing them. Therefore he was pleasantly surprised when one of his daughters learned to play the flute quite well.

At 15 he started to listen to jazz with his friends. He doesn't remember why; most of his peers listened to pop, for example Elvis Presley, "and we wanted something else of course". In all likelihood he and his friends started to really appreciate the music only after a little while. Possessing a couple of records elevated your status, someone at school even had a box full of them! Records were expensive at the time, 18 guilders, and the few records you owned you played at friends on simple gramophones with a speaker in the lid. They listened to Cannonball Adderley for example. Robert still owns LPs from those days.

During the time he studied in Groningen Robert also listened to jazz, but not intensively. He remembers jazz singles he bought in those days. He also heard live jazz in jazz cafes; he heard Dexter Gordon play there amongst others. Now and again he could be found in a specialized jazz record store. After graduation he went to work at the university. For years he took relatively little notice of music, although he did hear different things: an opera in Verona, and the Eagles, blues and Zappa where colleagues listened to for example.

Only when the LP was replaced by the CD did he start to buy jazz CDs. In the meantime he has quite a collection, arranged by instrument. He buys them in the CD store and also on the internet. He has a lot of CDs by for example Miles Davis, who he admires even though he suspects that the musical turning point in his career has indeed been a turning to the larger audiences – although one continues to hear that it is Miles Davis. For a while he only bought CDs of live concerts, the musicians clearly had more fun there. At a rough estimate he now has a collection of 500 jazz CDs.

He has a large collection of tenor saxophonists, some 100 CDs possibly; Hank Mobley is one of his favorites. Besides this he has also bought CDs of vocalists, amongst others Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan. Moreover there is a considerable collection miscellaneous: Callas, Bach, Elvis Costello, Lyle Lovett, children's CDs for the grand children, Queen, U2, Mercedes Sosa, pop 'Best of' CDs, Mary Black, German schlager singer Falco. He owns some world music but not a lot; amongst others a CD with Moroccan music, a souvenir from a holiday in that country, and a CD with Iranian classical music – it is hard work for him to listen to that for a long time. To jazz he is able to do this, although he does find it difficult to hear who is playing exactly, besides the very identifiable Miles David and John Coltrane.

The LP collection is just as varied: lots of jazz, alongside records from his youth also newly bought records, but furthermore also pop, country, cabaret, records he got from students. There is also a lot of stuff he ‘inherited’ from relatives, and also the collection of his wife.

Robert says he listens to music a lot; regularly to CDs or LPs, but you do have to change them all the time, this is inconvenient when you are writing. He listens to piano music a lot; “I love pianists with a classical touch, I do not know what it is but I like it.” Sometimes he has the radio on, but then for the news and not for the music. On the internet radio in his study he mostly tunes in to the jazz station. Television doesn’t have a role really (sometimes he watches dedicated music programmes), he has two music DVDs. The computer isn’t used for music, nor the mobile phone or an MP3player. In the car he does play music, mostly jazz but also a Maria Callas CD, but the most important thing is that you keep your eyes on the road.

Robert also reads about jazz: biographies (Duke Ellington, Chet Baker, Miles Davis), photo books (Jazz Lives – about the graves of famous jazz musicians), sometimes also in a comprehensive discography. For a while he was a frequent visitor to the North Sea Jazz Festival. Since it has moved to Rotterdam he doesn’t go anymore, also because he always went with friends from a village near The Hague. Initially he thought that the festival wasn’t his cup of tea, no ‘real jazz’, but it has also brought him knowledge about other music, the ‘ud (Arabic lute) as Anouar Brahim plays it for example.

He goes to other jazz concerts regularly, for example the concerts of Dutch pianist Rein de Graaff organized in the local theatre or the ‘Summer Jazz Bicycle Tour’ around the city of Groningen. He enjoys the excitement that fills the air just before a concert starts. Although he doesn’t know a lot of jazz fans he usually meets an acquaintance at every concert with whom he can talk about jazz; he likes that.

19. Simon

From his youth Simon (33) remembers mainly that he himself listened to the radio a lot. He relished being by himself, and from about the time that he was eight he also made tapes on which he acted as the DJ. At home little music was played - he does not remember children's songs being sung, his mother did listen to 60s and 70s music a lot. At Sinterklaas his mother did receive CDs as a present, Bruce Springsteen, UB40; in the past she was a fan of Little Richard. Of his father (who left the house when Simon was 12) he remembers little musically speaking, his stepfather did listen to music but was not a great music lover.

From primary school he only remembers a few things about music: the closing assemblies of the school week, the celebration of the 850th anniversary of the village they lived in at which they sang songs. Also at secondary school not a lot happened according to Simon. They did have music lessons, which was fun but they were about the musical tastes of the teacher, about songs where Simon did not much care for, and moreover Simon already knew a lot about music from himself and therefore learned few new things. Simon listened to Top 40 music mostly, he collected the weekly sheets on which the Top 40 was published. There were times he did not realize that there was more than Top 40 music, but through his sister and friends he came into contact with other stuff: house, Nirvana, Aerosmith, Guns N' Roses. On his 16th birthday Simon got a CD player and began to buy CDs himself. Simon did not take music lessons in his youth; now he thinks this is a pity.

From his 12th birthday Simon started, influenced by his sister, to listen to house. When he turned 15 he had a friend who made house music on his computer. Together they started to compose music. Making music was fun. In this period he was also occupied with making his own mixes on tapes and later on CD's. One of the pieces Simon and his friend made was played at a discotheque, and it was a lot of fun seeing people dance to their own music. When Simon turned 16 he was given a mixer, amplifier and house records as a present by his friends. Later this turned out to be a pivotal moment in his life: it was the start of his career as a DJ. After six months he abandoned this career- the fun went out of it because he had to play the same records over and over because he did not have enough money to buy new records. When he was 17 Sebastian went to a house party for the first time, in Germany, and from his 20th he went to Amsterdam regularly with his sister. That made him decide to take up DJ-ing again. This had something to do with the fact that Simon was quite a solitary person. Being a DJ gave him the opportunity to make music for other people and still be by himself.

From his 20th up to three years ago Simon was a DJ. He played music somewhere almost every week. Although he was insecure himself about what he was doing, he got a lot of positive reactions. He never played to make money or to gain popularity (like so many other DJs) but solely for the pleasure playing gave him; the money he earned went to buying new music. Occasionally he was busy composing music himself, solely as a hobby. In these periods he listened exclusively to house and related music, also to a lot of lounge music. On his 21st birthday he organized a large dance-party together with three friends, which was very successful. Through organizational difficulties they could not continue with this, but otherwise this concept could have been quite a big hit.

From 2003 onwards he played in a club in a town in the east of the Netherlands every weekend for five years. He made a lot of money but it took up a lot of time, because he felt that he needed to play a new set every week, even though the crowd changed all the time. Furthermore there was

less and less dancing and therefore he played more and more lounge. Sometimes he played together with a jazz-saxophonist. He followed the tastes of his audience and ultimately this was so discouraging that he, at a natural moment for the club, decided to quit playing music. For Simon playing is not a way of becoming popular or to go down well with the audience (this is also why he never became a professional DJ), but it is really all about playing what he likes and loves – if this appeals to the audience then that is terrific.

3 years ago he stopped playing music. He sold his equipment and bought a HiFi stereo set because he did want to continue working with music. He accumulated a big collection of CDs he cherishes, and also goes to concerts regularly. His musical taste has broadened considerably, he has (originating from the musical collection of his girlfriend) in fact been performing a catch-up operation compensating for the years he was solely involved in house. Simon is an ‘audiophile’: he has an outstanding stereo system on which well recorded music sounds good. Sadly there is, especially in the world of pop, a lot of music which is badly recorded, this makes it hard for Simon to listen to; U2 or Coldplay are good enough to listen to in the car but not in the living-room. Classical music, jazz or country is recorded much better generally. Simon is very sensitive to background noise. He is also careful with his ears because one of them is half-deaf. Therefore he will always be careful with headphones, and because of this he is also happy he no longer plays music because this does damage the ears. But he still has a soft spot for house – if he sees it on TV or hears house this reminds him of the past. Sometimes it gives him a feeling that he should once again do something with music. He thinks about taking piano lessons now but nothing has come of it yet.

