The therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music with women in prison: A qualitative case study

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to contribute ideas toward the possibilities of what music therapy can be, by examining the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music within the context of an Australian maximum-security women’s prison. Until recently, music therapists rarely documented or explored the potential of performance for music therapy practice while some health professionals even suggested that performance is anti-therapeutic (See Maratos, 2004). Music therapists writing about their practices in forensic settings emphasise the therapeutic potentials of singing and songwriting rather than performance and they predominantly approach these activities from a behavioural orientation. The almost singular theoretical approach to practising music therapy in forensic settings reflects a lack of relevant research. Consequently, the purpose underlying this research is to explore the therapeutic potentials of making and performing music with women in prison from an alternative perspective; namely humanistic rather than behavioural. The aim of this research is not only to examine previously undocumented processes in music therapy such as performance but also to contribute to the literature concerning the health and wellbeing of women in prison.

The research was designed as a qualitative case study of a ten-week creative process involving seven women in prison who collaboratively created a musical together with artists from a theatre company. As a culmination of this ten-week process, the women in prison and the artists of the theatre company performed the musical to an audience of approximately 60 prisoners, prison officers, health professionals and prison staff. In order to examine the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case, post-performance interviews were conducted with the seven women who were in prison as well as with the artists involved in the theatre company. The researcher also wrote session notes throughout the ten-week process and these, as well as the interviews and five songs created during the ten weeks, comprise the data set for this study.

The data was analysed using a variety of qualitative techniques chosen for their suitability to two main research tasks: 1) describing the case and 2) analysing the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case. In order to describe what happened collectively throughout the ten-week process, a content analysis was performed upon the researcher’s session notes. Phenomenological techniques of analysis were then applied to the interviews with the women in prison in order to describe the essence of each individual’s experience of the ten-week process. The five songs are presented in their original form as a way of further illustrating the case. In order to describe the work of the theatre company, techniques of grounded theory were used to analyse the interviews with the participating artists. Grounded theory analysis was also the method used to ultimately explain various aspects relating to the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case.

The main results of this analysis are presented in three parts. The first set of results explains how creating and performing music in this case served the participating women in prison as a bridge from the ‘inside’ to the ‘outside’. These women described a real and symbolic divide between their realities inside prison and the world outside the razor wire.
By creating and performing music, the women were able to experience five different ways of shifting outside of their realities in prison, by moving 1) from physical and symbolic ‘inside’ places to ‘outside’ places, 2) from privacy to public, 3) from solitude to togetherness, 4) from self-focus to a focus on others, and 5) from subjective thought processes to objective thought processes. The results outline different therapeutic potentials for each type of outward movement. The exploration of an outward-directed approach to music experience in this case can help to extend conventional music therapy practices where inward-directed therapeutic shifts are more commonly described.

The second set of results depicts the influence of five personal resources that helped the women to enact the therapeutic potentials associated with each of the five outward shifts. In particular, these results suggest that each type of outward movement was especially powerful when courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust were present in their fullest dimensions. It was these resources, rather than the processes usually associated with therapy, that enabled the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case to be fulfilled. Consequently, the notions of ‘therapy’ and ‘therapeutic’ are further delineated while important implications for the use of music as therapy and for the related practice of ‘arts in health’ are highlighted.

The third and final set of results suggest that music in this case, when compared with visual art and drama, provided the women with a ‘middle road’ in terms of the levels of exposure required by each art-form. As a predominantly gentle form of exposure, music in this case provided therapeutic potentials that differed more in strength rather than quality when compared with drama and visual art. These results suggest the importance of creativity in explaining the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of all arts therapies while also representing important implications for the development of indigenous theory in music therapy.

In relation to the stated aims, this research documents and explores the therapeutic potentials of musical performance and directly relates these potentials to new possibilities for music therapy practice. Furthermore, the research presents a humanistic rather than behavioural approach to creating and performing music with women in prison, thereby adding variety and depth to the sparse music therapy literature related to forensic health. More broadly, however, this research adds to the slim body of literature concerning women in prison by outlining a creative and powerful approach to helping such women improve their health and well-being.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

(a) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD;

(b) acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used:

(c) the study was given ethical authorisation from the Human Research Ethics Committees of both the University of Melbourne and the Victorian branch of the Department of Justice

(d) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, bibliography and appendices.

Signed:

Lucy O’Grady
“Art is the artist’s reward for going through the same thing twice.”

Brett Whitely
Renowned Australian painter
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This is it. We have been working toward this for months. It’s an old, familiar feeling; poised on the brink of something new with the memory of what it has taken to get here tailing behind - courage, conflict, trust, and dragging against the natural flow of prison energy. Part of me knows what will happen. It will be over in an instant and people will applaud. We will feel high and enormously relieved. Another part of me distrusts this knowledge. This time could be different.

I wonder whether it will all have been worth it.

Three soft lights suddenly cast their glances over an empty stage. This is the signal for the audience to be quiet. They are. Soft thuds accompany the dark shadows of performers taking their places on stage.

I take a breath and nod slightly.

Our hearts begin to beat to the slow and steady rhythm of a djembe. Dng. Dng, dng. Dng. Dng, dng. This is deepened by low piano octaves in the same beat. Suddenly a descending melody pierces the heart-beat, on the breath of a flautist. Such a rare sound in this place. Women slowly move on stage, forming this shape and that shape while the music continues. Now, they are a tight circle. The lights brighten as a woman in a dark cape breaks through the circle and walks to the front of the stage.

She takes a breath and begins to sing...
PRELUDE II
Frontispiece to the Performance Script featured in this Study

SONGS OF SATURN: MOVING FORWARD THE HARD WAY
------A Musical------

PERSONS REPRESENTED IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

STAR-GAZER, A woman who watches the heavens

GALLI, Astronomer

LEO, Astronomer

DARK STAR, An undiscovered celestial spirit who prefers to remain hidden

JUPITER, An expansive celestial spirit who is grappling with big changes

PLUTO, A soul-searching celestial spirit

NEPTUNE, A creative celestial spirit who likes to escape reality

SETTING – A scientific observatory; intermittently, the heavens

6 SCENES
1. Stars
2. The Shadowlands
3. Into Pieces
4. The Mirror
5. Awaken
6. Moving Forward
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

A wise old man recently suggested to me that music therapy is a tautology. I wished I’d had a dictionary with me at the time but nevertheless I felt fairly sure he was expressing an idea that I hear all the time, that music is therapy. The ancient notion that healing is inevitable when we interact with music is still popular and leads to the idea that it can be used prescriptively as if it were a pill. From biblical tales of David playing the harp in order to ease Saul’s depression to contemporary yet controversial reports detailing the use of Mozart’s music to treat epilepsy (Jenkins, 2001), people commonly perceive music as an object to which therapeutic outcomes are intrinsic and predestined.

However, music is not the neat and tidy object that the ipod makes it seem. Neither is it always therapeutic. Listening to music can induce epileptic reactions in some people (Jenkins, 2001) and in its ‘metal’, ‘rock’ and ‘rap’ incarnations, music enjoys a notorious but contentious association with the antisocial behaviours of some adolescents (Anderson, Carnagey, & Eubanks, 2003; Baker & Bor, 2008; Bushong, 2002; Doak, 2003; Lacourse, Claes, & Villeneuve, 2001; Miranda & Claes, 2004). Adults often tell stories of their childhood piano lessons with an ‘old dragon’ of a teacher who rapped them over the knuckles if they made a mistake, tainting music as a source of anxiety or pain. Furthermore, professional musicians sometimes even cultivate psychopathological experiences as a way into their work (Nelson, 2005) or succumb to the notion of the ‘suffering artist’ that is so firmly entrenched in our culture (Cameron, 2002). Therapeutic potentials may not even be intrinsic to music itself (Levitin, 2008); instead, the therapeutic outcomes from music experiences may sometimes stem from the mere act of doing something (Wheeler, 1983).

Music is not therapy nor is it always therapeutic. Certain therapeutic capacities, however, are inherent but not necessarily unique to music and these can be accessed depending upon the ways in which music is enacted. Mapping these ways has been of particular interest to music therapists who explicitly aim to access the therapeutic potentials of music in their clinical work. Music therapists often use music as therapy, relying predominantly on the therapeutic potentials of music (as opposed to talking for instance) to achieve their goals (Bruscia, 1998). Leaving it to music to weave its therapeutic magic however is not enough. Music therapists have also been trained to understand, explore and nurture many of the contexts in which the therapeutic potentials of music can be enacted. This knowledge forms part of the theoretical basis of music therapy practice, although music therapists are not the only keepers of such knowledge (Threlfall, 2007).

Music therapists have typically described the therapeutic potentials of music by drawing upon physiological, sociological or psychological frameworks of understanding, borrowing language and concepts from fields such as medicine, education, social-work and psychology. This has enabled music therapists to apply an already existing explanatory system to their ideas while communicating their work to different health professionals (Aigen, 2005). However, in adopting these languages predominantly, music therapists have not only undernourished the development of their own theories to explain
their work, they have also undervalued the types of therapeutic potentials that can be accessed through music (Aigen, 2001).

This is perhaps no more obvious than within the literature concerning the use of music as therapy with people incarcerated in prisons or forensic hospitals. Behavioural approaches to music therapy proliferate in these settings (Ficken & Gardstrom, 2002). In view of this almost singular approach, many music therapists working in the area have declared the need for more research (Ficken & Gardstrom, 2002; Fulford, 2002; Gallagher & Steele, 2002; Rio & Tenney, 2002; Wyatt, 2002). This need for knowledge is even more conspicuous when considering the dearth of research in forensic health in general, especially in relation to female prisoners (Balfour, 2006; Byrne & Howells, 2002; Cabrera-Balleza, 2003; McQuiade & Ehrenreich, 1998; Wyatt, 2002).

**Aim and Scope of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music with women in prison. The case consists of a particular ten-week period in which a musical show was created and performed by seven women incarcerated in an Australian prison, in collaboration with a group of eight female artists from a theatre company that included myself as musical director. Using language and ideas that stem from the women who participated in the research, the study adds variety to the predominantly behavioural body of related music therapy literature while potentially contributing to the development of creative programs in forensic settings and ultimately the health of women in prison.

The scope of this study is focused on the field of music therapy even though the therapeutic potentials of music have been addressed within a variety of theoretical disciplines that include music psychology, creativity theory, sociology and musicology. Although ideas from these disciplines inform the study, music therapy features predominantly because it is directly founded upon an explicit interest in the therapeutic potentials of music and because the research is informed by my own training as a music therapist.

The scope of this research is also limited to the particular case under examination because the study has not been designed to ascertain how this case is generalisable to other cases. As researcher, I focus instead on the particularities of this case and frame the research as an intrinsic case study. Explained in depth in chapter 3, an intrinsic case study is based on the assumption that the particular case under scrutiny is of sufficient interest in itself (Stake, 2005). Despite the limited potential of the present research to generalise empirically, I still believe and intend that the study will prove useful to people in other contexts. These people may include artists, musicians, therapists and other health professionals who work in forensic settings or who are considering the use of performance or song-writing as a therapeutic medium.
The Research Questions

In attempting to explore the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music with women in prison, this case study is driven by the following two research questions:

1) What were the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music that were available in this case to the women in prison?

2) What were the main personal resources that enabled the women to enact these therapeutic potentials?

An Emergent Question

This study also contains initial forays into a theme that emerged during data analysis. This theme involved the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music and other art-forms. It is presented in this thesis as an emergent question since it did not form the basis of the research but rather resulted from it. This question is:

3) In this case, how did the therapeutic potentials of music relate to those of the other art-forms explored by the women?

The emergent question cannot be comprehensively examined because it did not guide data generation. Nevertheless, it is included in this research for two reasons: a) limited exploration of this question will still contribute to the ongoing quest of some music therapists who seek to clarify what may be unique to music therapy practice (Aigen, 2004; Ansdell, 1995), and b) to reflect the ongoing nature of qualitative research (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002).

Defining Terms within the Research Questions

1. ‘therapeutic’
To define ‘therapy’ is a courageous enterprise, since it is a culturally-embedded construct that is utilised in a variety of ways (Stige, 2002a). To define ‘therapeutic’ is perhaps a little easier and certainly of more relevance to the present thesis in its examination of the therapeutic potentials of music. For the purposes of this thesis, ‘therapeutic’ is used as an adjective that changes or transforms in a positive, healthy or healing way. Unlike therapy, the use of the word ‘therapeutic’ does not predicate the involvement of a therapist, a specific agenda, or a particular set of procedures (Bruscia, 1998).

2. ‘potentials’
The use of the term ‘potentials’ in this thesis denotes capacities or powers and, when teamed with ‘therapeutic’, the term encourages an exploration of how making music has the power to inspire change or transformation in a positive or healing way in certain contexts, while also remaining true to the idea that music is not always therapeutic; that the capacity for change is not always enacted. The term ‘potentials’ also aligns this
research with the desire shared by Pavlicevic and Ansdell (2004) to construct music therapy afresh, by considering not what music therapy is but what it could be.

3. ‘personal resources’
In the context of the second research question, the term ‘personal resources’ refers to the particular human capacities, such as virtues, strengths or interactions, that were most important in enabling the women to enact the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music. This use of the term ‘resources’ is reminiscent of a particular approach to music therapy known as ‘resource-oriented music therapy’. In this approach, the music is oriented primarily toward the client's resources, strengths and potentials, rather than their problems and conflicts (Gold, Rolvsjord, Aaro, Aarre, Tjemsland & Stige, 2005).

4. ‘creating music’
Creating music involves making music in the moment, through improvisation or playing, and over time, through song-writing and composing. I use the phrase ‘creating music’ within this thesis in order to emphasise and explore the creativity involved in making music.

5. ‘performing music’
Performing music involves an encounter between performers and an audience. What happens in this encounter depends upon many factors, including the type of story told during the performance (Deeker, 2008). As a group, the women involved in the present study performed an original musical to an audience of approximately 60 female prisoners, prison guards and health professionals.

A note on the use of the terms ‘creating’ and ‘performing’ music.
Creating and performing music are actions encompassed by a broader concept, often referred to by music therapy authors as ‘musicing’. This idea is explained in depth in chapter 2. Attributed to musicologists David Elliott (1995) and Christopher Small (1998), the idea of ‘musicing’ (or ‘musicking’ as Small labels it) links humans to their situated and contextual relationships with music and emphasises the collaborative and interactive nature of the art-form (Stige, Ansdell, Elefant, & Pavlicevic, 2010). In this thesis, I prefer to use the terms ‘music-making’ or ‘making music’ to denote the interactive, collaborative, social and situated nature of music because these terms utilise more common everyday language and therefore render the thesis accessible to a wider range of people who may not ordinarily be familiar with the ‘musicing’ labels.

Editorial Notes
Following the advice of Evans and Gruba (2005), I have written this thesis mostly in the third person, using an active voice wherever possible. I have written in the first person only when recounting personal experiences, stating personal opinions and explaining the choices made in the research procedure.
In the context of this study, I am the researcher and also the musical director of the theatre company. Consequently, my voice permeates this thesis. In keeping with general standards of transparency in qualitative research, I situate this voice in the thesis within broader experiences, motivations, responses and attitudes that relate to both of my roles as researcher and musical director. I have chosen to gently unfurl these more personal aspects of the research at a variety of different points throughout this thesis rather than to present them all at once in the introduction. This is in order to reflect the feminist idea that personal aspects of research need not be ‘bracketed out’ in the beginning of a study in an effort to avoid bias; instead, they can be used as resources for deepening understanding along the entire research process (Forinash, 2006), for both the researcher and the reader.

Format of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into four main sections. In the first section, the research and the ideas underlying it are introduced. In the second section, the case under examination is located within some of its broader contexts. Interspersed between the chapters of these first two sections are the scenes and lyrics that were created during the ten weeks that comprise the case under examination.

The scenes and lyrics are supplemented by audio-recordings located in Appendix 8 (inside back leaf). The relevant track numbers on the CD in Appendix 8 are referred to within each set of lyrics or scene presented in the main body of the thesis. The audio-recordings depict the voices of the seven women from prison who participated in the research, for which their consent was obtained. Nevertheless, the seven women retain copyright to the songs and recordings. The recordings are not of a professional quality, due to the logistics of recording inside a prison with few resources, however they are of sufficient quality to bring musical life to the script and in this way provide the reader with an aural angle from which to understand the case. The first scene and five songs were recorded two days after the performance, using a Sony MD player and a small condenser microphone.

The songs and script are interspersed throughout sections one and two of this thesis so that the reader is familiar with the musical performance before the processes involved in its creation are deconstructed and analysed. Preliminary analyses are presented in section 3, where the case is described in detail. In the final part of this thesis, section 4, the case is analysed and discussed in terms of the research questions. Each section comprises the following chapters:

Section 1 (chapters 1-4): Introducing the research and the ideas behind it.

The following chapter, chapter two, presents a review of the literature related to the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music. The review begins with an examination of the historical role of music-making within the field of music therapy; here, it is argued that the therapeutic potential of creating and performing music has
generally been undervalued in music therapy. The limited value accorded to this activity within the general music therapy literature is then compared with more recent perspectives from Community Music Therapy, Community Cultural Development and Creativity Research in order to extend our understandings of the therapeutic possibilities of making and performing music. The chapter draws to a close with a rationale for the present research.

Chapter 3 continues to introduce the research and the ideas behind it by outlining the philosophical ideas underlying the research design. The assumptions underlying the qualitative paradigm are explored, with a focus on constructivist perspectives in qualitative research. Following this, the particular assumptions that informed more specific aspects of the research design, such as the qualitative case study and analysis techniques, are presented. The beliefs and experiences that led me to this research are then articulated, followed by an explanation of my motivations and intentions in conducting the study.

Chapter 4 also comprises part of the first section of this thesis by outlining more of the practical aspects of the research design. This chapter begins with an illustration of the overall research design. The components of this design are then discussed in turn, starting with the ways in which research participants were sampled. Following this, the phases of data generation are described in detail. The techniques involved in analysing the data are then introduced and explained in terms of their application in describing the case and answering the research questions. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the techniques used to increase the value and trustworthiness of the study.

Section 2 (chapters 5-6): Placing the case in its broader contexts.
In chapter 5, the literature concerning women in prison is reviewed. In response to some of this literature, my attitudes toward the notion of prison as well as the women who are confined there are outlined. The literature regarding the implementation of theatre and music therapy in forensic settings is also reviewed in detail.

Chapter 6 includes information regarding the Australian Justice System as well as the particular prison involved in this research. The chapter also includes information about the theatre company. These factual accounts are then followed by an interpretive explanation of how the artists within the theatre company talk about, execute and understand their work in general. This explanation has been constructed from a grounded theory analysis of the research interviews that were conducted with the artists of the theatre company. The steps that were taken in order to construct the explanation are also outlined in this chapter. Finally, the particular case under examination is located within this explanation.

Section 3 (chapter 7): Describing the case in detail.
Chapter 7 begins with a brief description of the seven women from prison who were involved in the research. The 10-week creative process is then described drawing upon the content analyses of session notes that were used to construct this narrative.
Descriptions of each woman’s creative journey are then presented, having been constructed from phenomenological analyses of interviews.

Section 4 (chapters 8-11): Analysing and discussing the case.
The first three chapters in this section each focus on a particular research question. Chapter 8 contains a grounded theory analysis and subsequent theoretical explanation that relates to the first research question, “What were the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music that were available in this case to the women in prison?”. This explanation emphasises the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’ through creating and performing music together.

Chapter 9 contains a grounded theory analysis and subsequent explanation that relates to the second research question, “What were the main personal resources that enabled these therapeutic potentials to be fulfilled?” Here, the resources of courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust are explained in relation to the case under examination.

The emergent question is addressed in chapter 10. In this chapter, a grounded theory analysis of relevant data is presented in order to explain, in this case, how the therapeutic potentials of music related to those of the other art-forms explored by the women. Although data was not generated with this question clearly in mind and therefore cannot lead to as rigorous an explanation, the third question is presented in this thesis in order to contribute some emerging ideas regarding the relationship between music and other art-forms in therapy while reflecting the ongoing nature of qualitative research.

The research questions are discussed in chapter 11. The chapter begins with a restatement of the rationale and the results. Each result is then evaluated and discussed in relation to the literature. The limitations of the study are then outlined together with suggestions for future research. The thesis is drawn together in this chapter with a concluding discussion of the implications and significance of the research.

Coda

In this chapter, the aims and questions underlying this research have been introduced and the format of the thesis has been outlined. The next chapter contains a comprehensive review of the ideas that relate to this study, where the literature concerning the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music is examined. First, however, the initial scene from the musical performed by the participating women in prison and artists from the theatre company is presented. The reader may choose to supplement this scene by listening to the first track on the CD that forms Appendix 8.
Scene 1: Stars

*(CD Listening, Appendix 8: Track 1)*

*Lights out. The soft, meandering and sparse sounds of a piano begin.*

*Enter STAR-GAZER alone, looking skywards.*

*Star-gazer. (Addressing the audience)* You know what’s the best thing about being out here? The sky at night. Untrapped. Untamed. Limitless. *(Gesturing to the stars)* Wonder if they ever wonder about us? Nah, why would they? The planets and stars are huge and we’re so small and insignificant. *(Pointing)* There’s Venus. She always stands out. She’s a beauty ... Did you see that? She twinkled! I think she heard me! I don’t know ... Reckon they might wonder about us ...

*Piano fades.*
CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Background to the Research Questions

For centuries, humans across cultures have known and accessed the therapeutic potentials of making music. From the ancient and continuing practice of shamans, who use music and other art-forms to help communities of people to connect with their inner experiences (Kenny, 1982; McNiff, 2004; O’Callaghan, 2001) to the ancient and continuing tendency of indigenous Australians to construct history and map the physical terrain through the creation and re-creation of songs (Gibson & Dunbar-Hall, 2000), making music has always played an important evolutionary role in alleviating human suffering and enhancing human health.

The following chapter is a review of literature pertaining to the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music, under the umbrella of ‘music-making’. The review begins with an examination of the historical role of music-making within the field of music therapy, and presents an argument that the therapeutic potential of music-making was generally undervalued. The limited value accorded to this activity within past music therapy literature is then compared with more contemporary perspectives from Community Music Therapy, Community Cultural Development and Creativity Research in order to extend our understandings of the therapeutic possibilities of making and performing music. The chapter draws to a close with a rationale for the present research.

Making Music in Music Therapy

The role of music-making in human health can be examined from a variety of angles due to the fact that music interacts with us in so many ways. Some researchers, for example, have focused on the physiological and biochemical effects of musical experiences, whilst others have highlighted the psychological potentials. Some contemporary musicologists emphasise the social act of making music, referring to it as ‘musicing’. This term, discussed at length by musicologists David Elliot (1995) and Christopher Small (1998), suggests that music is not just an object. It can also be a verb, an activity. More than that, however, the term ‘musicing’ embeds the act of making music in its broader environmental, social and human contexts (Small, 1998). There is a stream of discourse within music therapy, known as Community Music Therapy, where the situated and
The interactive nature of making music is also explored and, because of this, the concept of ‘musicing’ has also gained prominence within the field of music therapy.

Making music has not always been the focus of music therapists, however. As a contemporary profession, music therapy arose during the First World War when large numbers of war veterans were hospitalised. Pioneering music therapists used recorded music and live music played by musicians in a prescriptive sense to improve the emotional and physiological responses of veterans (Davis & Gfeller, 1999b). The early years of music therapy research were mainly founded upon investigations into the influence of music-listening on an individual. The effects of music began to be regarded as idiosyncratic to the individual and music therapy subsequently became less prescriptive and more attentive to the “needs” of the individual (Davis & Gfeller, 1999a). Making music with the individual, in the form of improvisation and song-writing, was introduced in response to some of these ‘needs’, until eventually it formed one of the cornerstones of music therapy practice (Grocke & Wigram, 2007).

Following this development, music therapy techniques were classified as either ‘active’ or ‘receptive’, a distinction that is still widely used today even though it is in reality less easily defined (Grocke & Wigram, 2007). The client of ‘receptive’ music therapy is “distinct from being an active music maker” (Grocke & Wigram, 2007, p.15) and is the ‘recipient’ of techniques that include music-listening or song-lyric-discussion. In contrast, an active participant in music therapy will make music through improvising, playing, singing, or writing songs with the therapist. Not only is active music-making now a cornerstone of music therapy practice, it is more widely used in music therapy than receptive techniques according to Grocke and Wigram (2007).

Making Music as an Activity Therapy

As active music-making began to be more widely used within music therapy practice, music therapists were classified as activity therapists whose techniques involved clients “in doing something which provides experiences needed to help make them healthier” (Wheeler, 1983, p. 8). According to Wheeler, the use of use of music in this way is therapeutically supportive, rather than re-educative or re-constructive, because it is not teamed with explorations of the individual’s impulses and instincts that are revealed in the music experience. Wheeler suggests that music as a supportive therapy could usually be substituted with activities from another discipline “and the same results achieved” (p. 10).

Are there Therapeutic Potentials Unique to Music and are they Intrinsic?

Wheeler’s (1983) suggestion acknowledges that some therapeutic potentials are not unique to music, that they may be shared by other activities. If this is so, we might wonder whether there are any therapeutic potentials unique to music. Ansdell (1995) assumes so, writing that “we have to look at what is unique to music in order to find out what is unique to music therapy” (p. x). Similarly, Aigen’s (2005) recent concept of ‘music-centered music therapy’ proposes that music affords unique experiences
associated with therapeutic potential. In this approach to music therapy, “specific musical qualities and experiences are the primary clinical factors” (p. xviii). Echoing Elliot’s (1995) argument that the self-growth and self-knowledge that results from making music is significantly different to other forms of artistic experience, Aigen (2005) contradicts Wheeler’s earlier assertion: “People engage in music primarily because of what the music itself provides, not because it provides a type of generalized experience that can be obtained through other means” (Aigen, 2005, p.108-9). Aigen acknowledges that this theory is yet to be entirely empirically supported, however he proposes that the unique strengths of music may be located in its ability to stimulate people’s creative capacities, re-connect people with their emotions and provide them with shifts of awareness and experiences of beauty. The communal dimension of music, he argues, also enables an individual to experience a sense of belonging to something bigger than the self. In contrast, Deliege and Richelle (2006) focus on the uniqueness of music as a performing art where unlike “painting, sculpture and literature, in which the artistic message goes directly from the producer to the receiver, music is in most cases a threefold event: someone, the performer, has to play the piece of music to convey it from the composer to an audience (composers playing their own pieces and listeners playing for their own pleasure are just special cases of plurality of functions)” (p. 4). Furthermore, they argue, music is unique because composers or music-makers are not constrained by external objects or structures as painters, sculptors and writers are.

Language such as this suggests that particular therapeutic potentials are not only unique to music but that they are also intrinsic. This notion, however, depends entirely upon whether music is perceived as a series of pitches or as a phenomenon encompassing broader forms of human action. Linking music to the evolutionary survival of humans, Levitin (2008) argues that

“Making and listening to music … feels good not because of anything intrinsic in the music. Rather, those of our ancestors who just happened to feel good during musical activities are the ones who survived to pass on the gene that gave rise to these feelings" (p. 20).

This idea is supported by Cross (2009), who suggests that music was a way of being connected to others which resulted in a neurological pleasure response. This response then became associated with the musical activity and ultimately as music became less necessary for survival it nevertheless continued to be everywhere because it was pleasurable. These two perspectives frame music as an object, devoid of intrinsic therapeutic potential until humans happened to interact with it in a positive way. Similarly, Wheeler (1983) isolates music as an object that is separate from the actions performed upon it when she suggests that the therapeutic outcomes from musical activities are sometimes more to do with the activity rather than the music itself.

When music is not only understood as an object, but also as an action aligned with the concept of ‘musicing’, music is no longer separate from the contexts in which it is experienced or from its interactions with humans. When defined in this way, the therapeutic potentials of music automatically encompass the potentials associated with particular contexts and human interactions since these broader variables are inseparable.
from the act of music itself. When defining music for the purposes of music therapy, Bruscia (1998) acknowledges these broader variables:

"Meaning and beauty are derived from the intrinsic relationships created between the sounds themselves and from the extrinsic relationships created between the sounds and other forms of human experience. As such, meaning and beauty can be found in the music itself (ie. the object or product), in the act of creating or experiencing the music (ie. the process), in the musician (ie. the person), and in the universe" (p. 104).

According to this definition, music is an object but it is also so much more than that. When viewed holistically as both an object that encompasses intrinsic relationships between sounds and also an action that involves extrinsic relationships to broader forms of human experience, it can be argued that there are therapeutic potentials intrinsic to music. Whether or not these potentials are unique to music, however, remains questionable. According to a substantial body of research, music can improve physiology, behaviour, cognition, mood, emotion, and social intelligence (Brusica 1998). Yet, as Wheeler suggested decades ago (1983), so can many other activities. Why choose music?

Comparing music therapy and the ‘other’ arts therapies.
Throughout the ages music has often been hailed as the most powerful art-form (Cameron, 2002; Maslow, 1962) but this is highly debatable. All art-forms have therapeutic power, hence their use within the arts therapies and other arts disciplines dedicated to the development of individuals and communities. As therapies, the different art-forms have generally suffered as “cubicles of isolation” (McNiff, 2004, p. 148) and consequently there have been few articulated examples of different arts therapies working together and therefore little comparison of their therapeutic strengths. The Netherlands is one example where different arts therapists work together under the umbrella of kreative terapie. A recent study in the Netherlands compared the clinical reasoning-processes of drama therapy, music therapy, art therapy and dance-movement therapy when treating aggression in patients of forensic psychiatry (Smeijsters & Cleven, 2006). Table 1 details this comparison in terms of the main therapeutic potentials attributed to each art-form.

Table 1 – A comparison of the therapeutic potentials of different art therapies when treating aggression in patients of forensic psychiatry. Adapted from Smeijsters & Cleven, 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art-form</th>
<th>Therapeutic Potential</th>
<th>Therapeutic means</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Behavioural change</td>
<td>Achieving distance through character and scenes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Change in emotions and feelings</td>
<td>Playing musical instruments, providing parameters and</td>
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opportunities for interaction

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<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Reduction of cognitive distortions</th>
<th>Imaging</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance-Movement</td>
<td>Change in the expression of feelings and emotions</td>
<td>Expression of feelings through the body and movement</td>
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The information contained in Table 1 suggests that the therapeutic strength of music, when compared with other art-forms, may be in its ability to access and interact with emotions. This idea is common; music is the art-form most often associated with the expression of emotion (Stecker, 1984), even though the human expression of emotion can be linked to most art forms (Cameron, 2004).

**Music and emotion.**

Despite a common link between music and emotion, there is little exploration of the relationship within music therapy literature. Perhaps this is because the relationship between emotion and music is a complex interaction between the listener, the music-maker and the music itself. In the context of music therapy, music can be expressive of a certain emotion and at the same time help a participant to express a different emotion. Adding further complexity to this patchwork is the fact that different emotions to those being expressed by the music or the participant may also be evoked in the listening therapist (Aigen, 2005).

Despite the subjective and non-formulaic relationship between emotion and music, it is always implicated in music therapy practice (Aigen, 2005). Music is predominantly understood in music therapy as a vehicle through which an individual’s emotions are expressed directly or symbolised, resulting in an experience of catharsis (Aigen, 2005). This catharsis is usually experienced by the music therapy participant through his or her expression of emotion in active music therapy, or through the arousal of his or her emotions in receptive music therapy (Bunt & Pavlicevic, 2001).

According to Bunt and Pavlicevic (2001), emotion features strongly in music therapy due to three different connections between the music and the music therapy participant: 1) associative connections, where music triggers in the participant “a whole range of associations with specific events and places (and) memories of certain people” (p. 184), 2) iconic connections, where the music therapy participant links certain characteristics of the music to some external musical event or human feeling, and 3) intrinsic connections, where the participant’s emotional experiences are linked to “both surface and deep structural aspects of the music” (p. 185).