Simon listens to music mostly at home (he has just moved, and at the time of the interview the audio has not been set up to his liking and therefore Simon listens less than is usual for him). In the car he also listens to music regularly, often via an MP3 player, yet very often he listens also to a news radio station without music. At the office he sometimes listens to music on the PC with a few colleagues. Simon still has an LP collection, which he does not want to sell – there are too many good memories connected to them. Also he has a CD collection, which he cannot listen to because he sold his CD-player. But he has digitalized all his CDs and also downloads a lot of music in the better MP3 formats or in FLAK. His LPs haven’t been digitalized because he is not satisfied with the sound quality of them, but most of what he has is downloadable nowadays. His collection is stored on a personal server which can be accessed from any place with internet-access; he has his music collection always within reach through his iPad. His music collection contains an estimated 300 albums.

The CD collection is very varied. A number of things he listened to a lot: ‘Unfinished Symphony’ by Massive Attack, Faithless, ‘Gorecki’ by Lamb, Erick E., St. Germain. Other favorites are Radiohead, Secede, Aphex Twin, and Porcupine Tree. A lot of music Simon listens to is related to images, associations or memories. That is why he listens to soundtracks regularly, for instance ‘Into the Wild’ or the soundtracks by Clint Mansell. He also has CDs of the ‘2 Meter Sessions’: “This is what I often like the best, just a bare room with people who reasonably spontaneously render a version of their song in a studio and of which also nothing is deleted in the final mix or so. It is what it is and I find that immensely beautiful.”

20. Thomas

Thomas (45) doesn't remember exactly what his first musical memories are. In any case he remembers that he went to the beach with his parents and heard transistor radios at the beach. At home there were LPs with fairy tales, with music that later turned out to be from the Brandenburg concertos by Bach. Listening to the radio has always been important to Thomas. At lunchtime his mother listened to the radio – music and quizzes. He still remembers specific songs and artists that were played. Thomas's father had a considerably collection tape recorder reels, he recorded LPs on them and was always playing music: the Everly Brothers, the Dutch Swing College Band, the Deep River Quartet and the Beatles. He also liked bands such as the modern Dutch jazz band Willem Breuker Collectief, but Thomas felt that was a bit too bizarre.

Thomas's mother played mouth organ and castanets, his father guitar, songs from his youth with jazzy chords. Thomas's affection for the guitar stems from this. From his 12th he taught himself to play the guitar, he accompanied himself, 'campfire songs'. During Thomas's puberty a piano came into the house, Thomas's brother took lessons and Thomas joined in – he himself also had piano lessons for a short while but the lessons weren't a success; he learnt to play piano by imitating his brother. Today he still plays the guitar and the piano regularly – on the piano he searches for classical repertoire he already knows. Learning instruments comes easy to him: he can also drum a little bit, and when he bought a tenor recorder he got the hang of it fairly quickly. Just recently he bought a violin and he hopes to play on that too. In his youth he also had cornet lessons for a short while in order to play in the wind orchestra after the family moved from Groningen to a smaller village but that didn't go well.

At primary school they sang while being conducted by the mayor's wife: old Dutch songs, but also the anthem of the province of Groningen. The teacher himself didn't have a lot of love for music, he did love Dutch accordion player John Woodehouse. From secondary school he remembers a classroom with lots of instruments. Thomas doesn't like playing music together in class, the level was too low and therefore the end result was uninteresting. He remembers fellow students making a radio play with Pink Floyd music, that created a certain atmosphere. Sometimes there also were presentations. Furthermore the dances at school were terrific musical events, there also was a 'LP of the week' – Thomas remembers Dexy's Midnight Runners' 'Searching for the young soul rebels'. You heard a lot of rock, but also disco, and in this way picked up a lot of music.

Throughout the years Thomas's taste broadened. He remembers ZZ Top from his early adolescence, he saw them on television and found the energy appealing. During that time he started to borrow LPs from the library and to record them, and his love of reggae also developed, starting with Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and UB40. There also was a period in which he listened to flower power music, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young for example. Later many of his cassettes were borrowed by friends and either were never returned or got left behind with ex-girlfriends.

After adolescence Thomas moved to a village in the west of the country. A friend there introduced him to reggae, a lot of the music that Thomas now finds on the internet was mentioned then by this friend for the first time. When he was about 20 the walkman came into vogue. He still sees himself sitting in the bus, "really enjoying the music within myself". Another friend brought him more into contact with classical music, mostly Bach – that friend read Hofstadter's book 'Gödel, Escher, Bach'. Reggae has always remained a fixture. It expresses Thomas's feelings – he

remembers that Midnite was a revelation on the Reggae Sundance festival, “there I saw them live for the first time, well there I stood listening to them a bit with tears in my eyes, I found it so amazing”. When he drives through the Swiss Alps with a friend during the holidays and they see a magnificent view, they put on a suitable reggae song. By now Thomas has a collection of over 13.000 reggae songs stored on the hard drive of his computer

In addition to this there are also stored several 100 ‘gems’ from other genres, because Thomas’s music taste is extremely broad. For instance he discovered Swedish folk music at a local international dance festival. Thomas almost always listens to music, anywhere and everywhere. He continues to discover new things, in which the radio plays an important role; just recently Mendelssohn’s ‘Wie der Hirsch schreit’. He also likes harder rock, but then mostly because it is technically impeccable, “I really enjoy people who are able to play their instrument better than average”. The thing Thomas absolutely abhors is ‘Dutch Oompah-pah’, schlager music. Because the half of the village he lived in listened to this he tried to appreciate it too but that never worked.

Thomas’s music collection encompasses some 30 cassettes from his past, seven of these were recorded by his father for him, for example Vivaldi’s *Four Season*. He had a lot of LPs but he got rid of those. He still has his fathers’ tape reel collection (but can’t play these – there is no tape recorder) and a diverse CD collection, in which among others Beethoven, Bach, Enigma, 3rd World, Blood Sweat & Tears, ‘Cats’ (the musical), Crosby Stills & Nash, John Denver, ZZ Top, and the Fugees. The heart of the collection is the computer. A separate hard drive is full of reggae, 184 folders (one for every artist): Burning Spear, Alpha Blondy, Desmond Dekker, Dutch-language ska-group Doe Maar, Midnite, Peter Tosh and the Swedish reggae band Svenska Akademien, just to name a few. On another hard drive the non-reggae is stored: among others Abba, The Beatles, Maria Callas, some 100 single hits, Pink Floyd and Santana.

Thomas goes to live concerts fairly little, they are expensive these days. When he was about 17, 18 he often went to local rock or jazz venues. Thomas enjoys going to free festivals such as the commemorative Liberation Festival. Thomas always has music on in the car. He hardly ever watches TV. Now and again he makes music himself, sometimes he plays together with his sister or with a friend, solely as a hobby and informally.

Thomas enjoys it that his children come into contact with music through him and then start to appreciate that for themselves; the same applies for the playing of musical instruments. He himself feels that his father played an important part in his musical upbringing, and that is repeating itself now.

21. Tarik

Tarik (49) grew up in Ankara. He is from a family in which music wasn't that important. There weren't any instruments in the house, they did listen to the radio and later to music on television. His parents listened to a lot of salsa, jazz and 'sanat' (Turkish classical music). He himself listened to the radio a lot in his room, stations from around the world. He remembers children's songs that were sung at home, and also the music that was played at weddings and other celebrations – singing, dancing, clapping – and the Islamic ritual music that his grandmother made at home with a couple of other women; he looked through a door that was ajar and saw sitting women singing, who kept repeating these short songs over and over. He really loved that, and also sees a link to the music that he makes himself now.

At primary school he had to play the melodica. That really wasn't something for him – he had no gift for melody and for a wind instrument. From about his 12th year he went to listen to symphony orchestra concerts on Sunday morning with his sister, something that was popular at that time among young people. Tarik still remembers it well: putting on handsome clothes, going to a magnificent concert hall, all those beautiful instruments, some unknown such as a harpsichord, music of which he didn't understand that much but which he did find marvellous.

Afterwards Tarik entered a period in which he danced a lot in discotheques. There was an international community in Ankara that went dancing in extraordinary clubs. At the end of his studies, and particularly during a stay of a year and a half in England, he became interested in jazz and Latin-American music. That was also the time he started to make music for the first time. The occasion was a concert of a band in which a conga player played a white conga. Tarik immediately fell in love with the instrument and the sound, and took lessons. Learning to make music didn't go smoothly – the first lessons were double Dutch to him, but through determination (something he learnt in sports among others things) he gradually built up his knowledge and skills.

After living in England he moved to Groningen, where his girlfriend originated from. He continued to study percussion: West-African (at the time a first-class Malian band was based in Groningen), Latin-American (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela), Brazilian, Middle-Eastern. Throughout the years he took lessons with over 30 teachers, among them big names such as Nippi Noya, Ray Baretto and Giovanni Hidalgo. In the beginning he shared a studio with a percussionist from whom he also learnt a lot. He started to play with musicians from different cultures, and because he is a sociable and reliable musician he began to play more and more, not just in the Netherlands but also in Belgium and Germany. He also started to teach, to children, adults, preschoolers and as a visiting teacher at conservatoires, amongst which in Rotterdam at the department of world percussion. Besides this, he does a lot of workshops for businesses and institutions, and he wrote a much-used teaching manual for djembe.

Since a couple of years Tarik also produces and compose his own music, and he is a DJ. He loves the combination of house with live music and for example plays with a top jazz trumpet player. Throughout the years he has started to become more uninhibited – since some eight years he doesn't 'think' anymore but is able to put his feelings and emotions into music directly and freely, without being constrained by the characteristics of the instrument or being dependant on traditions (where he is proficient in by the way). That for him also is the essence of music, something which every musician should aspire to: with music you want to express something. He also feels himself

to be an 'artist' more and more although he hesitates to use that word himself – he prefers the more plain 'music maker'.

His Turkish background doesn't really play a part in his work, except that Tarik feels that he is able to deal with 'strange' rhythms fairly easy because he heard a lot of Turkish irregular time signatures in his youth. He doesn't think of himself as very talented: he is a slow learner by his own account, needs time, but however retains very well what he has learnt. His experience is that not all of his teachers were able to respond to that – good musicians aren't always good teachers.

His music collection consists of cassettes (some 200, among which a lot of radio recordings), tape reels, LPs, CDs and MP3s on his computer. The collection is so large that it is located in several different places: at home, at his studio, and also in Turkey where his Turkish collection is mainly stored. He loves the LPs and 12" maxi-singles most; he uses them a lot for his DJ activities and feels that especially the basses on the maxi-singles are of superior quality. His music collection is very divers: Haitian house, the Fania All Stars, Errol Garner, Kitaro, Celia Cruz, David Sylvian, Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Black Coffee, it's all there.

Tarik listens to music an awful lot. He often goes to concerts, for example to the sessions with conservatoire students and teachers at jazz cafes, but also goes to modern dance performances regularly. In the car he plays a lot of music or he listens to the radio. Through the internet he can keep up with the newest developments; at the moment he is interested in South-African hiphouse.

22. Ursula

Ursula (38) came into contact with music at an early age. There was lots of singing at home, and her father, who was blind, was a musician. He played accordion, electronic organ, drums and mouthorgan, mostly in cafés in the Groningen inner city at a specific full-blown music street; now there is very little left of this. Her brother played drums. Her mother did not play music but did take care of everything for her father.

Ursula remembers that they listened to James Last a lot at home, and that as a child she wrote lyrics to the songs in her own way. When Ursula was a little older she regularly accompanied her father when he had to perform, and sometimes also sang some songs herself. When her father didn't play the instruments stood in the living room and the family lived in the kitchen, until at Ursula's 14th when they started to live in a bigger house with a separate music studio.

Ursula never had any music lessons. She did however go to a youth choir for a while where attention was paid to singing technique. At primary school no attention was paid to music, apart from a mini-playback show now and again; at secondary school there also weren't any music lessons. From her 11th onward Ursula participated in talent shows, in the city of Groningen, but also outside the city; many in Friesland but later also in Amsterdam, for example in the well-known artists cafe Shorts of London. She regularly won prizes and made a record at her 11th that was played a lot on the radio at the time and can still be heard now and again. After a while she stopped doing talent shows because she felt that the judging had little to do with singing and was based too much on outward appearances.

In her 20s, Ursula quit singing for quite some time due to personal circumstances, but blood will tell and from 2005 she started building up her career in music again, under the umbrella of an artists agency. She has released two singles, of which especially one does well, a song about what people go through, as Ursula says herself. A music video was made with it, and at the time of the interview the single has been the number 1 in a regional hit parade for weeks.

Ursula rehearses every week, new songs are being recorded, and in September 2011 her first full-blown CD will be released, with Dutch- and English-language material. The idea is to also put new recordings of old material on it. Ursula has to work hard to get the most out of her voice; stress takes its toll quickly on her voice, and together with her manager she's working on the creation of her own sound. Ursula performs live a couple of times a month, in smaller cafes but also at weddings. She sings a repertoire that she picks in consultation with her manager, new songs as well as covers. She really loves the repertoire from the 70s and 80s. Ursula thinks it is a pity that she isn't able to work much with genuine musicians and sings with tape accompaniment a lot, but that can't be helped; otherwise it's simply too expensive. But playing with genuine musicians really is the real thing.

Ursula's aim is to bring joy to her audience. If that happens, you can see this directly. Sometimes she brings people from the audience to tears – with her recent single there is always someone in the audience with tears in his eyes. Ursula says: "Everyone has a connection to that. When you think about yourself, then you think: Well, I can relate to that. My father, he is blind. That he would be able to see how I look just for a brief moment, see how I'm doing, well, that then is that song for me again." On one occasion Ursula burst into tears herself too when she had to sing the song a song about her mother.

Together with her manager Ursula still hopes to achieve a break-through. As an artist you have to have a hit that is played a lot only once, the fame and the earnings that such a hit generate can help you find the way to the top as an artist. Such a break-through is more easily to achieve when you have a lot of money, because you have to pay for everything, but step by step Ursula does hope to reach it. But entertaining the audience properly that has to come before everything else.

Ursula thinks the music scene is tough now. Some artists don't give each other the time of day, and many artists nowadays think very highly of themselves while they aren't very good at all, all things considered. Lots of singers improve their limited vocal qualities by way of technical tricks in the studio, but live they show their true colors. That is the reason why Ursula rehearses so much – she wants to be able to deliver the same thing live as on her CDs. Ursula doesn't go along with the competitive undercurrent; she gives everyone space, if she is able to arrange something for a fellow musicians than she won't fail to do so. Her father tells her sometimes that she works in the wrong period in time, and Ursula does agree with that, in the past there was more solidarity. Ursula doesn't like it when artists withdraw themselves amongst their own, she herself prefers to be with her audience.

Ursula listens to music an awful lot, often to CDs or to older cassettes. She loves Elvis Presley, Connie Francis, Dutch schlager singer André Hazes – she has Hazes' complete oeuvre on CD, the first CD she ever had was also by Hazes. The repertoire on cassette is very varied, for example there is also hip-hop amongst it and older German-language music; and in the car she regularly listens to Bob Marley. She also listens to the radio a lot. On television she often watches a Dutch-language music channel and also VH1 Classic with music from the 70s to the 90s. She thinks programmes such as Idols are rather funny but she has the impression that it revolves a lot around favoritism and is mainly aimed at younger artists. She likes a lot of music from the past because real instruments were used there, now you often hear more synthesizers. With her manager she sometimes thinks about doing a song in which a gospel- or shanty choir would sing along, but this is hard to organize as yet.

Ursula is glad to see that her three-year-old son has inherited her feeling for music – music makes one happy after all.