Aigen (2005) argues that the expression and arousal of emotion through music does not make full use of the relationship between music and human emotional life. In a music-centered perspective, he argues, an important role of emotion “is to provide the motivation to engage in musical activity with others and move one’s activity,
consciousness, and expression outward” (p. 257). In this way, music is not only valued for its ability to help people express emotions but also for its capacity to transform human emotions through connecting people.

The Therapeutic Potentials of Purely Musical Experiences

Within music therapy literature, the therapeutic strengths of music have predominantly been associated with the processes of therapy. Purely musical experiences have subsequently been undervalued (Aigen, 2005). The therapeutic outcomes of music experiences have traditionally been believed to be much more profound (Wheeler, 1983) and obvious (Bruscia, 1998) if accompanied with verbal processing of the experience. Approaches in music therapy that utilised music experiences without verbal processing were classified by Wheeler as ‘supportive therapy’ (1983) and were less indicated for more in-depth re-educative or reconstructive work. The need for verbal processing of music experiences for in-depth work has often been debated within music therapy discourse (Grocke & Wigram, 2007), however the idea still largely underpins the practice of music therapy (Aigen, 2005).

The underlying idea regarding the need for verbal processing in music therapy is most evident in Bruscia’s seminal music therapy text, Defining Music Therapy (1998). Simplifying Wheeler’s earlier classification (1983) of supportive, re-educative or reconstructive approaches to music therapy, Bruscia (1998) divides music therapy practice into two major approaches: music as therapy and music in therapy. Music as therapy is similar to Wheeler’s notion of music as an activity therapy or supportive therapy, where music is the main focus and there is little emphasis on verbal processing or exploration of impulses and instincts. In contrast, music in therapy utilises music not only for its intrinsic healing potential, but also to strengthen the therapeutic relationship and enhance other treatment modalities such as verbal therapies. Table 2 compares the two approaches to music therapy, according to the ideas of Bruscia (1998) and Wheeler (1983).

Table 2. A comparison of ‘music as therapy’ and ‘music in therapy’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Music as therapy</th>
<th>Music in therapy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Primary medium for</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Therapeutic alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other therapeutic modalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main goals</strong></td>
<td>To help the client relate to or engage in music</td>
<td>To enhance the therapeutic alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To support the client</td>
<td>To re-educate (to understand and resolve problems at the conscious level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To increase adaptive behaviour</td>
<td>To reconstruct (to resolve unconscious conflicts and thereby promote)</td>
</tr>
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Table 2 highlights the undervaluing of purely musical experiences, i.e. music as therapy, within music therapy literature. As therapy, musical experiences are represented as merely helping the music therapy participant to relate to music or to increase adaptive behaviour and the most noticeable changes with this approach are thought to be musical (Bruscia, 1998). According to Bruscia (1998):

"When music is used as therapy, the most noticeable changes are more likely to be musical in nature; when music is used in therapy, the most noticeable changes are more likely to be nonmusical in nature. Since in both cases the goal is to affect nonmusical areas of the client's life, nonmusical changes are often more obvious indicators that therapy has taken place than musical ones" (1998, p. 153).

This statement suggests that the use of music in therapy is more amenable to an evidenced-based approach because therapeutic change is more obvious. The systematic nature and explicitly therapeutic goals of music in therapy certainly lend support to this statement. Comparatively, the use of music as therapy can seem less methodical; the therapeutic goals may be more idiosyncratic to the music therapist and therapeutic outcomes may appear to be serendipitous and harder to evaluate (Bruscia, 1998).

Nevertheless, music-making in itself has tremendously deep therapeutic potential although this is not reflected in the predominant music therapy literature. Some pioneers in music therapy including Paul Nordoff, Clive Robbins, Juliette Alvin and Mary Priestly emphasised the therapeutic potentials of pure music-making, however music therapists have focused less upon it in recent times. Some music therapists who identify themselves with a contemporary approach to music therapy known as Community Music Therapy have begun to re-emphasise the therapeutic potentials of pure music-making. For example, Aigen (2005) has developed a way of practising music therapy which is centred entirely around this premise. He calls the approach ‘music-centred music therapy’.

Music-centered music therapy.

Music-centered music therapy is an extension of music as therapy where the musical experience “is self-justifying and the primary focus of the therapist’s efforts” (Aigen, 2005, p. 49). This contrasts with Bruscia’s conception of music as therapy, where the music therapist is usually focused on psychological, behavioural or physiological outcomes, i.e. non-musical outcomes. In music-centered music therapy, clinical outcomes such as these are considered to be secondary to the musical outcomes. Implicit in this idea is that “musical experience and expression are inherently beneficial human activities that are legitimate ways to address the reasons for which people come to therapy” (p. 56). In other words, to develop the self musically is to develop the self.
According to Aigen (2005), the benefits of developing the self musically are profound. The act of making music, he suggests, requires and develops the physical and mental abilities associated with the craft, the ability to understand silence, the ability to listen, and the ability to surrender to forces bigger than the self. Furthermore, he argues, the unique communal dimension of making music enables an individual to connect with others while preserving their separateness. This particular capacity is discussed as ‘musical communitas’ by proponents of Community Music Therapy (Aigen, 2005; Ansdell, 2004; Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2002a).

Community Music Therapy

Fast becoming a theoretical approach to music therapy, Community Music Therapy (CoMT) emphasises ‘health musicing’ (Stige, 2002a), where people make music together in socially-engaged processes that enhance health for individuals and communities (Stige, 2004). The socially-engaged aspect of this approach can be extremely useful when working with people who are seen as ‘marginalised’ or ‘disadvantaged’ within broader society (Stige, 2004), for example, prisoners. In particular, social advocacy on behalf of or in collaboration with these people is aligned with more radical approaches to Community Music Therapy (Stige, 2002a). Furthermore, Community Music Therapy “gives credibility” to the use of performance in music therapy practice (Ruud, 2004, para 6). For these reasons, Community Music Therapy is directly relevant to the present research and therefore the literature underpinning the discourse will now be reviewed in detail.

Community Music Therapy discourse emerged as a response to the increasing number of music therapists who were questioning whether certain aspects of their work could truthfully be classed as music therapy (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004), however it was not until the publication of Ansdell’s web-based article that the issue was debated openly and world-wide (Ansdell, 2002). In this article, Ansdell identified a problem: music therapy theory was not yet broad enough to include all aspects of a music therapists’ work, even though there already seemed to be a general acceptance among music therapists as to what music therapy was and how it was practised.

Consequently, Community Music Therapy represented a reaction to what was seen as the status quo in music therapy and what has been called, among other names, the ‘consensus model’. This model, although it may be more of an idea than a reality (Stige, 2002b), is referred to as a set of ideas in music therapy that is accepted and propagated by a large body of international music therapists (Ansdell, 2002). Both Pavlicevic and Ansdell (2004) argue that music therapy as a discipline “seems to know what it is and what it does” (p. 28) which they feel is dangerous for newer therapists who become indoctrinated into authoritative and uncontextualised ideas of what is right and what is wrong in music therapy practice. Consequently, music therapists began by defining Community Music Therapy in terms of what it was not, compared with the usual conventions of music therapy.
Conventional music therapy.

What are the conventions of this universally-accepted model of music therapy? According to Stige (2004), conventional music therapy is a model of practice that examines health issues, focuses interventions at the level of the individual and works within the boundaries of a clinic, institution or private office. Alongside these conventions is a collective value of working methodically and grounding clinical decision making in scientific theory. Pavlicevic (2004) denotes conventional music therapy as inclusive of both historically-established practices and familiar contexts within which music therapists work. According to Pavlicevic, historically-established practices include improvisational music therapy, analytical music therapy, vibro-acoustic therapy and Guided Imagery in Music (GIM). Furthermore, she argues, the familiar contexts within which music therapists work include educational, health, rehabilitation and forensic organizations. Pavlicevic (2004) lists the conventions of such practices and contexts as being the therapeutic space, the therapeutic relationship, the referral system, the music therapy technique used, and the duration and frequency of sessions. Other conventions include reporting, evaluating, assessing, and reflecting upon the session. The ‘consensus model’ is commonly criticised within CoMT discourse for treating the individual as separate from their social and cultural contexts (Amir, 2004a; Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004a; Stige, 2004), focusing on illness rather than ability (Rolvsjord, 2006; Stige, 2004) and attributing unnecessary power to the therapist (Procter, 2002). These challenges to the consensus model are particularly relevant when performance is included within music therapy practices.

The conventional model of music therapy as a challenge to performance.

According to Pavlicevic and Ansdell (2004), the chief issue that leads music therapists to question whether their practices can be called ‘therapy’ is that of performance. Despite some descriptions of the use of performance in music therapy by Nordoff and Robbins (2004/1971) and Schmidt-Peters (1987) the use of performance was rarely documented in the music therapy literature (Ansdell, 2005) until the advent of Community Music Therapy (McFerran, 2010). This is in spite of anecdotal evidence that it was common practice for music therapists working in developmental contexts to facilitate Christmas concerts and choir performances (McFerran, 2010). Pavlicevic and Ansdell (2004) argue that the neglect of performance in the music therapy literature is due to psychotherapeutic concerns within the consensus model of music therapy for confidentiality, privacy and a musical search for emotional authenticity.

The tensions between psychotherapy and performance are discussed at length by British music therapist Maratos (2004). Maratos recounts how her identity as a psychodynamic music therapist was tested by her central role in facilitating the rehearsals and performance of a musical involving staff and patients of a mental health unit in London. She discusses how prior to the musical she presented music therapy on the ward as a form of psychodynamic therapy, not social therapy, so as not to contaminate the transference relationship or confuse the role of the therapist. Music therapy in this context was conducted in a closed room, with individuals and small groups who were referred to the program by other staff members. In keeping with the conventions of psychotherapy,
Maratos did not typically socialize with patients in informal surroundings and avoided performing with or for the patients. She acknowledges that these boundaries were “an attempt by the music therapists to be taken seriously and accorded some status and position within the system” (2004, p. 135).

These boundaries caused Maratos difficulties when she began to champion the rehearsals and performance of the musical. She constantly questioned her own motivations, as well as those of the other staff, for performing the musical. This uncertainty was further compounded by colleagues who dismissed the project’s performances as being anti-therapeutic and complained about the breakdown of boundaries that occurred through inpatients and staff rehearsing and performing together. Nevertheless, while Maratos acknowledges the theoretical and practical difficulties that resulted from the performances, “it was clear that they were a particularly exciting and unique experience for some patients” (2004, p. 138), some of whom transcended their diagnoses while in character and became active partners in reciprocally-supportive relationships with performing staff members. These performance outcomes lend support to Aigen’s (2004) assertion that “the possibilities (of CoMT) exist in the realm of helping clients achieve musical, artistic, and personal growth not possible when the work is confined to the privacy of a therapy room” (p. 211).

It is widely acknowledged in Community Music Therapy discourse that performance in music therapy can inspire many therapeutic outcomes (Davidson, 2004; Maratos, 2004; Powell, 2004; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). In addition, some cultures regard performance as not separate from the act of music itself but rather it is valued for its capacity to share and connect with other people (Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004). However, Davidson (2004) warns that, although the sense of self is unfixed, not everyone has a performing personality and it is important that music therapy participants are not forced to do something that does not fit easily with them. Similarly, McFerran (2010) acknowledges that there are both positive and negative potentials when using performance in music therapy. She suggests that music therapists cannot assume what the therapeutic outcomes will be when incorporating performance into their practice.

**What is Community Music Therapy?**

Although it has been argued that Community Music Therapy cannot and should not be defined (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004b), some music therapists have bravely offered definitions for its practice. Well before Ansdell’s article introducing the notion of CoMT (2002) graced the international stage, Bruscia (1998) had described CoMT as a process whereby

the therapist works with clients in traditional individual or group music therapy settings, while also working with the community. The purpose is twofold: to prepare the client to participate in community functions and become a valued member of the community; and to prepare the community to accept and embrace the clients by helping its members understand and interact with the clients (p. 237).

In a similar fashion, Stige (2002a) defined CoMT as
music therapy practices that are linked to the local communities in which clients live and therapists work, and/or to communities of interest. Basically two main notions of CoMT exist: a) music therapy in a community context, and b) music therapy for change in a community.

Both of Stige’s notions require the therapist to be sensitive to social and cultural contexts but he suggests that the latter is more public and political than what is conventional for music therapy.

Some authors have made efforts to define the nature of Community Music Therapy in terms of goals and roles, however there is still little consensus amongst music therapists regarding the nature of the approach, nor the appropriateness of the Community Music Therapy label. Stige (2004) and Ansdell (2002) suggest that the general goal of the community music therapist is to cultivate a musical community in comparison to the general goal within the consensus model of music therapy which is to use music to alleviate symptoms within an individual. A stronger emphasis on making music in CoMT requires the community music therapist to balance her dual identity as a musician and a therapist, while remaining sensitive to culture and contexts (Ansdell, 2002). Ruud (2004), however, argues that many approaches to music therapy are sensitive to cultural contexts while being music-centred, not just those defined as Community Music Therapy practices. In his definition, Ruud (2004) places more emphasis on the “reflexive use of performance based-music therapy within a systemic perspective” (para 8).

Despite these differences of opinion, some authors agree that the practice of CoMT is not relegated to any specific setting (Ansdell, 2004; Pavlicevic, 2004; Stige, 2004). The people who access CoMT are not usually grouped together by particular diagnoses but more by social disadvantage (Stige, 2004). It can occur within institutions (Aasgaard, 2004; Maratos, 2004; Powell, 2004; Wood, Verney, & Atkinson, 2004), in community-based contexts (Bunt, 2004; Pavlicevic, 2004; Procter, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Zharinova-Sanderson, 2004), or it can involve both institutional and non-institutional settings in the one CoMT process (Wood et al., 2004). It may also involve the use of public arenas for performances (Stige, 2004). In sum, it occurs “wherever music or music-making is needed” (Ansdell, 2002, para. 22). Similarly, there are no specifically-designed techniques to be used by community music therapists. According to Stige (2004) community music therapists may use process- or product-oriented approaches. For instance, process-focused improvisations may be initially used to enable and empower individual members of a group, while public performances or the production of CDs may later be used to empower the community (Stige, 2004). Ruud (2004) disagrees, however, emphasising the importance of performance in Community Music Therapy practices for enabling the therapist “to negotiate the space between the private and the public, the client and the institution/other staff, or the client and the community. Without this negotiation there is no CoMT” (para. 2).

Although the nature of Community Music Therapy is still debated within music therapy literature, most authors agree that some of the associated techniques and approaches resemble the practices of community musicians. The relationship between Community Music Therapy and Community Music is important to review in the context of the present
research since it involves arts practices that are aligned with Community Music as well as with the broader area of Community Cultural Development.

The relationship between community music therapy and community music. With the new directions proposed by Community Music Therapy, music therapy practice seemed to be inching into the territory normally reserved for community musicians. As early as 1999, Australian music therapist Threlfall was openly considering the relationship between community music and music therapy. She noted that many Australian music therapists were working in community settings and not considering this work as therapy. Her article, published in a local AMTA newsletter, described how her own community music work was aimed at “creating a healthy and supportive environment” (1999, p. 12) even though the effects of work at this level were not reflected in the music therapy literature. She explained that her own definitions of music therapy and community music were the same: “the creative use of music to facilitate positive change for a person or community” (1999, p. 10). She has since developed these ideas to challenge the idea of music therapists ‘owning’ music-making in any situation (Threlfall, 2007).

By 2002, British music therapist Ansdell had also published his explorations of the relationship between music therapy and community music. In a discussion paper, he remarked how the new status of music therapy as a State Registered profession in the UK led to questions about how music therapists’ practices differ from those of community musicians. He asked, “Do music therapists and community musicians have different practices, or just different theories?” (2002, p. 111). One of the main theoretical frameworks guiding community musicians and other community artists in Australia is known as ‘Community Cultural Development’ or CCD. This framework guides the Arts Health movement that is rapidly growing in Australia and other countries. The main ideas underlying CCD will be now be examined.