23. Vincent

Vincent (50) grew up in Drachten. His father played music regularly, sentimental songs, accordionist John Woodhouse, sometimes also slightly risqué songs. His mother followed his father in her musical tastes. His four years older sister played a lot of pop music: Ten Years After, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, the Golden Earring, Donovan, the Eagles. Instruments were not played; later a son of his stepmother (his own mother died when he was 14) did play the accordion, they had a background where it was more common to make music at weddings and parties. Vincent found it “a little entertaining but not really good”.

At primary school children’s songs were sung. Vincent remembers a teacher from the 3rd/4th/5th grade who did a lot of things with music and played the violin himself. Vincent liked this, just as the musical show in the final year – although he had to stand at the back because he could not sing. From secondary school Vincent remembers little about the music lessons. Sometimes a music lesson was taught, occasionally a concert was attended, but that was that. Partly the music teachers were to blame, they were of little inspiration; partly the age of the students was to blame. Laughing: “If they could bully a teacher they could not resist this of course.” He does remember seeing the Rocky Horror Show, which was amazing, when they went on a school trip to London.

Around his 14th Vincent began to listen more actively to music, in the beginning to records of his sister. Around his 15th of 16th he bought his first own records and also started to make his own cassette tapes. During this period he also organized discos in the holidays when he was staying with family in the Frisian countryside. When he was 16 he had his first summer holiday job, he did not buy the customary moped but a stereo set. Important for the broadening of his musical taste was his stepbrother, who built loud-speakers and listened to different music than Vincent. Also of influence was the Surinamese friend of the sister of a friends. Also through friends he came into contact with new music. From his 16th he read music magazine ‘Oor’ (‘Ear’), through which he arrived at Captain Beefheart for instance – where at first he doubted if he played it at the right speed. And also he dove into reggae.

When punk sprang up he became interested in it, it was fresh new music. But after a while the freshness disappeared; then he became, also on the advice of a record shop in Leeuwarden, interested in avant-garde jazz. After having pursued further secondary education for a while Vincent started to work in nursing, and he also got training in nursing. For a brief period he took saxophone lessons but by his own reckoning had too little time and talent to continue with this. He did however start to attend concerts more actively; he remembers a concert of Ras Michael and the Sons of Negus, reggae with lots of roots. At his 20th he went to a festival abroad for the first time, he heard among others Evan Parker and Fred Frith.

In the years after this he kept on listening to music intensively and he was also always on the lookout for new musical experiences. Some of these experiences were very intense. One of his fellow students played the Ravi Shankar side from George Harrison’s ‘Concert for Bangladesh’, he loved this but did not search for Indian music actively (yet). And on his 19th he went to North Sea Jazz with a friend for the first time. When they walked back to the house where they were staying in The Hague they heard music all of a sudden in the nighttime from a house that Vincent loved immediately – it was soul, he recognized it by what he had read about it. And therefore he started to buy soul records. Vincent describes these experiences as a kind of epiphany.

About some 10 years ago Vincent started to get really interested in Indian music. Step by step he widened his experiences: after Ravi Shankar he tried music by the flute player Hariprasad Chaurasia, and then a duo, and in this way he slowly got sucked into Indian music. After he had missed an Indian musical festival in Brussels because a girlfriend did not want to go in the end, he went to a festival in India (Ahmedabad, Ghujarat) himself. It was a wonderful experience: 13 days in a foreign culture, talking to people, four to six concerts every day. When he returned the music resonated in his head for another six weeks. Listening to Indian music leads to surprising experiences: seeing colors while listening to music, but also the time he was at a concert of the Sabri Brothers where he saw the whole band rise up in a purple glow: "Of course they are not really rising up but I did see this, apparently it is something that happens, it is simply beautiful." A little over two years ago Vincent started organizing Indian concerts in Groningen with a friend, starting from the idea that this music brought him so much that he wanted to give something back.

Vincent has an extensive music collection: 5300 CDs and about 2800 LPs and maxi-singles. They are organized by genre, often by subgenre within this, by artist, and sometimes by instrument. His entire collection sits in a database on the computer so he can find what he has. He almost never listens to music on the internet. At the very least he goes to a concert once a week, very varied. Now and again he goes abroad, for example to India again for a music festival. He listens to music a lot at home, also in the car and on his iPod when he cycles. He watches almost no TV, he also listens little to the radio: "I have so much music myself."

Vincent has a lot of music. The main classification system of his collection of CDs gives an impression: Indian, jazz, opera, pop, country, folk, soul/R&B/gospel, funk/disco, hip-hop/rap, dance/techno, world music, organ music, electronic/avant-garde music, reggae, classical. Nevertheless he does not describe himself as a collector: he likes to listen to good music but he does not have to have everything and certainly not the originals. Vincent does not like Dutch-language schlager music, "I really hate the real schmaltzy songs" (although a lot of soul songs are tear-jerkers actually, he concedes; but "if it is borderline I do like it"), and also does not like overly loud hard rock.

He describes his development as a listener as a combination of a very good musical memory – what he has heard he always recognizes, he talks about "the library in my head" – and a great curiosity. The source of this lies in his puberty he thinks, in which he was particularly open to the comfort music gave him after the death of his mother. Once a month he gathers with a group of four friends and one of them initiates the others in a specific type of music or a special piece.

He describes music as a combined play, not just of musicians but also of musicians with the listener. "Whether music is played sincerely and passionately, I think I can indeed hear that, and it does not matter at all if it is electronic music or improvisation." Vincent likes variety: at one moment an organ concert in a church, at the next an electronic concert, "and if something is not immediately beautiful but it feels interesting, then I will listen to it again, and again".

24. Wilco

Wilco (53) is from a family in which music was of great importance. Although few children's songs were sung at home, Wilco's father played in the local wind orchestra (just as cousins and neighbors) and also filled positions on the orchestra society's board. His mother could sing beautifully but sang little at home. Wilco heard his father practice on several instruments (tuba, clarinet, baritone saxophone), the wind orchestra was talked about a lot and Wilco also regularly went along to concerts. When he was seven he started to play the clarinet because there was a need for clarinets, and two years later he played along in the wind orchestra. He remembers that the wind orchestra played Sinterklaas songs when Sinterklaas arrived in the local harbor, and also that he went from class to class in primary school to play songs on his clarinet – the reason why he knows so few lyrics to children's songs is that he mostly played them instead of sang them. At home a lot of music was also played – primarily James Last and Montovani-type music, pleasant enough but with little 'depth'.

Of primary school Wilco remembers being taught to play the recorder – not really making music, he feels, but more like being taught to play as a robot and that sound can be made if one blows on a tube with holes in it while one puts his fingers in a certain position. When Wilco went to secondary school very quickly the choice was made for the secondary school of the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague – ordinary subjects until 12.30, afterwards every day music related subjects such as theory, choir, solfeggio, clarinet lessons, general musical training, music history. You learnt a lot because the people there were also studying music intensively, the environment educates you. At his 13th Wilco went to play in a street symphony orchestra, after that in a national youth orchestra, and there followed a period of playing gigs during his studies.

In his youth Wilco was not very interested in pop music. In the period he went to secondary school he developed an interest in the music of Bartók and Stravinsky, later followed also by jazz-rock and fusion: Chick Corea, the Mahavishnu Orchestra. Very soon Wilco started to compose music himself also – he sees composing as an interesting puzzle. He had already composed a piece for a well-known acoustic instrumental band once, and when he finished his studies at the conservatoire the leader of the group asked him if he wanted to compose for his new group. Wilco became a member of this group, he helped compose the group compositions and group scores and toured with the group for four years (he played clarinet, keyboard and percussion among other things).

A short while after he stopped playing in the group, he won a audition as a clarinet player in a professional symphony orchestra, where he still plays in. Wilco believes the orchestra is doing things right, in particular those last ten years – it has grasped what it needs to do and does this well. It is not just about the playing of the symphonic repertoire but also for example about the children's concerts, of which Wilco was a founder, and also about big box-office draws such as Pink Floyd-, Queen- and Beatles-programmes and annual free open air concerts. Wilco feels this is also a self-evident task for an orchestra which is supported by all taxpayers together. He thinks that it is still a challenge to find the right format, how to reach an audience and with what. The Armin van Buren-programme was not a success for instance according to him –it is the A-B-C of music, he thinks, and we do not get on to D-E-F sadly enough, and the question is what the audience actually hears. "Sad. Pathetic even."