Community Cultural Development (CCD)

‘Community Cultural Development’ (CCD) is another name for terms such as community arts, contemporary cultural practice or cultural action (Clark & Richards, 2006). It is a field of arts-work practised all over the world (Goldbard, 2006) and describes the work of artists and other community members “collaborating to express identity, concerns and aspirations” (Goldbard 2006, p. 20) through active participation in the arts and other cultural activities (Clark & Richards, 2006). The processes within CCD help communities to develop new artistic and social skills, express their identity through their stories and build creative and cultural capacity (Clark & Richards, 2006; Goldbard, 2006; VicHealth, 2003). In doing so, CCD can contribute to positive social change (Goldbard, 2006), especially as a "powerful means of awakening and mobilising resistance to imposed cultural values" (Goldbard, 2006, p.20).

Although there is no universally-accepted term for the work, CCD became the official label for community arts practice in Australia in 1987 (Goldbard, 2006). The most committed organization to the establishment of CCD practices in Australia is the
Australia Council for the Arts, despite its recent recommendations to change and cut back funding (Goldbard, 2006). Even before these recommendations were made, most CCD work still relied on short-term funding from philanthropic trusts, sponsorships and other government bodies (CAN SA, 2007). This means that CCD work is often in the form of short-term projects rather than long-term programs and, as a result, CCD artists are constantly looking for ways in which their work can be made more sustainable (CAN SA, 2007). Similarly, there has been little sustained financial support for CCD in other countries (Goldbard, 2006). According to Goldbard (2006), the struggles within the field to legitimize CCD as a profession, with its own journals, standards and training initiatives, are a direct consequence of this lack of financial support.

Although there are no widely accepted standards underlying CCD theory and practice (Goldbard, 2006), there is a loose framework of understanding (CAN SA, 2007) that draws on a variety of disciplines. The official Australian website (see www.ccd.net) for CCD suggests that there are three main principles underlying its practice:
1) cultural democracy, which refers to the importance and current lack of equally-distributed opportunities for all people to participate in artistic and cultural activities.
2) self-determination, which refers to a group or individual’s right and ability to create their own future by being involved at every level of any action concerning them, and
3) social justice, where cultural expression is seen as a means to emancipation and the artist’s role is an agent of change. Despite this principle, CCD is not posited as a form of welfare practice; it does not claim to save or rescue a community or its members.

The Arts Health Movement
Arts Health is a current movement that builds upon the theory and practice of community cultural development through a focus on the health of communities and society (Clifford & Kaspari, 2003). The term encapsulates the interaction of professional arts practice with health environments such as hospitals and health centres. The Arts Health movement is rapidly gaining momentum in Australia and in other countries under different names (Stige et al., 2010). Despite this momentum, artists in health settings generally face a lack of understanding and support for their work from other health professionals and funding bodies (Clifford & Kaspari, 2003). They are often expected by funding bodies to facilitate creative work around particular health issues, regardless of whether these issues are at the forefront of the participant’s motivation to be involved (Veltre, personal communication). Funding bodies and health professionals generally give far less credence to the health outcomes that naturally result from creative participation and instead seek a more explicit relationship to therapy.

These challenges are also shared by the music therapists who call for a more music-centered approach to music therapy. In fact, there are many more similarities between the Arts Health movement and the development of different arts therapies. According to Clifford and Kaspari (2003), the arts therapies are just part of the ‘arts health’ sector which also includes community cultural development, public art, architecture and health, art collections, health promotion and education. The similarities between the arts therapies and ‘arts health’ practices certainly inspire a need to define and understand the relationship between them.
The Relationship between Music Therapy and Community Cultural Development.

With a focus on communities rather than the individual, CCD and ‘arts health’ practices resemble the more radical approach to CoMT outlined by Stige (2002), where music therapy occurs “for change in a community” (p. 328). Clearly, the approaches are related. The findings of a recent study, however, imply that music therapy and the arts health practices that are part of ‘community music’ are not entirely interchangeable (O’Grady, 2005). Expanding on the assertion that “there is often a time to be private, and a time to be public in music therapy; a time for the nurturing of intimate communication; and a time for the performance of the fruits of achieved communication, skill and confidence” (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004, p. 23), O’Grady (2005) reported that those ‘times’ are most dependent on the health of the participant and that there are four distinct stages of health-care in which certain approaches to music-work are contraindicated. These stages are 1) acute illness/crisis, 2) rehabilitation, 3) community, and 4) well-being. Each stage of health-care suggests the appropriateness of different models of music-work due to the music participant’s varying needs and capabilities at each stage. For example, if music participants are in the acute stages of illness, they are likely to need a reduction or stabilisation of symptoms more than the development of new artistic or social skills. In this instance, approaches to music-work based on the previously-discussed conventional model of music therapy will be most appropriate (O’Grady & McFerran, 2007). On the other hand, the approaches implied by CCD and Community Music Therapy discourses are most appropriate and potentially interchangeable in the ‘community’ and ‘wellbeing’ stages of health-care.

Putting community music therapy in its place.

Extending from the results of this research is the notion that an individual’s readiness for change is perhaps the most important factor influencing the degree of success achieved by different therapeutic approaches and theories. This is because people’s problems are constantly in flux and changing, despite the fact that diagnoses suggest otherwise (Hubble, Duncan, & Miller, 1999). According to Prochaska (1999), there are specific and universal stages of change and providing treatments that match these stages bestows more successful outcomes on the process of therapy. Furthermore, different forms of therapies “are differentially effective with clients at different stages of change” (Norcross, 1999, p. xviii). So, rather than hailing Community Music Therapy as more powerful than all that has gone before it, it is important to understand where the practice of it fits in terms of people’s readiness for change.

In view of this, previous research already suggests that Community Music Therapy could be viewed as one approach to music therapy for people who are not in the stages of acute illness or crisis (O’Grady, 2005b). However, this idea is still too broad; more specific research is needed in order to establish the different stages of change that are appropriate to different approaches to music therapy. In this way, CoMT could be defined by the health of the people it involves rather than the musical methods that are utilised. This is in direct contrast with the common assertion that CoMT is defined more by music, community, culture and context rather than by health or pathology (Pavlicevic & Ansdell,
Defining music therapy instead by the stages of health and change that people traverse restores the explicit focus of music therapy to the role of music in human health across the entire health continuum.

Even though Community Music Therapy may be best suited to certain stages of change, the theories underlying its practice have certainly begun to broaden the therapeutic value accorded by music therapists to purely musical experiences. The therapeutic potentials of making music that have been articulated within CoMT discourse emphasise the individual, social, and communal possibilities and extend the therapeutic goals that were represented in Table 2. In order to better understand how these goals can be even further extended, the therapeutic potentials of making music as represented in early and more contemporary research into creativity will also be examined.

The Therapeutic Potentials of Creativity

Compared to most music therapists, past and present researchers of creativity use different language and ideas in order to discuss the type of transformations that can occur through experiences with music, other art-forms or indeed any creative act. Well before Wheeler (1983) had envisioned that the potential for making music as an activity therapy lay in its capacity to increase adaptive behaviours, early humanist psychologists Abraham Maslow and Rollo May were suggesting that creativity was the pathway to self-actualisation. These psychologists believed that the potentials for transformation through creativity were possible to achieve through the deeply absorbed encounters with the world that occur during creative processes (Maslow, 1959; May, 1975). Encounters such as these often lead to heightened states of consciousness and experiences of “non-self”; that is, a momentary suspension of the all-pervading sense of separateness from other objects or people in the outside world (Maslow, 1959; May, 1975). Described by Maslow (1959) as ‘peak experiences’, these states of consciousness give an individual a momentary sense of unity; “for the time being, the splits, polarities and disassociations within him tend to be resolved; the civil war within is neither won nor lost, but transcended” (p. 89). The therapeutic potentials of such experiences to transcend illness are highlighted by May (1975):

“This means that our fears and anxieties also tend to disappear. So also our depressions, conflicts, ambivalence, our worries, our problems, even our physical pains. Even – for the moment – our psychoses and our neuroses … For the time being, we are courageous and confident, unafraid, unanxious, unneurotic, not sick” (p. 37).

The humanists did not view creativity as being intrinsic to forms such as music; instead, the arts or any other activity were like portals through which the creative process could flow. This is supported by the more recent work of Csikszentmihalyi (2002), whose notion of ‘flow’ is very similar to Maslow’s ‘peak experiences’ and describes deep engagement in an activity where “consciousness is harmoniously ordered” (p. 6). According to Csikszentmihalyi (2002), it does not matter what the activity is, as long as it is appealing and moderately challenging enough to absorb an individual’s awareness.
This suggests that therapies based on activities of some sort may all be united by the potential for an individual to experience ‘flow’ through deep absorption in the activity. Artistic activity, via any art-form, is one way of channeling the therapeutic potentials of the creative process. In other words, the different art-forms are microsystems of the larger ‘creative energy’ that permeates nature (McNiff, 2004). This, however, is not reflected within the literature of the arts therapies; there has typically been little emphasis on the community of art-forms and the things they share (McNiff, 2004). When viewed as separate entities, it seems possible to pit the art-forms against each other and argue that music is the most powerful of all (Cameron, 2005; Maslow, 1952). However, when all art-forms are understood as parts of a creative whole and therefore combined to work together, the individual creative energies of each art-form are strengthened and the overall creative energy is at its peak. Theatre is the greatest expression of this, combining the creative energy of all art-forms and as such “is the genre through which all creative expressions … complement one another and aspire toward the full unfolding of the intelligence of imagination” (McNiff, 2004, p. 94).

Creativity in Music Therapy

The connection between creativity and music therapy was articulated explicitly in an early model of music therapy, called Creative Music Therapy. Developed by Clive Robbins and Paul Nordoff, Creative Music Therapy is an improvisational approach to individual and group therapy that was initially used with disabled children in a variety of settings (Bruscia, 1987). Music therapy is explicitly linked to creativity through the name given to this approach, however ‘creative’ in this instance refers mainly to the therapist who creates “the musical resources to be used within each therapeutic experience, the therapeutic experiences and techniques to be used in each clinical circumstance, and the process whereby these experiences and techniques are sequenced” (Bruscia, 1987, p. 24). Despite its focus on the creativity required by the therapist, however, the primary purpose of Creative Music Therapy is to engage the client in pure music-making through which the therapy is believed to take place (Aigen, 2005).

Although Bruscia (1998) clearly asserts that “music therapy is creativity-centred” (p. 42), the connection between creativity and music therapy seems largely and implicitly assumed in contemporary discourse. Wigram (2006) suggests that this may be because in the early development of music therapy, creativity was potentially over-used as a concept to explain the therapeutic value of music therapy. Creativity in music therapy is now most explicitly linked to the technique of improvisation where it is assumed that “as the client goes through their therapeutic process at some stage they will begin to develop their own skills and potentials, using music in a creative way (Wigram, 2006 p. 223). Improvisation, and subsequently creativity, is fundamental to Aesthetic Music Therapy (Lee, 2006). In this approach improvisation is understood as a non-verbal means of communication that enables a person “to express every aspect of one’s living through music … (thereby) encapsulat(ing) the true essence of creativity in music therapy” (Lee, 2006, p. 250).
Despite these explicit links between creativity and music therapy, the creative processes involved in clinical improvisations or song-writing remain relatively unexplored. For example, in a recent text concerning the use of songwriting in music therapy (Wigram & Baker, 2005) songwriting is only incidentally acknowledged as a creative act. It is predominantly discussed as a way to experience mastery, increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety, anger and tension, improve coping and social interactions, facilitate self-expression, learning, develop insight and problem-solving skills and provide support (Wigram, 2005). In contrast, Aigen (2005) includes creativity as one of the five important dimensions of music-centered practice. He emphasises that creativity is important for its life-affirming potential: “Engagement in creative activity, particularly music, is therapeutic because it provides both access to and field for the development of the individual’s capacity for embracing creation and, hence, life itself” (Aigen, 2005, p. 94). Therefore, he argues, to stimulate people’s creative capacities is a legitimate clinical goal in music therapy.

The relationship between therapy and creativity. Despite the limited exploration of creativity in music therapy, therapists “often draw parallels between the creative process and the therapeutic process” (Bruscia, 1998, p. 43). This is because both processes are healing (Cameron, 2002; Moller, 2003) and involve transformation of some sort (Cameron, 2002) as well as a type of problem solving (Bruscia, 1998). McNiff (2004) argues that the processes involved in the arts therapies are part of broader creative processes, however many authors argue that creative and therapeutic processes are built on two entirely different sets of assumptions. Cameron (2002) asserts this distinction very strongly:

“Therapy aims at making us normal. Art aims at expressing our originality … Therapy adjusts us to the world. Art adjusts the world itself … Therapy constructs a self; art presupposes and asserts a self … Therapy makes something of what we were, while art makes something of what we are … Therapy aims to make us at peace with our grudges while art is more anarchistic. Art is more aggressive and more assertive than therapy. It is an action, not a reaction” (p. 62-64).

Cameron further suggests that the virtues required by therapists are very different from those of an artist: "For an artist, being too virtuous is no virtue at all. It is destructive and counterproductive" (2002, p. 102).

The processes of therapy and creativity are also presented as similar but distinct within music therapy literature. According to Bruscia (1998), "going through the various phases of artistic creation is not the same as engaging in the process of therapy" (p. 36). He argues that therapy is always a systematic process of assessment, treatment and evaluation that requires the involvement of a therapist. Bruscia (1998) also delineates between the terms ‘therapy’ and ‘therapeutic’, arguing that every experience that turns out be therapeutic does not qualify as therapy since therapy is a systematic process rather than a serendipitous outcome. This contradicts, however, his inclusion of “Music as Aesthetic Experience” as a model of music therapy. In this model, music experience is not designed prescriptively nor systematically according to therapeutic goals and "the
dynamic motivation is experiencing music in and of itself, and for its own sake, rather than for the sake of the therapy process" (p. 147). In this model, "art is therapy, even when not intentionally undertaken for that purpose"(148). This model of music therapy in particular highlights the blurred boundaries between creativity and therapy.

The boundaries between creativity and therapy are more clearly defined when examining the processes involved. Conventional music therapy processes involve some type of assessment, treatment and evaluation (Bruscia, 1998) whereas creative processes do not. The systematic nature of therapy means that its processes are more easily mapped than those of creativity. Indeed, many artists rail against any attempt to understand the creative process for fear it will ‘kill the muse’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2005; Dacey & Lennon, 1998). This notion is aligned with the idea that the benefits of creativity cannot be pursued, they only ever really occur through a whole-hearted focus on the creative endeavour itself. Might this also be true of some of the therapeutic outcomes articulated within the arts therapies?

Mapping the Creative Process

In support of the desire of many artists not to unduly demystify the creative process, it is generally accepted that the creative process can never be fully mapped or predicted and that there are always surprises and mystery involved (Cameron, 2002; McNiff, 2004). This intangibility has contributed to the neglect of creativity within scientific research (Dacey & Lennon, 1998) and possibly to the limited regard accorded it within health settings. Nevertheless, there do seem to be some commonly discussed elements of the creative process. These include the creative space, the primary and secondary processes, and shifts of awareness. The creative ‘space’ tends to be a common starting point for artists.

The creative space.
The creative space often refers to the intangible creative energy found or made in the physical environments where art is enacted. Crucial to the notion of the creative space is the idea that the physical environment can influence the creative process equally, if not more, than any individual person involved. According to McNiff (2004),

“It may be very important in our research and practice to avoid an exclusive focus on the person who makes the art object and to expand our attention to the relationship among people, materials and spaces. What do these things do to us?” (p. 21).

Our interactions with physical space are not sufficiently consistent or generalisable to have attracted much research. Despite this, they do influence our feelings, attitudes and responses and in so doing, form part of what we understand to be ‘the creative space’.

The creative space is similar to Pavlicevic’s idea of ‘music space’ (Pavlicevic, 2003), which incorporates physical, social, mental and emotional elements. Its intangible nature is highlighted by Pavlicevic’s suggestion that music therapists need to make sense of what is happening inside the music space by ‘tuning in’ with all of their senses, all of the
time. Obviously then, the phenomenon of the creative space is not to be solely understood through the intellect and for this reason it risks being dismissed as too ethereal to be real.

**Primary and secondary processes.**

Another aspect of the creative process that is often referred to or implicitly assumed is that most clearly outlined decades ago by Maslow (1959) as the primary and secondary processes of creativity. The primary processes refer to the intuitive factors involved in creativity, whilst the secondary processes refer to the more rational elements. Maslow (1959) explains the distinction in the following way:

"The great work needs not only the flash, the inspiration, the peak experience, it also needs hard work, long training, unrelenting criticism, perfectionistic standards. In other words, succeeding upon the spontaneous is the deliberate; succeeding upon total acceptance comes criticism; succeeding upon intuition comes rigorous thought; succeeding upon daring comes caution; succeeding upon fantasy and imagination comes reality testing ... Now come the comparisons, the judgements, the evaluations, the cold, calculating, morning-after thoughts, the selections and the rejections" (p. 91).

This idea is still prevalent today. For example, it emerged in Nelson’s recent study (2005) of the creative processes of individual artists as the interplay between intuitive and analytical thought processes. According to Nelson, the intuitive (primary) processes are more predominant than the analytical (secondary) processes. This is also implicitly reinforced by Cameron (2002), who writes: "As artists, we may perform in public, we may publish or show in public, but we must invoke and rehearse and practice and incubate and first execute within a circle of safety and privacy" (p.117).

**Shifts of awareness.**

Other aspects of the creative process that are commonly referred to can be grouped together as different shifts of awareness. Many creativity researchers discuss the deep absorption that can occur during creative activities (Cameron, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Maslow, 1959; May, 1975; McNiff, 2004; Nelson, 2005). The shifts of awareness that accompany this deep absorption in an activity are typified by a movement in and out of self-awareness (Nelson, 2005). These shifts of awareness can sometimes result in an individual’s sense that they are no longer in control of the activity and that instead the source of the activity stems from something outside of themselves (Nelson, 2005). This shift of awareness can also lead to a momentary sense of unity between the self and the outside world, known as ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) or ‘peak experience’ (Maslow, 1962).

Most examinations so far into the therapeutic potentials accessible through artistic creativity have mainly focused on an individual’s interaction with the art-form (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003a). Until recently, the processes involved in group creativity have been left relatively unexamined. This may be due to some evidence that groups inhibit creative performance through their inclination to achieve premature consensus and lower individual accountability (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003a). This is in direct contrast, however, with recent suggestions that groups have the ideal capacity to generate much more
energy, creativity and therapeutic power than an individual (McNiff, 2004; Paulus & Nijstad, 2003a). The idea that groups are more problematic than individuals may also be reflected within the music therapy literature, where there is a general dearth of exploration of the practice of music therapy with groups in general (Pavlicevic, 2003).

The creative process for groups.
Recent explorations of group creativity have been predominantly cognitive-behavioural in orientation and associated with innovations in corporate organisations designed to increase productivity (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003a). In this context, groups are renowned for being less productive than individuals (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003a) even though their potential is far greater (Milliken, Bartel, & Kurtzberg, 2003). In view of this, past creativity research suggested that individuals should work alone when productivity was paramount (Paulus & Brown, 2003). Current research suggests that groups seem almost counterintuitive to creativity due to their commonly-shared drive to reach consensus (Nemeth & Nemeth-Brown, 2003). This often means that ideas are prematurely agreed upon and majority views predominate (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b).

Counter to consensus is diversity and this is possibly one of the most important factors for group creativity. According to Paulus and Nijstad (2003b), “a group’s creative potential first and foremost depends on the level of diversity in the group” (p. 327), particularly in regard to attributes such as education, values and personality (Milliken et al., 2003). Diversity in these areas increases a group’s social capital from which deeper levels of group creativity can emerge (Hooker, Nakamura, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

In addition to a strong association between creativity and diversity within a group, collaborative creativity seems also to be served by an open yet critical climate amongst group members (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b). It is not ideal when groups are restrictive, overly critical and low in trust and yet, on the other hand, too much group cohesion is also unhelpful (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b). Trust is very important (West, 2003) yet so is a critical norm that prevents premature decisions being made in pursuit of consensus. In other words, “groups need to be open and safe and group members should feel free to offer ‘crazy’ ideas; at the same time, there should be room for debate and constructive controversy” (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b, p.330).

Perhaps this can be best explained in terms of the ideal timing of divergent and convergent processes in group creativity. These processes are similar to the primary and secondary processes articulated earlier by Maslow (1959). Divergent processes focus on the generation of ideas. Here the key is quantity rather than quality and consequently some ideas may seem irrelevant or contradictory to other ideas (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b). Convergent processes require these ideas to be brought together into some coherent form (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b). Divergent and convergent processes require different capacities from group members: divergent processes require group members to remain open to all ideas while convergent processes involve group members in some form of critical evaluation (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b). Similar to Maslow’s primary and secondary processes, divergent processes come before convergent processes and it is important to separate the two. In other words, “do not critically evaluate ideas when they
are being suggested, but stimulate debate and criticism when ideas need to be selected and implemented” (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b, p.330-1).

Group creativity is also heightened when group members are intrinsically motivated to create (Hennessey, 2003). More often than not, intrinsic motivation stems from the sheer pleasure of creating when there are no external factors constraining the process. This is when creating feels most like ‘play’ (Paulus & Brown, 2003). In contrast, extrinsic motivations commonly involve rewards or evaluations from others and are considered “killers of motivation and creativity” (Hennessey, 2003, p. 188). Extrinsic motivations are often set up by larger organisations in which groups create. These organisations need to value and understand creativity in order for it to flourish (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b).

**Group creativity in music therapy.**

Group creativity in the form of making music has been addressed within music therapy literature mainly by Pavlicevic (2003). In her exploration of this topic, Pavlicevic uses ideas familiar to creativity theory, such as ‘flow’ and the ‘creative space’, and specifically relates them to group music therapy. Pavlicevic (2003) describes ‘flow’ within group music-making as either ‘interpersonal flowing’, which she defines as the "micro-adjustments of gestures and acts (in all senses of the word) in order to engage with other human beings" (p. 115), or as ‘finding a common groove’ where there is “enough temporal 'slack' within the music collaboratively being made to accommodate the temporal 'discrepancies' of each individual” (p. 187). Both ‘interpersonal flowing’ and ‘finding a common groove’ refer to the same momentary experience of flow but, unlike the early humanists, Pavlicevic (2003) does not present this as necessarily positive or health-enhancing. She argues that “there can be as much flow in a collective fragmentation, unease and even in group conflict” (p. 122). Pavlicevic (2003) also cautions that the experience of being part of a greater whole, which often accompanies ‘flow’, can be both “enriching and destructive” (p.104). In this way, she provides an unsentimental and pragmatic portrayal of the potentials for change during collaborative creative acts in music therapy while also highlighting the importance of dissent and destruction in creativity. Perhaps this last point is where therapy and creativity differ the most: therapists try to resolve dissent and destruction (Cameron, 2002) whereas artists embrace it as vital to the creative process (McNiff, 2004).

The therapeutic potentials of making music are multifarious when considering the literature from creativity research, general music therapy literature, community cultural development as well as community music therapy discourse. Table 3 draws these ideas together by comparing the main therapeutic potentials and therapeutic means highlighted within each academic field. It adapts and builds upon the information contained in Table 2.
In drawing together the ideas underlying four different approaches to using the arts to facilitate change, Table 3 highlights the limitations in using only one of these approaches. In particular, the review of Creativity Research suggests that some of the therapeutic potentials of music may be related more broadly to the therapeutic potentials of the creative process and music may therefore provide some of the same therapeutic potentials as other art-forms. In view of this, Creativity Research may be an important area for developing indigenous theories that are relevant across all the arts therapies.

According to Australian music therapists Daveson and O’Callaghan (2008), indigenous music therapy theory “refers to knowledge emergent from music therapy relationships within music therapy” (p. 282). However, this is based on the assumption that music is unique in its therapeutic potential and that, therefore, music therapy is a unique practice.
Since, however, some of the therapeutic potentials of music may be related more broadly to the therapeutic potentials of the creative process, perhaps it is more feasible to develop indigenous theories for music therapy and other arts therapies based on explorations of the creative process involved in all of these art-forms. This would not require music therapists or other arts therapists to borrow theory from other academic disciplines to form its basis, since creativity is the foundation of all art-forms and thus all arts therapies (McNiff, 2004).

**Rationale for the Present Research**

The need for indigenous theories to explain the work of arts therapists is perhaps no more evident than in the literature concerning music therapy in forensic contexts. As editors of a special journal issue devoted to the topic, Ficken and Gardstrom (2002) lament “the preponderance of behavioural approaches and activity-based protocols” (p. 54). This may be due in part to a general lack of research within forensic health, particularly concerning female prisoners, however it is also in part due to the limitations of the theoretical frameworks borrowed by music therapists to fully and accurately explain their work in forensic contexts. Although Ficken and Gardstrom (2002) suggest that the proliferation of behavioural approaches to music therapy in forensic settings should be counteracted with examples of psychotherapeutic approaches, an aim of the present research is instead to contribute to the development of indigenous theory; to raise ‘activity-based protocols’ to new heights by illuminating their creative and therapeutic value through the experiences and language of the artists and music-makers involved in this research rather than through theories borrowed from psychotherapy or behavioural traditions.

The distinction between indigenous and borrowed theories has important implications for women in prison, especially if their well-being is not only undernourished in the broader literature (Wyatt 2002) but also limited in reality by behavioural approaches to therapy (Ficken & Gardstrom, 2002). The need for different therapeutic approaches according to an individual’s readiness for change has been highlighted as a relevant consideration. Behavioural approaches are not best suited to all the stages of change that an individual moves through and therefore do not complete the picture of the therapeutic potential of making music in environments such as prisons (O’Grady & McFerran-Skewes, 2007). The purpose underlying the present research, therefore, is to explore the therapeutic potentials of an alternative approach to making and performing music within a women’s prison. An emphasis on creativity and its therapeutic potential is fundamental to this alternative approach while the budding theoretical framework for Community Music Therapy is also relevant to the group music-making involved in this research. As researcher, I hope that this investigation of a different approach to making music with women in prison will outline new potentials for music therapy but more importantly, new potentials for the health and wellbeing of women in prison.

*Coda*
In this chapter, the ideas underlying the present research have been examined in terms of the existing literature. Different perspectives regarding the therapeutic potentials of performance have been reviewed while ideas relating to the creative process have been highlighted as extremely relevant to this research. The therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music have been reviewed from four different perspectives: 1) general music therapy literature, 2) community music therapy discourse, 3) community cultural development discourse, and 4) creativity research. Ideas from these different perspectives have been drawn together to explain the rationale for the present research.

The following chapter continues to introduce the research and the ideas behind it by presenting the epistemological stance underlying the research design. First, however, the second scene from the musical performed by the participating women in prison and artists from the theatre company is presented. The reader may choose to supplement the lyrics in this scene by listening to their musical accompaniment on the second track in Appendix 8.
Scene 2: The Shadowlands

*Enter GALLI and LEO.*

*Leo.* Morning Galli!

*Galli.* Morning Leo.

*Leo.* How are you?

*Galli.* Supernova!

*Leo.* We've got a lot of work to do today. Scope at the ready?

*Galli.* Ready, set.

*Leo.* It's a very auspicious time. Planets are aligning and we're at the forefront of a major astronomical breakthrough!

*Galli.* Once in every 1012 years and guess who is going to capture it?

*Leo.* “Dr Leo and Dr Galli, we present you with this year’s Nobel Prize for your groundbreaking work on the planetary alignment!”

*Galli.* I'd like to thank Mum and Dad, my sisters, my dear friend and colleague Dr Leo. Thankyou one and ALL! Oops! *(knocks telescope)*

*Leo.* *(Rushing to the telescope)* It's moved! You moved it!

*Galli.* It was only a little bump. Can't have moved that much.

*Leo.* A little bump! Now where are we? We're lost! Galli, I can't believe you did that!

*Galli.* We can put it back.

*Leo.* You can't just put it back. We've been working for decades on this! All that work! All that time! Ohhhh, we're ruined. Ruined! We'll be back to the lab, dissecting rats tomorrow!
Galli. *(Looking through the telescope)* Leo, did you clean the lens?
Leo. Of course I did.
Galli. You can’t have. Looks like a bit of fly poop. Could be a dark star. Nah, it can’t be. It’s not meant to be there for another million years. Must be fly poop!
Leo. Show me! *(looks through the lens)* Galli...
Galli. *(Expecting to be hit)* Leo..
Leo. It IS the dark star. *(They both start to sing “Gallileo” from Queen’s Bohemian Rhapsody)* Call NASA!
Galli. Get them to send a probe!
Leo. We need to find out all there is to know!
Galli. *How it works*
Leo. *How old it is*
Galli. *What’s inside*
Leo. Most important! Get them to take a sample! The whole world will want to know!
Galli. We’re gonna be famous!
Leo. The dark star will be famous!

Boom of thunder. Enter DARK STAR to the side. GALLI and LEO freeze.

Dark Star. What if I don’t want to be famous? I stay in the shadows for a reason. No-one’s taking a bit of me away to be analysed. My story is my own. It’s not ready to be told. But when the time comes, the voice that tells it will be MINE.

A djembe beat begins, in the rhythm of a heart-beat. Piano enters in time with the heart-beat followed by a soft but distorted electric guitar and a piercing flute. DARK STAR and others begin to dance an abstract but structured series of movements that play with the notion of shadows. DARK STAR begins to sing:

*(CD Listening: Track 2)*
Slam into my world
Demand to know my pain
But it's mine to keep
With the paper hoops of sleep
I ask not for understanding
But a little space
A little room

I sleep in incubation
You search for illumination
I am trying not to miss you
I am trying not to breathe

Minute dreams of daylight
In this haunted hallowed space
Of mine
Slowly erasing time
I cup the hands of memory
Around the tiny flames

I sleep in incubation
You search for illumination
I am trying not to miss you
I am trying not to breathe
Philosophical Approach to Designing the Research

The myriad ways in which a study can be designed to suit a research question is both liberating and constraining. A pragmatic approach to designing a study employs the methods that are most likely to answer the research question (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Ultimately, however, the question being asked and the choices made by the researcher concerning research method are inextricably linked to his or her own value system and set of beliefs about the nature of reality (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002; Bruscia, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fossey et al., 2002; Mason, 2002). Although these beliefs can never be proven or falsified, a transparent explanation of how these beliefs have influenced the research enables the reader to be more easily aware of the assumptions on which the new knowledge has been created and therefore to be more critically aware of the information he or she is ingesting (Aigen, 2005b).

Consequently, this chapter begins with an explanation of how my beliefs regarding truth and the ways in which it can be apprehended have influenced the design of this research. The assumptions underlying the qualitative paradigm are explored with a focus on constructivist perspectives in qualitative research. Following this, an exploration of the particular assumptions that informed more specific aspects of the research design such as the qualitative case study and the approach to data analysis is presented. The role of feminism in this research is also addressed. Finally, the specific beliefs and experiences that led me to this research are articulated, followed by an outline of my motivations and intentions in conducting the study.