Wilco listens relatively little to music, the essence of music is in the playing of music for him. He also thinks that he, as a musician, listens differently than people who do not make music actively; he has read a study in which was shown that musicians use different parts of the brain than non-musicians while listening to music. When Wilco listens to music, he wants to be able to concentrate fully on the music; music as a background does not work for him. He has a varied CD collection together with his wife, who is also a musician; recently he bought jazz CDs to replace his jazz record collection.

For his musical education Wilco thinks it was of great importance that from the beginning the starting point was playing music together. Listening to how others play, listening to what the conductor wants, discovering the role of your instrument in the structure of the piece – learning by doing was how he learnt to play. For him the essence of most instruments is then also the playing of music together – also individual instrumental teaching should be focused on this. “A melodic instrument is only fun when one is making music with a couple of others, one learns the most that way in my opinion. When one does not hear anything except one’s own notes, well ...” And for him the choice for the clarinet was not a very conscious one; he is not focused solely on the clarinet and also not on playing solo, playing in an orchestra is marvelous for him, that he does this while playing the clarinet is a matter of minor importance to him.

Wilco is very worried by the current cultural climate, in which music is seen as an unimportant peripheral phenomenon, schools of music disappear, cultural and musical organizations are struggling, and music at school has largely disappeared. For him learning to understand the structures of music, learning to listen analytically, are of the utmost importance to human development – making music is on par with the visual arts, the writing of literature, or doing research; all of them activities where creativity is central to. But talking about music, about what music in essence is, that is difficult. The only thing one can probably say about music is that someone is doing it.

25. Xandra

Xandra (48) comes from a family in which making music actively did not play a big role. Her father used to play the mouth organ well but from home Xandra remembers mostly that he always whistled songs. They listened to Glenn Miller (the music from Xandra's parents youth), but also to Dutch artists as Nico Haak and Ria Valk. From TV she remembers music shows, game shows and humorous plays. At the Summerhill¹⁷ primary school lots of music was made, she remembers learning to play the recorder; mostly by ear, she did not feel like learning musical notation. By nature Xandra was shy, in group discussion she did not say much but through music she was able to express herself nevertheless; that is why she was on stage quite regularly at the weekly closing assemblies, and she also remembers regularly following the drum band when it came round, and that she imitated singers in front of the mirror.

Xandra's father died when she was 12, from that moment on her mother was a single parent. Her mother took care that the children always had a 'young people's cultural pass', for instance they went to hear Dutch acoustic instrumental group Flairck and guitarist Harry Sacksioni. After her 12th birthday she discovered pop music more and more. She remembers her eldest sister – Xandra had two sisters and one brother – started watching Top of the Pops when she was around 13 years old, she was too young for that at first. When she was ready for pop music she made a conscious decision not follow to the mainstream: everybody listened to Abba, she listened to Status Quo.

She also discovered other music: Neil Young, the Moody Blues, Pink Floyd. She went to concerts at the youth centre, hearing Dutch bands as Gruppo Sportivo, Jan Akkerman, and Moluccan bands, and discovered a way of life in which music was part of a much larger youth culture. She still sees herself and her contemporaries as members of a 'lost generation': raised with lots of ideals of freedom and responsibility, in a time in which there was a great deal of good quality on offer, but they wound up in a culture mostly evolving around money and achievements.

At secondary school music lessons were given but these were childish and formal. Xandra was always singing herself, mostly for herself – under the shower, at the beach, she was always singing. But only at her 17th she joined a band. A friend played the guitar, and together with another guitarist they formed a band which played folksy music in the streets – covers and their own songs – successfully. Right from the start she received compliments about her voice, and, she says, that has ultimately led her to pursuing a vocal education. But singing also changed her as a person: she became stronger, less shy, and more prone to talking.

Her journey to jazz started when she had a friend who listened to jazz-rock. She could not make heads or tails of it, but through listening to it a lot she began to value it ultimately. It was a big transition, from Crosby Stills Nash & Young to Blood Sweat & Tears. It is a process which has to do with maturing but also with habituation – training the ears to hear beauty in something, but also with the letting in of emotions. That maturation never comes to an end.

Only at her 27th – Xandra was working in health care in the mean time – did she go to the conservatoire. She knew a guitarist who studied there and who took care that she learned to sing a couple of jazz-standards. From then her voyage of discovery through jazz set on, which she describes by way of the singers she studied: from Joni Mitchell and Carly Simon through Billie

¹⁷ In the Netherlands these types of schools are called 'Jenaplan'.

Holiday and Dinah Washington to Elis Regina and Flora Purim. But she also appreciates many others singers, amongst others Dutch cabaret singers Jenny Arean and Toon Hermans. Songs which tell a story, that is becoming more and more important to her.

Since her time at the conservatoire she is working in music fulltime. For 12 years she sang in a female musical cabaret group, she teaches, conducts workshops, leads jazz sessions, and performs in many different ensembles. She finds that the times are more difficult – people invest less in music, the demand for workshops is declining for example. Jazz and Latin are her great loves but she has developed a more attentive ear: she thought in her puberty that Abba was terrible, now she appreciates many of their songs, and she can also appreciate the musical cleverness of Dutch language singer Nico Haak. And she describes her love of jazz and Latin as continuations of her folksy start but as something more intellectual – it is still about freedom.

Professionally Xandra listens to music a lot – repertoire for her students and for herself – but in her spare time she prefers silence mostly. During the holidays she listens more; for instance in the car, one can do little else than listening and watching the landscape, therefore one listens quite intensely. Her musical collection contains cassettes – which she does not listen to any more but does not want to part with – and LPs, about 500; the record player is waiting to be reconnected. Furthermore lots of CDs and lots of music on her laptop, this is becoming the central spot for the musical collection more and more. Xandra watches little music on TV, she does have a collection of music DVDs, ranging from Woodstock to Anita O’Day.

Xandra does not go to live concerts a lot – she performs so much herself and is happy to be able to be home too. Every week she goes to listen to a concert at the start of a session in a local jazz cafe, and travels regularly to New York, where she goes to see a concert every night. “Seven concerts in seven days; that is quite enough again for six months,” she says.

26. Yuri

The earliest memory of Yuri (26) is the LP 'Amahl and the Night Visitors' which his parents played. In particular he remembers that one of the three kings in the story was black – that made quite an impression. Yuri heard a lot of music in his youth, nowadays he often recognizes a lot of music which he also heard in his youth. His father played a lot of Janis Joplin, The Beatles, Tiny Tim. His mother liked Billy Joel. A lot of classical music was also played: Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Percy Grainger. In church Yuri heard a lot of music, amongst others Haydn of course.

At Yuri's home a lot of music was made actively. Everybody (Yuri had two brothers and two sisters, he was the youngest brother but one) sang in the church choir, Yuri's father sang tenor and played the trombone and guitar (although Yuri heard this infrequently – his father being away a lot due to his work), his brother played piano and church organ, one of his sisters played the flute, and his younger brother played the bass drum in the school orchestra for a while. All this music also brought him many memories; Yuri turned the pages of the church organ music for his eldest brother and while doing this heard a lot of interesting music, among which Messiaen.

At primary school there were music lessons but these did not amount to much – his brother said that he himself could teach these much better than the music teacher. There was a school choir, but the level was not very high – for the audition Yuri had to sing 'Happy Birthday'. At secondary school music was not taught, however there was a school orchestra in which many fellow students played; a lot of Copland and Sousa was played, and also Orff, all of which Yuri does not like.