Ontology and Epistemology

A researcher’s beliefs about the nature of truth and how truth may come to be known permeates his or her research and forms part of the overall paradigm within which the particular research is situated (Aigen, 2005b). ‘Ontology’ refers to a person’s beliefs about the nature of truth while ‘epistemology’ refers to his or her beliefs about how truth may come to be known; it is, in other words, “the path we take to knowing something based on our beliefs” (Shoemark, 2007, p. 60). Different ontological and epistemological assumptions contribute to different paradigmatic frameworks; for example, the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm is based on the belief that reality is not external or fixed, but fluid and actively constructed by individuals. Hence, reality is local and specific to context but elements are often shared across individuals and contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fossey et al., 2002; Mason, 2002). In contrast, the positivist paradigm is based on the assumption that a ‘knowable’ and external reality exists. This reality is context-free, therefore, reality is generalisable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, the researcher and ‘object’ of research are assumed to be interactively linked and, together, they create the findings as the study proceeds. Therefore, the research process and findings cannot be value-free (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fossey et al., 2002; Mason, 2002). On the other hand, inherent within the positivist paradigm is the assumption that the researcher and ‘object’ are independent of each other and therefore the research is uninfluenced by the researcher’s beliefs or assumptions.
Consequently, human behaviour can be quantified or reduced in the same way as natural phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The present research is aligned with the ontological and epistemological beliefs associated with the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm. I consider the truths that I construct through this research to be inextricably linked to my own beliefs and experiences but rather than seeing these as biases I hold them as important resources for me in learning about the particular realities that I have explored in this research. I do not consider my constructions of truth to be the only constructions possible; nevertheless I still hope that they prove helpful to other people in constructing their own truths about related phenomena.

Qualitative research seems almost synonymous with the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, however it is not limited to this paradigm. Qualitative methods may be used by positivist researchers, for example, albeit in different ways and for different purposes (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Nevertheless, the design of the present study is based on a qualitative framework that is steeped in the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm. Supported by these two constructs, the research incorporates a variety of qualitative methods including the intrinsic case study as well as analysis techniques associated with grounded theory, phenomenology and content analysis. The practical uses of these methods are outlined in the following chapter. The present chapter explicates more of the philosophical approach to these methods.

A Qualitative Framework

Although it may be true that the divide between qualitative and quantitative research is more of an artificial polarisation rather than a reality (Lloyd-Jones, 2003), contemplation of the distinct features is useful for clarifying one’s own research stance. Some authors suggest that the application of qualitative or quantitative methods to research is a choice rather than a natural extension of a researcher’s beliefs. From this position, the chosen framework and subsequent methods should be congruent with the nature of the case being studied (Anderson, Crabtree, Steele, & McDaniel, 2005).

Qualitative research usually refers to “research methodologies that describe and explain human experiences, behaviours, interactions and social contexts without the use of statistical procedures or quantification” (Fossey et al., 2002, p.717). According to Cresswell (1998) qualitative research is well suited to investigating interactions between people in their natural environment as well as situations in which the research questions begin with “how” or “what”, the variables are not easily identified, and theories do not yet successfully explain the phenomenon.

The present research examines the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of human interactions and experiences with music in the context of a women’s prison. A qualitative framework is particularly conducive to research in prisons, considering that the variables within prison environments are usually highly difficult to control and identify even outside of the research context. In view of this, and in view of the interpretivist-constructivist position
underlying this research, a qualitative framework is suitable and appropriate for the present study.

It is becoming increasingly common for research to provide some sort of balance between the polarities of quantitative and qualitative research. A mixed methods approach is the most explicit way of doing so, whereby both forms of data are collected and analysed in the one study (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). However, blending of the two types of research occurs less overtly in other ways; for example, when quantitative results are contextualized within the local reality from which they are taken or when qualitative findings are presented as completely generalisable. Grounded theory is a prime example of the undefined middle ground between these paradigm poles.

Grounded theory and the paradigm poles.
The development of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s was an attempt to link the creation of theory more closely to empirical research (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Technically a qualitative research method, grounded theory has historically shared more in common with positivistic approaches than other qualitative methods (Aigen, 1995) and as such has provided many researchers with “a template for doing qualitative research stamped with positivist approval” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 509). Within the field of music therapy, for example, Daveson, O’Callaghan and Grocke (2008) have developed a hierarchy of grounded theory investigations in music therapy, with the highest level in the hierarchy reserved for studies whose power to generalise is not limited to time and place due to their ‘complete’ use of grounded theory techniques. These authors advocate for a distinction to be made between ‘complete’ grounded theory studies and those that modify the method in ways that render findings non-generalisable.

A more constructivist approach to grounded theory is outlined by Charmaz (2005): “A constructivist grounded theory adopts grounded theory guidelines as tools but does not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions in its earlier formulations” (p. 509). Instead, a constructivist approach to grounded theory values context-bound statements over generalisations while framing each statement as a mental construction co-created between the biographies and interests of the researcher and research participant, as well as the research context. A particular strength of grounded theory methods in constructivist research is that “they provide tools for analysing processes” (Charmaz 2005, p. 508), offering abstracted statements about the conditions and consequences that form part of these processes. Consequently, the processes themselves are emphasized more than the methods used to examine them.

In this study, I use all the steps associated with grounded theory analysis to answer the research questions. Like Charmaz (2005), I value the context-bound nature of my analyses over their ability to generalise. Furthermore, I do not subscribe to the hierarchical concept of ‘complete’ grounded theory studies offered by Daveson, O’Callaghan and Grocke (2008) since I value more the capacity of grounded theory to explicate processes rather than confirm their generalisability. I believe that approaching grounded theory research in this way should be considered as ‘complete’ and useful to
the music therapy profession as the post-positivist approach esteemed by Daveson, O’Callaghan and Grocke (2008).

The Qualitative Case Study

The constructivist approach to grounded theory is strongly aligned with the qualitative case study, which is defined by the researcher’s interest in an individual case and not by the methods of inquiry used (Lloyd-Jones, 2003; McDonnell, Jones, & Read, 2000; Rosenberg & Yates, 2007; Smeijsters & Aasgaard, 2005; Stake, 2005). Case study research is particularly appropriate when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being asked of a real-life situation and when the researcher has little control over the events in that particular context (McDonnell et al., 2000). Although some researchers suggest that case study designs are typically associated with qualitative research (Kyburz-Graber, 2004), there are many ways to design a case study, including the use of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods frameworks (Rosenberg & Yates, 2007).

The issues central to qualitative case studies are usually complex relationships that require observation, reflection and thick descriptions (Stake, 2005). Furthermore, qualitative case study researchers typically focus on experiential knowledge of the case in order to formulate research questions and provide an important addition to the data (McDonnell et al., 2000; Rosenberg & Yates, 2007; Stake, 2005). This emphasis on experiential knowledge usually leads to a richness of data, which is a particular strength of case study research (McDonnell et al., 2000).

Stake (2005) identifies a particular form of qualitative case study, which he calls the ‘intrinsic case study’. According to Stake, an intrinsic case study is undertaken because, rather than wanting to know what it is a case of, one wants a better understanding of this particular case. "It is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but instead because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest" (Stake, 2005, p. 445). The present research fits most easily into this form of case study because the underlying purpose was to explore the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music for a particular group of women in prison rather than to propose a more general, universal explanation.

In this way, the present research does not seek to generalize its findings. The capacity for case study research to make valid generalizations has often been questioned by researchers (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Kyburz-Graber, 2004). However, when teamed with a constructivist’s view of reality, such a criticism can be seen more as a misunderstanding about the value of different forms of knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake, 2005). According to Flyvbjerg, misunderstandings concerning case studies mainly arise from the assumption that general, theoretical, context-independent knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical context-dependent knowledge. He argues that formal generalisation is overvalued by science whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated, and suggests that case knowledge is central to human learning. Similarly, Stake (2005)
argues that "damage occurs when the commitment to generalise … runs so strong that the researcher's attention is drawn away from features important for understanding the case itself" (p. 448).

Aldridge (2005) presents the case study as a highly suitable form of research for the discipline of music therapy. He promotes both qualitative and quantitative case study research to music therapy researchers as a move towards more "formalised, rigorous presentation of practitioners thinking deeply about the meaning of their work and its implications for practice" (Aldridge, 2005, p.10). The case study, he argues, has a flexible design and therefore allows music therapy practice to remain as ‘natural’ as possible while under examination. Furthermore, "building theories from practice examples is a particular strength of the case study approach for the arts therapies in general" (Aldridge, 2005, p. 12).

**Triangulation and crystallisation.**

Qualitative case studies draw upon a variety of sources of data in order to depict the case in as whole a manner as possible (Smeijsters & Aasgaard, 2005). This technique is referred to as triangulation. In line with the epistemology of the present study, the construct of triangulation is replaced with one of ‘crystallisation’. Historically, the notion of triangulation is built on the assumption that truth is absolute and verifiable, and can be more readily accessed if more than one or two sources of data are examined (Bruscia, 1995; Stake, 2005). However, according to Richardson (2005) “there are far more than 'three sides' by which to approach the world. We do not triangulate; we crystallize” (p.963). Richardson explains her use of this metaphor further:

> The central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach … Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose (p.963).

The present study reflects and refracts a variety of perspectives from four different sources of information: 1) songs created in collaboration with the women in prison, 2) interviews with the women in prison, 3) interviews with artists from the theatre company, and 4) session notes written by me. Through these sources of information I am able to construct just some of the infinite number of ‘prisms’ through which the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music within a women’s prison can be illuminated.

**The role of feminism in qualitative research.**

It is widely acknowledged that feminist theory has restructured, and is still restructuring, qualitative research practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mason, 2002; Stige, 2002). Although there is a wide variety of theories, methods, topics and epistemologies available within the rhetoric of ‘feminist theory’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Hadley, 2006), a common concern for all feminist researchers is to establish collaborative and non-exploitative relationships with research participants whilst situating themselves within the research in order to increase transparency and avoid objectifying participants (Denzin &
Lincoln, 2005). These tenets of feminist theory are now common practice in qualitative research.

Feminist research can also involve minorities or people who are seen as oppressed by broader social paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and females are often the focus of such research (Mason, 2002). The research participants in the case presently under examination are all women and some of these are prisoners. Feminist researchers predominantly view female prisoners as a deeply marginalized, silenced population. Some of the literature concerning this idea is reviewed in chapter 5. Many of the ideas underlying the work of the theatre company are also easily aligned with feminist theory, and these links are identified towards the end of this chapter where my experiences with the theatre company are presented.

Feminist perspectives are sparse in the music therapy literature (Hadley & Edwards, 2004). In a recent book that explicitly connects feminist theory to music therapy practice, Hadley (2006) identifies numerous approaches to feminism. The present research can be located most easily within the ‘postmodern feminist’ approach identified by Hadley (2006). This approach reflects the view that “identities are discursively constructed and are multiple and malleable in nature” (Hadley, 2006, p. 14) and that the meaning of “woman” changes according to different contexts (Hadley, 2006). In presenting women’s ideas and experiences related to the therapeutic potentials of participation in the arts, this research does not represent a critique of patriarchy or power imbalance, nor is there a focus on gender, race or class as systems of oppression. Instead, in this research the notion of ‘woman’ is treated as fluid, individually interpreted and larger than the discursive constructions used to describe it.

**The role of theory in qualitative research.**

Theories that are developed from qualitative research are, according to Strauss & Corbin (1994), “interpretations made from given perspectives as adopted or researched by researchers” (p. 279). In other words, theories are always created (Bruscia, 2005). Empirical theories in qualitative research are attempts “to conceptualize a phenomenon based on some form of systematic observation, inquiry, or research investigation” (Bruscia, 2005, p. 544). They can be expressed as narrative statements, visual pictures, or a series of propositions (Creswell, 1998) and although their interpretive nature means that they are not presented as objective truths, theories can still be judged on their soundness and usefulness (Strauss et al., 1994). Furthermore, theory goes beyond description and conceptual ordering by systematically integrating concepts through statements of their relationship to a central or core category (Daveson, O'Callaghan, & Grocke, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Theory is central to music therapy because it shapes and is shaped by practice and research (Bruscia, 2005) although according to Aigen (2005a) clinical theory is usually resistant to being tested by quantitative research procedures. Music therapy theory is still important, however, as it provides the explanation for what music therapists do, why they do it, and how music therapy works. This has important ramifications for participants in music therapy as well as for music therapists who need to communicate their work to
other professionals. In the music therapy context, theory resulting from qualitative research is useful for its explanatory power rather than its ability to be tested (Aigen, 2005a).

The theories proposed within the present research are offered as one way of explaining the particular case under examination. The theories are grounded in the data generated as part of this study and are also informed by my five year’s experience as a musician working with women in prison. This is now discussed in more detail.

_Situating the Researcher in the Research_

As data was being generated for this study, I moved constantly between two different roles: musical director/workshop facilitator, and researcher. As musical director/workshop facilitator, I was concerned with continuing my work as usual within the theatre company. In this role I collaborated with women in writing songs and script, directed the rehearsals and performed musically alongside the women. As researcher, I designed and implemented the research as well as writing extensive session notes and analysing the data. As a consequence of these roles, my voice permeates this study. It is therefore important that I locate myself in relation to the research and present background information regarding this ‘voice’.

Authors often suggest that qualitative researchers need to articulate their prior beliefs and experiences that have shaped the research, their motivations for conducting the research, and their relationship with research participants (Aigen, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Shoemark, 2007). Some authors also encourage qualitative researchers to be transparent about the influence of their cultural memberships, including class, gender, age, and race, on the research they conduct (Aigen, 2005b). However I believe that, in the context of the present research, this type of information is less useful for the reader because it is not as easy, efficient or even desirable to make such direct and simple connections between the research and these facts. Instead, the following section outlines to the best of my knowledge how my prior beliefs and experiences have shaped the research, as well as my motivations for conducting the research and my relationship to the research participants.

**Prior beliefs and experiences.**

The most influential factor leading to my creation of this case study was my role as the musical director of the theatre company. I had worked with this theatre company for five years at the time the data was collected, commencing the work directly after having completed my training as a music therapist. In general, my work involved the facilitation of weekly music workshops in the prison which were structured to engage women in a creative and musical process. Many musical outcomes from these workshops, mainly in the form of original songs, formed the musical elements of the annual theatre performances organised by the theatre company. Each year, impending performances saw my role change from ‘collaborative music creator’ to ‘musical director’, rehearsing the women for their upcoming performances and helping to ensure their musical success.
Early in my work with the theatre company I became aware of the potential for negative associations with the word ‘therapy’. The artistic directors constantly stipulated that they and their employees were not therapists, they were artists. The women in the prison sometimes mentioned their own misgivings about the therapy groups they had to go to as part of their rehabilitation. I also frequently experienced the tension between art and therapy, especially since the high aesthetic standards of the company often meant I needed to prioritise the music over the women’s sense of ownership or self-expression. Despite this, I often experienced how powerful the work could be, both for myself and the women I was working with, and I attributed it mainly to the creative processes involved.

I understood that many aspects of the work of the theatre company were different to models of therapy but I also saw how many of them were related. Although the artists of the theatre company never identified themselves as feminists, their views on therapy were very aligned with feminist authors who criticised traditional models of therapy as forms of ‘psychoppression’ (McLellan, 1995) due to unnecessary power differentials between the therapist and client (Merrill, 2006), the stipulation of therapist-directed boundaries (Shuttleworth, 2006) and the tendency to pathologise the client (Ballou et al., 2002; Purdon, 2006). I wanted to explore the relationship between these ideas and my work further, so I undertook a master’s study initially intending to examine my work within the prison and its potentials for a feminist model of music therapy. However, the directors of the theatre company eventually decided that they did not want their work to be associated with therapy and that therefore they could not allow me to research my work with them. Consequently, I decided instead to examine the relationship between music participation and music therapy by comparing the data from interviews with a variety of community musicians and music therapists. This helped me to understand how community music and music therapy may be related, but there was still a burning desire to explore my own work as an example of such a relationship. Thus, with much more in-depth discussions with the directors of the theatre company, I returned to research two years later with their permission to examine my work in this case study.

Motivations underlying the research.
There are two main motivations underlying this research; one is of a theoretical nature and the other relates more to a practical outcome. The literature review in chapter 2 clarifies my theoretical motivation: my intention is to contribute to the body of literature that supports the use of music as therapy. This motivation stems from many of my professional experiences where the perception of music as therapy has often been undervalued by the people funding the work. For example, I was once asked to change the lyrics to a rap-song that had been spontaneously and beautifully written by one of the naughtiest boys in a high school in collaboration with me. The lyrics detailed his mixed feelings toward the town where he lived but because this had nothing to do with the project theme mandated by the funding body, which was ‘body image’, I was asked to alter the lyrics. In my view, this was a gross misunderstanding of where the deeper therapeutic potentials of music and creativity were to be found. I have had many similar experiences, and so have some of my friends who work as artists in health settings. Consequently, I want to reassure potential funding bodies through this research that there

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is profound and powerful therapeutic potential in creating and performing music and that it does not always require the addendum of a ‘therapy’ agenda; in fact, sometimes therapeutic potential is thwarted by this.

The other more practical motivation is perhaps the ultimate and certainly the most important. I intend that this research will help to improve the opportunities provided to women in prison by legitimating the therapeutic potential of music and creativity. Prisoners often rail against the therapy programs that are imposed upon them in a demand to rehabilitate. Women in prison often remind me that they will change when they are ready, not when someone tells them to change. Creative programs are ideal for some women in prison because, when implemented well, they meet people where they are and do not impose expectations of change. They also harbour specific and powerful therapeutic potentials.

Relationship with research participants.

My relationship with some of the research participants began well before I initiated the research study. My role as musical director of the theatre company had begun five years prior to this study and during this time I met and worked musically with four of the seven women who participated in the research from prison. The relationships that formed from this work can not be likened to a therapist/client relationship since the women were not participating in therapy sessions with me; instead, these women were there to participate in music or art or drama and sometimes referred to me as a teacher. Even though this label was not completely accurate, since I did not focus on skill-development as many music teachers do, it is perhaps more apt to describe the dynamics between myself and the research participants as similar to those of a teacher/student relationship.

During the year in which I began this research I continued to work in the same musical role and the same context as I had been for the last four years, regardless of my extra role as researcher. Even if I had not conducted the research, the same women would have participated in the music sessions and developed relationships with me. My relationships with these women continued after the period of data generation ceased and were maintained until I finished working with the theatre company six months later. In order to ensure that their decision to participate in the research was not influenced by our relationship, the women were invited to discuss their potential involvement with other members of prison staff. They were also encouraged to participate in the sessions I conducted regardless of whether or not they chose to be involved in the research.

My colleagues from the theatre company also participated in the research. I had pre-existing relationships with all of them, based on our work together as part of the theatre company. They were invited to take part in the study via an email from me, which emphasised that any decision not to participate would not adversely affect our relationship. Ethics approval was given by both Human Research Ethics Committees from Melbourne University (Ref: 0609219) and the Department of Justice (Ref: CF\07\12317). In these ethics applications I found it very important to consider the impact of my relationships to potential research participants on their decisions to participate. Nevertheless, pre-existing relationships between researchers and research
participants are common in qualitative research; some authors even argue that this deepens the results of the research (Miller & Crabtree, 2005).

Coda

In this chapter, the philosophical underpinnings to the research design have been presented, including a discussion of the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm, qualitative research, the qualitative case study, feminism and the role of theory in qualitative research. In response to standards of transparency in qualitative research, my beliefs, experiences, motivations and relationship to the research participants have also been made as transparent as possible in this chapter.

The following chapter outlines more of the practical aspects of the research design, such as the methods chosen for sampling, data generation and data analysis. First, however, Scene 3 is presented from the musical performed by the participating women in prison and artists from the theatre company. The reader may choose to supplement the lyrics in this scene by listening to the third track in Appendix 8.
Scene 3: Into Pieces

*GALLI and LEO unfreeze.*

*Leo. (Looking through the telescope).* It's gone! It was there and now it's gone!  
*Galli.* Guess it didn’t want to be found, eh?  
*Leo.* Always the philosophical one, eh? *(Sighing deeply)* Well, that’s it for me. I'm done.  
*Galli.* Done?  
*Leo.* This is where we part ways. Take care, eh?  
*Galli.* But Leo, you can’t! We're a team!  
*Leo.* Not anymore. You have to understand, Galli. *(Gesturing towards the observatory walls)* This is my life! I take it very seriously, while you always seem to find the lighter side. We find a galaxy and YOU stuff it up. Oops! We find a dark star, millions of years before its time, and you don’t care that we lose it again. We're just too different, Galli.  
*Galli.* But that’s what makes us work, Leo! I love that you’re a big cranky cryptic-crossword-know-it-all. *(Looking through the telescope)* Hey, Jupiter’s back. It’s a good sign. Let’s start again. You know, I like you just the way you are, Leo.  
*Leo.* That’s good, Galli. But to be honest, I was hoping that one day you might change.  
*Galli.* *(Turning away dejectedly)* I’ll pack up.  
*Leo.* I’ll get my things.

*GALLI and LEO freeze. Enter JUPITER to the side.*

*Jupiter.* *(gesturing towards Galli and Leo and addressing the audience).* I’ve been there before. They both think they’re right, think it’s the end of the world, but it’s not. Whatever choice they make, things will never be the same.
JUPITER begins to play the guitar. She is immediately joined by a flute and piano. When Jupiter sings the following, she is sometimes accompanied by vocal harmonies:

*(CD listening: Track 3)*

You see me walkin’ around
Like I don’t give a damn
My eyes straight on the ground
Hands on my head
I see you walk my way
But it won’t matter
Your words don’t mean the same

(Djembes enter)
After a minute with you
We fell back into
The games we were used to
I couldn’t mould you
Instead you walked away
Didn’t matter
My words don’t mean the same

I swear I heard my heart break
Into pieces
Butterflies
I won’t break down and cry
Black hole pulled me under
Into pieces
(All instruments cease, except for djembes. There is a dance sequence for three dancers, to the accompaniment of the djembes. After approximately a minute, the instruments re-enter and Jupiter continues singing).

It was an end once
Ages ago
And there was nowhere for me
Nothing left to know
And then I walked away
‘Cause nothin’ matters
And nothin’ stays the same

I swear I heard my heart break
Into pieces
Butterflies
I won’t break down and cry
Black hole pulled me under
Into pieces
Into pieces
Into pieces
CHAPTER 4
The Research Design

The design of this research is built upon the framework of a qualitative intrinsic case study. This type of framework influences the processes of sampling, data generation and data analysis available to the researcher. In particular, case studies require thick description as well as rigorous analysis of the particular case. Thick description can be achieved when the researcher constructs a variety of ‘prisms’ that reflect different sources of data (Richardson, 2005). It enables the reader to be immersed in the complexities of the case before it is dismantled for analysis (Shoemark, 2007). However, description always requires some level of analysis (Wolcott, 1990) and the present research design reflects this.

This chapter begins by illustrating the overall research design through Figure 1. The components of this design are then discussed in turn, starting with the ways in which research participants were sampled. Following this, the phases of data generation are described in detail. The techniques involved in analysing the data are then introduced and explained in terms of their application in describing the case and answering the research questions. The chapter concludes with an explication of the techniques used to increase the value and trustworthiness of the study.
The Overarching Research Design

The overall structure of the research method is represented in Figure 1. It details the relationship between the case study design, the study sample, the sources of data, the methods of data analysis utilised to describe the case in detail, and the methods of data analysis employed to answer the research questions.

Figure 1. The research design.
Sampling

There are a variety of ways to sample participants in qualitative studies and sampling is typically linked with the ongoing and emergent nature of the study (Fossey et al., 2002). The specific sampling technique known as ‘theoretical sampling’ is ideal in grounded theory research because it involves the selection of research participants based on theoretical grounds in order to explore emerging ideas and build theory. The applied nature of an intrinsic case study, however, necessitates a different strategy. Aldridge (2005) humorously calls this strategy ‘reality sampling’: "many of us have to be content with the people that we meet in practice as the population of our sample" (p. 11). The reality for the present research was that the sample consisted of all the women in prison who were already participating in music sessions conducted by myself as part of the theatre company, as well as seven of my colleagues within the theatre company. Details on how these participants were recruited will now be outlined.

Participants.
After ethics approval had been obtained from the Department of Human Ethics Advisory Group (DHEAG) at the University of Melbourne (Ref: 06092191) as well as the Department of Justice (Ref: CF/07/12317), two groups of participants were recruited for the present study:

1) women who were incarcerated in the prison, for at least the duration of the data generation phases. These phases are outlined later in the chapter.

2) the artists employed by the theatre company.

The women who were currently participating in the music program at the prison had their attention drawn to the research either orally by a member of the theatre company, or in the form of a flier that briefly outlined the research project and invited anyone who was interested to speak to a member of the theatre company or to the programs manager employed by the prison. When women expressed interest in the project, most commonly to a member of the theatre company who had mentioned it to them, the researcher explained the study and read through the Participant Information Statement (see Appendix 1, p. 201) with them. After questions were answered, the researcher left the women with the information to consider until at least the next weekly session where the decision whether to participate was followed up. If the women chose to participate, they were asked to sign consent forms (see Appendix 2, p. 203). At all times, the researcher emphasised that a decision not to participate would not affect the women’s normal participation in the music program and that participants could withdraw from the research project at any time. All women who were imprisoned during the data generation phase and were already involved in the music program consented to participate, resulting in a sample of seven women from the prison. As a researcher concerned with ethical rights, I felt concerned at the high level of agreement and checked the process for inviting participation rigorously to ensure that there was no subtle obligation being levelled at these women. The process was appropriate, but even so, I continued to offer the women the opportunity to reconsider their decision during the entire phase of data collection.

The artists from the theatre company were recruited via an email to the two artistic directors of the company, explaining the details of the project in a Participant Information Statement (see Appendix 3, p. 205) and emphasising the voluntary nature of participation in the research. This was also followed up with a direct invitation to participate, to which the artistic directors gave consent. Following this, at various times over several months, the researcher and the directors informed the remaining artists about the project and emphasised the voluntary nature of participation. Seven out of eight artists from the theatre company gave their consent at the time allocated for the interviews (see Appendix 4, p. 207). The one artist who chose not to participate explained that he was too busy at the time. As a result of this one decline, the entire sample of research participants for the study, including both groups, consisted of fourteen people, all women. Relevant descriptions of each participant are reserved for subsequent chapters.

_Data Generation_
There were three distinct phases during which data was generated. These phases are represented chronologically in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Phases of data generation**

- **Phase 1** – Ten week period culminating in performance
  - Five original songs
  - Researcher’s session notes

- **Phase 2** – Post-performance debrief in prison (two days)
  - In-depth semi-structured interviews with women in prison

- **Phase 3** – Annual artist debrief (2 days)
  - In-depth semi-structured interviews with artists

*Methods of Data Generation: Interviews, Session Notes, Song-Writing*

In phase one, where the musical performance was created, five songs and 24 typed pages of session notes were generated. In phase 2, seven in-depth semi-structured interviews with the women in prison were generated. These ranged in duration from 15 - 45 minutes. Finally, phase 3 involved the generation of seven in-depth semi-structured interviews with the artists from the theatre company. These ranged in duration from 20 – 90 minutes. The techniques of interviewing, writing session notes and song-writing are now discussed in relation to the research method.

*The in-depth semi-structured interview.*

I chose the semi-structured interview as an appropriate method for data generation in this study mainly due to its ability to deeply explore complex ideas while addressing a breadth of issues (Mason, 2002). It can be seen as the ‘middle road’ of qualitative interview methods (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). It is not entirely structured, as in a survey-like interview; nor is it completely unstructured, as in a free-flowing conversation with no agenda. Semi-structured interviews are described as modified or extended conversations that are flexibly designed to follow the interviewee’s thoughts or feelings, yet are guided by a set of themes or questions to be covered (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Mason, 2002; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). This set of themes or questions is often referred to as ‘the interview guide’, and is intended to remind the interviewer of the topics to be covered rather than to direct the questions (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The following two interview guides were designed for this study. The first guided the interviews with the women in prison and the second guided the interviews with the artists from the theatre company.

**Interview Guide For Women in Prison:**
- Overall experience
The creative process:
- How the song was created
- How the creative process affected elements of wellbeing
- Preferred songs and reasons why
- Experience of the creative process leading up to the performance

Performance:
- Experience of the performance
- Ways in which performance affected well-being
- How the creative process is related to the performance

Interview Guide For Artists:
- The principles that guide the artist in their work eg. views on creativity, wellbeing, purpose
- How these principles fit within the theatre company
- How these principles contribute to wellbeing
- How the artist’s art-form fits within the theatre company
- The role of music within the theatre company
- Important aspects of the creative/devising process
- Important aspects of the performance/exhibition

My approach to the semi-structured interviews was based on the assumption that the interviewee continually assembles and modifies their answers, thereby actively constructing knowledge in the moment together with the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fossey et al., 2002). I was not focused on mining the participant for information; instead I was actively engaged in a process of making meaning with the participant.

The interview process.

Setting and Equipment

The research interviews with the women from the prison took place in an interview room within the programs section of the prison. The interviews with the artists from the theatre company took place in each participant’s apartment which had been rented for the purpose of the annual staff debrief. One interview took place in a café, due to the time of day. Before the interview began, each participant signed their consent for the interview to be recorded. I recorded each interview onto mini-disc, using a Sony MiniDisc player and a condenser microphone which was placed on a table close to the interviewee. During the interviews, I sat facing the research participant.

Interview Procedure
I began each interview by briefly explaining to the research participant the purpose of the interview. I emphasised to the participant that their perspective on their experiences in their work was of central interest to me. This was an attempt to reassure each interviewee that they knew enough to participate as well as an attempt to encourage each participant to draw their discussions from their own experiences. I also indicated that there was no set format for the interview but that there were certain issues I would like to discuss; that the interviewee should feel free to discuss anything and in any order; and that I would ask if I needed points to be elaborated or other issues to be discussed.

Although questions in semi-structured in-depth interviews are phrased and ordered to fit each individual (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), the interviews in this study typically began with the first point on the interview guide because these were topics that were familiar to participants. This was a strategy to increase each individual’s level of comfort. From there, the order and content of topics within the interview depended on the participant’s responses. Typically, my questions were open-ended and conveyed genuine curiosity. I also avoided questions that seemed to be a test of the participant’s knowledge and often reflected back to the participant the main themes I perceived in what they were saying in order to communicate my authentic interest and check that my interpretations were not too distant from their intended meaning.

Session-note writing.
The inclusion of the researcher’s observations as a data source in qualitative studies is based on the assumption that the researcher is inextricably linked to the ‘object’ being studied and is therefore an active participant in the construction of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fossey et al., 2002; Mason, 2002). The researcher’s perspective, therefore, is another valuable form of data which, when combined with other data sources, adds to the creation of thick descriptions warranted by qualitative research (Mason, 2002). Session notes written by the researcher/clinician are a relatively common form of supplementary data in qualitative music therapy studies. In Australian music therapy research, for example, Shoemark (2007) used session notes to supplement video footage and interviews in her study on music therapy with pre-term neonates. Hunt’s (2006) session notes accompanied sound recordings of musical improvisations in her study of music therapy with young refugees and O’Callaghan (2004) used session notes to supplement survey data in her study of the relevance of music therapy in a cancer hospital.

I generated session notes in this study in order to construct another angle through which the research could be understood. I typed my session notes directly into a Word file within three hours after each music session. In general, I recorded attendance, observations, significant events and what I thought or felt about these events. I began writing these notes as soon as the annual creative process had begun in earnest and finished writing them after the performance debrief had occurred. This resulted in twenty-four typed pages of session-note data written over a ten-week period.

Collaborative song-writing.
There are many ways of collaboratively writing a song in music therapy contexts, although specific techniques have scarcely been discussed in the music therapy literature until recently (Cordobes, 2007; Jones, 2005; Wigram & Baker, 2005a). In general, it is common for the lyrics to be developed first, followed by the musical accompaniment (Wigram, 2005). Roberts (2008) as well as Wigram and Baker (2005) suggest that the music therapist’s approach to song-writing is more often than not to write a song ‘with’ someone, not ‘for’ someone, however Dalton and Krout (2006) emphasise that writing a song for someone can have equal therapeutic benefit.