Yuri himself only started to play music from his eighth: 'horrible pop' from the early 90s such as TLC and Boys II Men. He became a fan of Weird Al Yankovic, and stayed a fan until now, of him he has a large collection of CDs. He became acquainted with a lot of music through the parodies of Weird Al as a first source. He also heard a lot of music through his brothers and sisters: Prince, Britney Spears, Hanson. Around 1996 he heard Godsmack for the first time, he was deeply impressed – never before did he hear someone use his voice in this way. He also listened to Coolio, Eminem, Aerosmith.

At his 16th the family moved – without his father, his parents had divorced in the meantime – to the Netherlands, his mother got a job as a researcher. Yuri went to the international school. During this time he listened a lot to Mad'house, Michael Jackson, the Isley brothers – the lyrics struck him as hilarious. After secondary school Yuri had to choose between studying mathematics or going to art academy. He chose to go to art academy. At the art academy he listened to Frank Zappa, Nick Cave, System of a Down and other (less interesting) metal, and indie-pop such as Bright Eyes and Neutral Milk Hotel.

Towards the end of art academy he decided to convert his graphic work, which often had a mathematical basis, into his own compositions. Since then he has studied the modern composers: Schnittke, Bloch, Stockhausen, Ligeti, Xenakis, Lutoslawski, Kurtag, Vivier, Partch (one of his favorites) and much later also Adams, Cage, Reich and Glass. For his current project he also got acquainted with a lot of less well-known composers: Henry Kimball Hadley, Barry Guy, Arrigo Barnabé en Fausto Romitelli for example. Incidentally when Yuri is in the middle of a composition he often only listens to his own music.

Yuri writes music which is very difficult to perform. When he was working on a score with his eldest brother, his brother said that the music caused him brain damage. Yuri demands a lot of musicians: rhythmically playing 19 over 47 for example. Yuri describes himself as a 'maximalist', and finds it interesting when musicians are pushed to the limit. One of the female singers in his opera compared Britten's 'War Requiem' to a children's song when compared to Yuri's work. As a composer Yuri also pushes himself to the limit, which sometimes leads to a month long monomaniacal preoccupation with one composer, and also of the listener he demands an extreme effort.

Yuri's music collection consists of CDs, a couple of LPs (which he is not able to play at the moment) and lots of music on his computer. His CD collection is not put in any specific order, and comprises amongst others Zappa, Aerosmith, Sleepy Jackson, The Liars, Lutoslawski, Adams, Ligeti, Purcell, Glass, Coolio, Berlioz, Berio, Zemlinsky, Nick Cave, Henze, Sousa, Berg, Enescu, De Falla, Stockhausen and Weird Al Yankovic. On his computer Yuri has a large collection of music. He buys a lot but also downloads regularly, sometimes to listen if something is good, after listening to it once he then deletes it again – he is for instance happy that he listened to Agnes Obel on the computer and that he did not invest money in her. There is also music which Yuri absolutely cannot listen to or watch (what a musician looks like and how they behave is of importance to Yuri's appreciation of their music). Lady Gaga is an example of this. Yuri's father believed that really good artists did not concern themselves with video clips but played live. Yuri disagrees with his father in this but the comment has stuck in his memory nonetheless.

Yuri goes to live concerts regularly. He mentions for instance Ralph van Raat who played Jonathan Harvey at the local performing arts festival, a concert of Weird Al ten years ago, concerts of Ray Charles and Better Than Ezra. He goes to concerts regularly in local rock venues, just recently to Jan Klug/Kaspar van Hoek, and he went to the Fluxus-day at the Rietveld Arts Academy. Sometimes concerts are less interesting: the commemorative 'Liberation Festival' in Groningen for instance, of a recent concert of Orff's 'Carmina Burana'. He remembers with pleasure a live performance of Beethoven's violin concerto.

The most impressive piece of music he knows is Ligeti's opera 'Le Grand Macabre'. But also hearing his own music performed live is an amazing experience for him. The worst musical experience is listening to Fork in the Blender – nobody knows them, and this is just as well. Also the music of Grieg – except 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' – he thinks of as bad, or at any rate: it provides him with a bad experience. "But", Yuri says, "I also do not like sugar."

27. Zina

The earliest memory of Zina (48) is of her mother singing children's songs for her. Her mother had six children and sang with them a lot – Dutch songs and songs in the Groningen dialect. Some songs were very old, her mother had learnt them from her parents who in turn learnt them from their parents. Her mother was member of a choir and also sang that repertoire at home. A lot of psalms and hymns were also sung, and before bedtime a little prayer. Her father also sang a lot, she remember that this was a different repertoire. Music was also made at home. Her father played the trombone, on Sundays he went to the store above which the family lived to practice the trombone, when it was dinnertime her mother knocked on the balcony with a pole. For Zina the sound of the trombone and the sound of wind bands is strongly connected to her youth. At special occasions her father also played the trombone in church.

They mostly listened to Christian music and classical music: Vivaldi, Bach, Beethoven, Strauss. She remembers how compelling she found the symphonic poem 'Der Fremersberg' by Miloslav Koennemann. Sometimes they also listened to the radio. When they listened to live music this often was a wind band, choir or classical music. Furthermore Zina remembers the music of her South Moluccan neighbours which she heard as a small child. The fact that she is now interested in the music which for example asylum seekers bring with them she thinks harks back to that early experience.

At kindergarten there was a lot of singing. At primary school Zina joined the children's choir. From the age of eight she took a couple of recorder lessons, after that she took church organ lessons – at home they had a harmonium. But when Zina moved from Groningen to a smaller village at her 13th, she stopped making music actively; she did not like the harmonium, and she sometimes found the choir too large, too overwhelming.

Towards the end of primary school Zina started to listen to the radio and sing along with the songs. Gradually she discovered non-Christian music: Abba, BZN, the Cats, Al Stewart, the Bee Gees. Through boyfriends she discovered new music also, such as ELO and the Dire Straits. Fairly late she started buying her own LPs, particularly when she met her future husband and got a record player from him with a stack of LPs, then she started to put on music herself often. When Zina had children she again sang a lot with them also. Zina sings a lot anyway, actually she catches herself humming music which fits with her mood of the moment all the time.

Her musical perspective has broadened enormously during her life. At home classical and religious music was played mostly. If something else was played on the radio her parents quickly asked for something different to be put on. She was, so she says, raised in a complete Dutch reformed world (something which was particular to her family, other families were more open in this respect), and she gradually started to look 'beyond the walls', also because she started to understand English better and started to pay more attention to the lyrics. Through her five children, who are all very much into music, she comes into contact with a lot of new music, Christian pop music as well as for example DJ Tiesto or rap. She also listens to commercial pop radio regularly.

For Zina music has the power to evoke the past vividly. For the psalms and hymns this also has to do with the translation. Zina learnt them in the old translation, and although she sings them in church now in the new translation she finds that she always spontaneously sings them in the

archaic old version, “that still is the language of your heart”. Also in the past one sang more slowly, and higher. The religious repertoire has changed and has increased in size very much, for example with the incorporation of the ‘Opwekkingsliederen’¹⁸ in the repertoire used in church. Zina thinks this is a positive phenomenon but also feels that tradition must be preserved, also to give elderly people a home.

Songs plays an important role in Zina’s faith. Singing is worshiping God, at the moment of singing God is at work in a person. Through singing, Zina stays conscious of the fact that she does not live for herself but for God, that she has a relationship with Him, and that she has Him to thank for everything. This makes her happy as a result of which she automatically starts to sing – the one is strongly connected to the other. But also at sad occasions, such as funerals, singing together is an important source of faith and comfort.

Nowadays the computer plays the most important role in listening to music. Zina looks up a lot of music on YouTube and sometimes she posts links to music that appeals to her on her Facebook page. When she wants to listen to music a bit longer she listens to the radio sometimes or to CDs but often she also listens to a YouTube playlist on her computer. She watches little television, and also music DVDs are not very important to her; you watch them once and then you have seen it all. She still has her LP collection and she is not going to give them away, but there isn’t a working record player in the house, which isn’t a bad thing: almost all the music from the past can be found on YouTube.

Nowadays Zina goes to live concerts regularly. In church and through the church she hears a lot of music, and now the children have grown she also ventures further afield. In September for example the whole family is going to a concert of Jesus Culture in Amsterdam. They do not do this very often, because concerts are expensive.

Zina’s CD collection contains a lot of Christian music but also classical music and pop music. Classical CDs are for example CDs with Mozart’s French horn concertos or Tchaikovsky’s ‘Nutcrackers’ Suite’. Her pop collection is diverse and contains for example Agnetha Fältskog, Celine Dion, Marco Borsato, BZN, Marc Knopfler, ELO, Andrea Bocelli, Dutch singer Conny Vandebos, Phil Collins and Era. Her Christian collection is large: Hillsong-CDs, Trinity, Casting Crowns, Brian Doerksen, Michael W. Smith, Chris Tomlin, Kees Kraayenoord, Matt Redman, Kari Jobe, Tim Hughes and many more. Moreover there is also the collection of her husband, who for example has a lot of church organ music, in particular of organist Martin Mans.

In the past there was a strict separation between ‘music-for-Sundays’ and ‘music-for-the-rest-of-the-week’. That division has more or less disappeared, though Zina would not listen to ELO or DJ Tiesto readily on a Sunday.

¹⁸ A specific repertoire of songs of praise.

28. Charles

Charles (29) was born into a Surinamese-Javanese family in a provincial town in Groningen. His parents listened to what Charles sees as the predecessors of the urban genre, such as the Jackson 5. Besides this they listened to Surinamese-Javanese music too but because Charles was not proficient in the language he could not relate to it much.

Active making music did not happen within the family. Charles says that he also, despite his dancing talent, has got no talent for making music. He cannot sing and does not play an instrument; on the piano he only knows the difference between high and low but “learning to read musical notation – forget it”. He does regret this, he would have liked to learn it. When he was 15 he wanted to learn to play the guitar through a cousin but he had too little time because he was engaged with dancing so much. A little bit after his 20th Charles did become successful as a rapper for some time – he could even be seen on MTV and TMF – but his heart was not in it, so he quit. At present there is a guitar in the house, but he does not do anything with it.

Until around his 10th Charles did not have a specific musical taste: he liked nearly everything, except for the Dutch-language schlager for instance. After his 10th a period of musical awakening started, ultimately he became an R&B listener mostly. Michael Jackson played an important part in this; the song ‘Smooth Criminal’ was the first song about which he thought: “This is really beautiful”, and Charles still calls him one of his great heroes, besides MC Hammer, Usher and John Legend. He also listened to rap, but not the harsher version of for instance 50 Cent or Tupac, although he can appreciate the realism in the lyrics sometimes – he describes them as ‘sentimental songs for rappers’. However he listened to quite a broad spectrum, also to mellow house for instance.

He does not remember anything from the music lessons at primary school. At secondary school Charles did find the music lessons interesting: one learnt where music came from, how for example the blues was the start of the history of pop music, and what the relationship between the blues and slavery was. That was knowledge which stuck to him. At his 15th Charles began dancing hip-hop. He danced to Puff Daddy, Mase, LL Cool J. Since that time urban changed: it has become harsher and more explicit, and that change is still continuing. At secondary school Charles was one of the trendsetters – lots of what he did was subsequently copied by others.

After secondary school Charles went to several different schools, but those all offered him just a part of what he wanted to learn: start a gym or something of that kind. At his 21st he started his own urban dancing academy. It became a success: it is the most popular urban dancing academy in Groningen, among other things because they continued to professionalize themselves and also paid attention to training new dance teachers constantly. With his own dance group Charles made it to the semi-finals of one of the editions of ‘Holland’s Got Talent’.

The urban world is characterized by Charles as a quite closed off world. He does not participate in this himself, he is more open than many other people, he also interacts with people outside the urban culture, and he is also much more verbal than a lot of lovers of urban.

Charles goes to concerts regularly, just recently to John Legend in Amsterdam – profound lyrics, “entertainers are truly artists”. His music collection consists of CDs and MP3s stored on his computer. In principle he rarely plays his CDs, because he transferred everything to his computer.

His CD collection encompasses among other things TLC, Jay-Z, Harry Potter sound tracks, Madonna, Rappers Zonder Naam ('Rappers Without a Name'), Usher, Michael Jackson, Justin Timberlake, Santana, John Legend, Josh Stone, Notorious BIG, Black Eyed Peas, a CD with tranquillizing music, Alicia Keys, and Adele. Not just urban then – Charles's taste is broader, and for example in the mixes he makes for his dance choreographies he uses a lot of movie sound tracks. He does not save all his mixes, even though is it labor-intensive work to make them – just the well-turned out ones are saved by him.

Besides the music from his CDs Charles also uses a lot of music from friends' CDs, and he downloads a lot, also a lot of the music he uses is not obtainable through regular channels – the more original the music he uses in choreography, the higher the show will be appraised. He uses a lot of sound tracks in his mixes, because these are a reference points for many people. But except for work related music Charles also listens to other things: classical music now and again, jazz regularly, and also soothing New Age music to regain his breath in his hectic life.

In the mean time Charles has quit dancing himself and only teaches two lessons a week, the rest of his energies are put into the running of his dancing academy, the business side as well as the managerial side.

29. Lou¹⁹

Lou (65) still remembers well the first time he was deeply moved by music. When he was in the third or fourth grade of primary school, at the end of the 50s, he heard music he had never ever heard before at the Mayfair on the central square in Groningen. It turned out to be rock 'n' roll: Little Richard, Elvis Presley, Fats Domino. At that time one heard classical music and 'light' music such as that of Dutch singer/guitarist Eddy Christiani on the radio, at primary school one received a lesson on classical music every 2 or 3 months ("which you were supposed to like"), therefore this was new: "I don't know how this came about but I really loved this music." Once he was able to buy records himself and owned a small record player (sometimes he also built small record players out of Meccano, a little motor, some cardboard) he started to buy that music himself.

His father, who played cornet in a wind orchestra and who had a good musical ear, did not think much of the musical tastes of his son. His mother, who sang in a choir, however encouraged Lou, and in 1959 Lou took guitar lessons offered by a local music shop, from which he also rented a guitar. His older brother also encouraged him: he helped him to figure out the English lyrics and also gave constructive criticism on his music making. Lou's love of rock 'n' roll was revolutionary; he remembers that in first grade of technical school pupils were allowed to bring records to school and that his choice for rock 'n' roll was rather unusual but that it did strike a chord with his fellow pupils.

Lou took guitar lessons briefly, after which he picked out the music he wanted to play from hearing. In 1960 he formed a band, The Rocking Tigers, with guys from the neighborhood. His first performance was when he was 14 years old in 1961, and after winning the second prize in a talent show of some kind afterwards they moved from one thing to another; in 1962 they already played in Germany regularly. The money they earned was invested in instruments and equipment which still was very expensive in those days; all members worked a day job, also Lou. He had left school when he turned 14 and worked as an assistant dental technician. He did this fulltime for six years, afterwards two years part-time still, but it became harder and harder to combine his job with his musical activities and in 1967 he quit as a dental technician and he became a fulltime musician. Which he stayed for the rest of his life, with ups and downs – sometimes a supplementary benefit was needed, also sometimes he was able to get by easily.

Lou played in numerous, and very different, bands and also did a lot of session work. After The Rocking Tigers he played in or with among others The Tykes, The Human Orchestra, Cuby and the Blizzards/Harry Muskee, Nina Hagen, Phoney and the Hardcore, Quincy Dence Band, Lia Ona Band, Solution, Herman Brood – and many many others. Besides blues and rock Lou played and still plays jazz regularly, for example with saxophone player Jenne Meinema. He plays bass guitar mostly, but also guitar regularly (electric and acoustic), and he sings. He hardly ever writes songs, and he mainly sings in English although he recently released a song in the local dialect called "Facebook"²⁰ – songs in the dialect do well on local and regional radio and TV. Lou also regularly contributes to recordings for other singers. He plays at very diverse locations, also for example in intimate music cafe 'Café Marleen', at anniversaries and at benefit concerts.

¹⁹ On special request of the interviewee, Lou Leeuw, this portrait has not been anonymized.

²⁰ 'Facebook' in the Groninger dialect.

Even after his 65th he is still going strong; lots of musicians of this age are plagued by physical ailments, and also drink and drugs have taken their toll on some of them, but Lou does not do the latter and as long as it is possible he will continue playing. Lou is unable to put into words exactly what makes certain music so good. Certain music is fun without one being touched, other music touches one immediately because the sound of the guitar or the drums or the piano appeals to one or because it is a catchy tune.

Lou's music collection consists of LPs (amongst them a lot of LPs on which he plays himself), CDs, tape recordings and cassettes. Everything can still be played, and he also listens to the radio a lot and uses the internet to search for songs. On tape and cassette he has a lot of radio recordings with special music from the past; however he hardly ever uses these, a lot of what he is looking for is easily found on the internet nowadays. Lou listens to different things: lots of pop from the 50s to the 80s, but also newer pop, jazz and, only occasionally, classical music. His collection contains for example John Mayall, Little Richard, Conway Twitty, Roger Chapman, Pink Floyd, the Pretty Things, the Rolling Stones and Bertolf.

Besides playing with famous musicians such as Herman Brood, Harry Muskee and Nina Hagen, Lou looks back with lots of satisfaction on two big parties: when he celebrated his 40th anniversary as a musician, and recently when he turned 65. At his 40th anniversary his colleagues organized a big party in a café – he was picked up by limousine, welcomed by many fellow musicians and they played music the whole night. At that occasion he received a large piece by well-known Groningen painter Christof Beukema, “De Nachtwacht van Groningen”, which was revealed by the mayor. He organized his party for his 65th himself, he invested his first old age pensioner's benefit in it. Lots of musicians came to play, and approximately 600 people came to the venue – enough to break even, enough to at least pay the musicians who came to play pro-bono a little something, and enough to present Café Marleen with a small amplifier for their musical evenings.

30. Yolanda

Yolanda (37) grew up with Dutch-language music. Her parents played famous Dutch artists such as Johnny Hoes, the Zangeres Zonder Naam ('Singer Without a Name'), Manke Nelis ('Gammy Nelis'), the Sneeuwbaltrio ('Snowball Trio'), the Havenzangers ('Harbor Singers') and Rika Jansen at home; they watched Dutch-language music shows on television, and also her grandmother was a big fan. Also childhood friends listened to the same music. Yolanda's father played accordion now and again, and also an aunt played accordion. Yolanda remembers her playing Sinterklaas songs, and how nice and pleasant this was.

Yolanda remembers how she as a four- or five-year-old went to a local concert venue with her grandmother and her sister to a Dutch-language music festival; her father got tickets through his work but didn't go himself. There she saw all the big names of the genre: Arne Jansen, Corry Konings, Ria Valk. She remembers pointing out Arne Jansen ("He stood there near the doorway just going about his own business") to a friend. Her friend did not believe it was him therefore Yolanda simply went up to Arne, who liked it that he was recognized. One time she went to a party by singer Ard Eggen unannounced together with her grandmother. They were admitted and stood among his family and friends; then you realize that artists also are quite ordinary people, Yolanda says.

From kindergarten Yolanda remembers the musical games and songs. At primary school Yolanda received recorder lessons in her class, but she found it difficult. Also lots of songs were sung, she participated in playback shows and sound mix shows, but, she says, "nothing came of it". At secondary school she received music lessons for a little while, she remembers that the lessons were about The Beatles, Tiffany – they listened to their songs and they wrote about them. Yolanda liked that, everything that had to do with the making of music was of interest to her. During puberty Yolanda also focused somewhat on English-language pop music but her heart always stayed with Dutch-language music.

Yolanda very often listens to music: when she's cleaning, when she is sad or happy, there is always fitting music to listen to. She knows two artists personally and they have become friends actually and are very important to her, she listens to them every day. But she also listens to other artists a lot. Arne Jansen is one of her heroes, she especially loves the spontaneity and vitality he exuded in his live performances, and how he involved the audience in his shows. She also thinks contemporary singer Jannes is marvelous, he deservedly is *the* chart-topper of the moment, and what she very much likes about him is the way in which he does not put on airs. And Johnny Hoes, who she even saw performing at his 93th, she still listens to with pleasure – she was raised on his music.

Yolanda listens to CDs a lot but actually the computer is the central spot for music. She uses YouTube a lot. Also she still has LPs, most of which have been digitalized and stored on the computer by now but she still cannot part with them. In the past she also had cassettes, but she did get rid of those. In her CD collection are for example Denny Christian, Heintje, Hepie and Hepie, Bonnie St. Claire, Tante Leen, Sandy, Peter Koelewijn, the Zangeres Zonder Naam, Frans Bauer, Corry, the Havenzangers, 'Best of' CDs, and local artists such as Lenny, Anita Hulshof, Sylvia Corpiér, and Fenny and Martin.

Yolanda regularly goes to live performances of Dutch-language music, also to so-called 'pirate music festivals', CD presentations of artists and open-air concerts. She mostly goes to these in the city or close to the city, although there is less going on here than in other regions of the Netherlands. In the neighborhood she lives in (a typical working-class area, Yolanda thinks) there are CD presentations regularly in the building of the playground association, as it happens a considerable number of singers also live in the neighborhood. Consequently she gets to know a lot of artists – experienced and beginning – personally, such as for example Henny Thijssen, Sandy Goeree (who she knows from when she was a baby and with whom she lip-synched together at the start of her musical career) and Dennis Cornelissen, and she gains firsthand knowledge of how artists support each other in their careers.

At the centre of the Dutch-language music according to Yolanda is the relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, the personal contact with the musicians, the spontaneity, and the fact that one can recognize oneself in the lyrics. She says: "People sometimes really get caught up in a song, I also have that feeling with certain songs." She mentions the song 'Duizend sterren' ('A Thousand Stars') by Thomas Berge, when she hears that song she starts to cry because she thinks about her deceased father: "Then I this feel very deeply, yes."

Actually Yolanda does not listen to Dutch-language music exclusively. She also listens to for example Peter Maffay, Meatloaf, Creedence Clearwater Revival, UB40, Bon Jovi, Tiffany – very varied, "as long as it sounds good and is enjoyable and – songs that are appealing of course. Certain songs touch a nerve in you". At the end of the year she listens to the Top 2000, and to the Dutch-language and dialect Top 50 of the regional radio station. On the radio she mostly listens to Radio Continu, Holland FM, Radio Noord, or Gigant FM via the computer (all stations which also play Dutch-language music), sometimes also to the more general Sky Radio. On TV she occasionally watches music talent shows – but she doesn't stay at home for them.

Yolanda's son listens to rap mostly, her husband for example to regional dialect party rock band Mooi Wark ('Nice Work'); but he regularly chooses music for her that fits her mood well. Yolanda's daughter has the same taste as Yolanda. What Yolanda experienced with her grandma (her 'second mother' as she calls her herself), now she tries to pass on to her own daughter: the love of Dutch-language music. That love is present in the family, "it's in the genes". Almost everybody in her family loves Dutch-language music, and in the family one finds fans as well as musicians and radio amateurs also. Yolanda would really love for her daughter to start singing herself, but if that is in the cards is unclear as yet – but she is into singing and dancing in her own way already.

Betreuungsausschuss

Erstbetreuer:	Prof. Dr. Dr. P. Alheit
Weitere Betreuer:	Prof. Dr. R. Bendix
Weitere Mitglieder der Prüfungskommission:	Dr. B. Barendregt

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung: 19. September 2013

Musicking in Groningen

This dissertation investigates the uses and functions of music in the daily lives of thirty very diverse individuals living in the Dutch province of Groningen. Based on an in-depth analysis of lengthy narrative interviews, models of the uses and functions of music for the individual are developed. These models give insight into what people do with music and what music does with people in a modern western society. The dissertation is essentially an ethnography and as such gives a deep insight into the Dutch music culture, and into the often shared, but sometimes hotly debated, notions of what it means to be a 'musical person' in Groningen AD 2010.