In this study, original songs were collaboratively written in diverse ways. I facilitated two group song-writing sessions during which one song was written by the entire group of research participants. The remaining four songs were written by individuals in collaboration with me. My involvement in writing each of these songs varied; my level of input generally decreased when the research participant showed comparatively more ability to write lyrics or formulate music. For instance, one woman who could play guitar and sing wrote most of her song by herself. My collaborative input into this song was to help the woman write a final verse and to arrange and orchestrate it. In contrast, another woman was unable to formulate lyrics or music on her own and I therefore had far more input into the song’s creation. The following series of general steps were utilised in the present study to generate song data:

1. **Establish a theme.** This was done in a variety of ways, including strategies such as theatre improvisations that use the body to tell a story and, more commonly, general discussions about what each participant wanted to write about.

2. **Discuss the theme.** I initiated discussions on the theme with the group/individual and wrote down as many quotes from the group/individual as I could. In one contrasting instance, a research participant gave me pages of her own writing and asked me to form it into lyrics relevant to the participant’s desired theme.

3. **Form initial lyrics.** These quotes (or writing) were then formed into lyrics, either by me, the group, or the individual, or via collaboration between us all. If it were me who formed the lyrics, the research participants were always consulted and given opportunities to make changes.

4. **Develop melody and harmonic accompaniment to initial lyrics.** A general harmonic accompaniment, or riff, was usually developed first, either by me or by a member of the group who could play a musical instrument. Then, me or a member of the group vocally improvised melodies over this accompaniment, using the already formed lyrics as the basis for the melody. Sometimes, other group members helped to develop the melody by verbally describing where they envisaged the melody should go next.

5. **Complete lyrics.** The musical structure provided by the melody and accompaniment usually made it easier for research participants to add more lyrics and complete the song.

6. **Arrange and orchestrate the song.** Once the song was complete, I typed up the lyrics and chord charts so that research participants could sing or devise their own instrumental parts. This was usually done in consultation with the woman who had written the song and involved asking her what she envisaged for the song.
7. **Rehearse the song for performance.** I led the rehearsals, which occurred twice a week. The arrangements of each song evolved with each rehearsal as participants modified or extended their parts. These steps are very similar to those proposed by O’Callaghan (1996) and O’Brien (2003) and resonate with most music therapists’ approaches to collaborative song writing with verbal populations.

The methods of in-depth, semi-structured interviewing, collaborative song-writing and session-note writing, resulted in three types of data for this research. The ways in which the data was analysed will now be described.

**Data Analysis**

Figure 1 highlights the array of qualitative methods used to analyse the data collected in this research. Such a variety of methods is common in qualitative case studies (Smeijsters & Aasgaard, 2005). The mixture of qualitative methods in this research is a consequence of pragmatism; each qualitative analysis technique has been selected for its appropriateness to each research task. Authors often encourage this type of pragmatism in qualitative research (McLeod, 2001; Shoemark, 2008; Stake, 2005; Wheeler & Kenny, 2005).

The tasks of analysis within this research fall into two broad purposes: describing the case under examination and answering the research questions. Figure 3 represents the techniques of data analysis that were used according to these purposes.

Figure 3. Phases and techniques of data analysis.

In describing the case as fully as possible, I wanted to provide the reader with as many different angles as I could. One of these angles involved constructing a theoretical framework, presented in chapter 6, to explain the work of the theatre company and provide the reader with more context for the particular 10-week creative process under...
examination. Constructing this framework involved the use of grounded theory analysis techniques which are described in detail in the next section of this chapter. The original songs composed during the ten-week period also provide the reader with another angle with which to understand the case. These songs together with script are interspersed throughout the first three sections of the thesis. Similar to the studies of O’Brien (2003) and Aasgaard (2005), the songs are not analysed in this research; they are presented instead for their illustrative value and as such provide a less-processed angle from which the reader can understand the case.

I also wanted to describe the particular ten-week creative process that forms the basis of this research in a chronological narrative. Describing events and experiences is a highly subjective process and there are many ways in which to generate a narrative (Smeijsters & Aasgaard, 2005; Wolcott, 1990). Two strategies were utilised to investigate the phenomenon at this level. This first relied upon content analyses of my own session notes, which were examined to identify group formation as well as key creative and interpersonal events. The second drew upon the semi-structured interviews conducted with each of the women in the prison, using a phenomenological process to analyse the texts. The techniques associated with content analysis and phenomenology will be described later in this chapter.

The purpose underlying the second phase of data analysis was to answer the two research questions outlined in chapter 1 as well as to contribute initial explorations concerning the emergent question. In this phase, I used a singular qualitative approach to data analysis: grounded theory. This method, as well as the methods of content analysis and phenomenology, will now be described.

Grounded theory.
Grounded theory is not just a method of data analysis; it also influences the way data is generated (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). In particular, full grounded theory studies involve a sampling technique known as ‘theoretical sampling’. This technique involves two processes at the same time: 1) the ongoing selection of research participants and 2) data analysis. These simultaneous processes of sampling and data analysis enable the researcher to select research participants according to the concepts that are already emerging in the data which ensures the full development of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). These simultaneous processes also result in sample sizes that are usually only determined after sufficient depth of information has been achieved, or once no new relevant data continues to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Theoretical sampling is at odds with the ‘reality sampling’ strategy employed within the present case study, whereby the size and content of the sample was already set by the reality of the case under scrutiny. In this study, every person who was involved in the performance and its lead-up constitutes the research sample, regardless of their ability to inform the data in particular ways. Unlike the process in full grounded theory studies, I generated the interviews in this research first and then formally analysed this data afterwards. One technique involved in theoretical sampling, however, did inform the data analysis in this research: some concepts that had emerged within the first few interviews
were then probed and elaborated upon in subsequent interviews with other research participants.

For the purposes of this research, grounded theory was utilised as a method of data analysis rather than a complete approach to research. The techniques of analysis associated with grounded theory were particularly relevant to this study in addressing two separate purposes: 1) in describing part of the case under examination through the construction of a theoretical framework that explains the work of the artists from the theatre company, and 2) in answering the three research questions outlined in chapter 1. Both of these purposes require explanatory frameworks that build up ideas through abstracting the data, rather than reducing ideas to their essence. Grounded theory is an ideal method for these purposes.

Grounded theory is “a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). It is arguably the most comprehensive and influential qualitative research methodology available to health researchers (Haig, 1995; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The development of grounded theory by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967 (Aigen, 2005b) was an attempt to link the creation of theory more closely to empirical research (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). However, Glaser and Strauss eventually disagreed about the epistemological implications and methodological procedures of grounded theory, and Strauss and Corbin have continued to change and adapt their ideas concerning the method (Amir, 2005; Daveson et al., 2008).

As a result of this evolution, there have been a variety of research designs portrayed and offered as models of grounded theory research, even within the field of music therapy. Some music therapy researchers have used the full methodological guidelines concerning sampling, data generation, data analysis and presentation of results as theory (Amir, 1992; Daveson, 2006; Moe, 2002; O'Grady, 2005b; Ruud, 1997). Modified versions of grounded theory have more commonly been used in music therapy research (Amir, 2005), where the researchers have stopped short of creating theory for different reasons (Ala-Ruona, 2002; Edwards, 2000; Nagler, 1993; O'Callaghan, 1996, 2001; Ramsey, 2003; Ruutel, Ratnik, Tamm, & Zilensk, 2004).

Although grounded theory has been used in a variety of ways, Strauss and Corbin (1994) argue that all grounded theory research is founded on three principles:
1) a direct interplay between data and theory-building
2) processes of theoretical coding, known as open, axial and selective
3) the development of theory.

These three foundations of grounded theory were central to the data analysis contained in this case study. In particular, they featured when describing the work of the theatre company and in answering the three research questions. In order to serve these purposes, the analysis techniques of grounded theory were applied to the interviews with the women in prison and the artists from the theatre company. The following two steps were taken in order to prepare the interviews for analysis:
1. **Interview transcription.** I transcribed the audio recordings from each semi-structured, in-depth interview into a Word file on computer. I re-read these files a number of times, helping to improve my familiarity with the data.

2. **Incorporating the information into software.** Each file was incorporated into the QSR NVivo 2 software program, chiefly designed by Tom Richards to store codes and categories generated by the researcher and enable them to be explored, organised or changed (Bazeley & Richards, 2000, p. 5).

After the interviews had been prepared for analysis, the following procedure guided both the construction of a theoretical framework that described the work of the theatre company as well as the process of answering the research questions:

1. **Open Coding.** This step involves “the dissection, examination, comparison, contrasting, and categorising of data with the view to identifying concepts and categories within the data” (Daveson et al., 2008, p. 282). In this step, I constructed conceptual labels based on what I inductively derived from the material in each transcription. Using the NVivo ‘code’ command, I ascribed these labels, or ‘open codes’ to the relevant text fragment. I then grouped codes into different levels of categories, based on their similar characteristics or properties. The hierarchy of categories was easily managed using the tree structure of the QSR NVivo 2 program. I then reviewed the categories in order to eliminate redundancies and to extend other categories.

2. **Axial Coding.** This step involves reassembling the codes and categories from step 1, by developing the properties and dimensions of each category and developing relational statements between the categories (Daveson et al., 2008). Properties are the general or specific characteristics of a category while dimensions are the location of the property along a continuum (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). One way to develop relational statements is by identifying the conditions, actions, interactions and consequences of the properties and dimensions of each category, a process that has been referred to as ‘the paradigm scheme’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which was later modified to a less prescriptive ‘process and structure’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

In this step, I selected certain categories in the NVivo ‘tree structure’, based on my interpretation of their relevance to the phenomenon being researched. Using pen and paper, I constructed a list of the properties and dimensions of these categories and then drew flow charts that incorporated these dimensions and properties into a visual representation of the conditions that give rise to them, the actions that arise from these conditions, the interactions with other properties and dimensions that occur, and the consequences of these actions and interactions. Examples of axial coding are provided in chapter 8 of this thesis.

3. **Selective Coding.** According to Daveson, O’Callaghan and Grocke (2008), selective coding “is the process of integrating categories along a dimensional level to form a theory, validate the statements of relationship among concepts, and fill in any categories
in need of further refinement” (p. 282). The dimensional level that integrates categories is referred to by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as the ‘central category’. According to these authors, a good central category appears frequently in the data, enables all major categories to be related to it, is sufficiently abstract to be used in further research in other areas, is logical, consistent and unforced, and is able to explain variation and alternative cases.

In this step, I was often in awe at how a central category expressed as a dimension always seemed to emerge clearly from the process of axial coding to explain the phenomenon I was focusing upon. When applying the paradigm scheme to different categories in step 2, there was often a consistently repeated dimension across the categories. This repetition usually suggested the potential of the particular dimension to become the central category. In order to check that this dimension was appropriate as the central category, I examined its links to all other categories by developing a theoretical narrative. This part of the grounded theory process is like story-telling, only in this context the story’s characters were categories and the plot was thickened by refining and developing these categories further rather than creating dramatic intrigue. Developing the theoretical narrative often involved a return to the raw data or to steps 1 or 2.

The purpose behind the first phase of data analysis in this study is to describe in detail the case under examination. This phase involved the use of grounded theory, content analysis and phenomenology. In particular, I utilised content analysis in order to help me frame a description of the overall 10-week creative process. The application of the strategies of qualitative content analysis within this case study is now described.

Qualitative content analysis.
Content analysis, according to Krippendorff (2004), is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their uses” (p. 18). Content analysis commonly involves measuring units of text in order to reveal themes or patterns (Patton, 2002). The method can be used in both qualitative and quantitative research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) although it is always an interpretive process since text rarely has a single meaning that can be attributed to it (Krippendorff, 2004). In a qualitative content analysis, a researcher may use conventional, directed or summative approaches to interpret meaning from units of text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In a conventional approach, the type of text units to be examined are inductively derived from the data, whereas directed approaches use existing theory or past research to formulate the types of text units to be examined in a deductive process. Conventional approaches to content analysis are limited to building concepts. For the present purpose of building a framework to describe the overall 10-week process involved in this case, building concepts was all that was necessary and therefore I adopted a conventional approach to content analysis. From a thorough examination of my session notes, I was able to inductively derive three concepts that I thought may offer interesting insights into the 10-week creative process overall:

1) **The attendance of group participants.** I tabulated the attendance of each participant in order to infer any patterns associated with group formation.
2) **The sequence of creative actions.** I defined these as any action that resulted in a creative product, such as a song or script. For example, creative actions included brainstorming lyrics, arranging songs and developing script. I tabulated the occurrence of these and other creative events over time in order to infer any patterns in the creative process.

3) **The events that I interpreted to be significant to the group experience.** I defined events as significant if they affected most of the group members and tabulated these in terms of their chronology. I cross-referenced this table with those from steps 1 and 2, which helped me to make inferences about their possible impact on the group’s 10-week creative process.

Content analysis of these three concepts provided a useful framework for describing the overall 10-week creative process. Phenomenological analysis, on the other hand, was more amenable to describing the essence of each individual’s experience during the 10-week creative process. This is because phenomenological analysis distils data into an essence; a process that is in direct contrast to grounded theory analysis where data is built up through increasing levels of abstraction. The philosophy and techniques associated with the phenomenological approach I adopted will now be briefly described, followed by an outline of the steps I took to analyse the interviews with the women in prison.

**Phenomenology.**

Phenomenology is a philosophical method considered to be founded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who wanted to encourage researchers back to the study of phenomena within the natural world. Husserl’s protégé, Martin Heidegger, developed phenomenology further by emphasising the need to investigate the experience of the phenomenon. In 1975, American researcher Giorgi formulated a clear outline of the steps to be taken in this pursuit and in doing so created a more procedural model of analysis (Giorgi, 1975) which was not adopted by European schools of phenomenology (McFerran & Grocke, 2007). Nevertheless, Giorgi’s model of phenomenological research has been influential in the way that phenomenology is applied to research today. Moustakas (1990) built upon Giorgi’s procedural model of analysis to develop a form of existential phenomenology, using terms such as Structural Meaning Units and Experienced Meaning Units. These terms, together with Giorgi’s procedural form of phenomenology, form the basis of the approach to phenomenological research described by Australian music therapists McFerran and Grocke (2007). McFerran’s approach in particular has guided the phenomenological analysis undertaken in this study.

At the forefront of the analysis of the interviews with the women in prison was the phenomenological concept of returning “to the things themselves” (Husserl, in Moustakas, 1990). The ‘things’ in this study refer to each woman’s experiences regarding the 10-week creative process in which she had taken part. Returning to this phenomenon entailed repeatedly returning to the original transcripts of the interviews with women in prison with the question of ‘individual experience’ in mind.
Phenomenological analysis began only after all interviews had been conducted and transcribed. The following steps of analysis, based on the approach of McFerran and Grocke (2007), were then undertaken:

1. **Identification of key statements**: This is the highlighting of all statements perceived by the researcher to be meaningful. Effectively, it is the deletion of all text that is irrelevant to the question (McFerran & Grocke, 2007). I deleted all statements that did not refer to the individual’s experience throughout the creative process, even when such statements were of interest to me.

2. **Creation of Structural Meaning Units (SMUs)**: I grouped the key statements into different categories of literal meaning, eliminating repetitions of the same sentiment and keeping only the one that I interpreted as the most meaningful. I then rearranged and streamlined the key statements into discrete paragraphs. I found it necessary to allocate statements with multiple meanings to multiple relevant SMUs. I gave each SMU a title that encompassed the literal meaning of its constituent statements. This was helpful in perceiving alternate underlying meanings, which led to the creation of EMUs. An example of SMUs can be found in Appendices 6 and 7.

3. **Creation of Experienced Meaning Units (EMUs)**: I analysed the SMUs at a deeper level, seeking the implied rather than literal meaning in each SMU through a process of imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1990). This involves trying to view the statements from different angles to see if they can be perceived to have alternate underlying meanings other than what was literally being said. This acknowledges the multiple realities possible in the interviewee’s responses. As a consequence of imaginative variation, I effectively rearranged the content of the SMUs into the new categories of experienced meaning. These EMUs remain in the original wording of the interviewee to keep the findings grounded in their voices. An example of EMUs can be found in Appendices 6 and 7.

4. **Summarisation of individual experiences**: I rearranged the titles of each EMU according to a loose correlation between their themes and combined them into narrative summaries, which are presented in chapter 7. I needed to edit each summary for readability and flow.

Based on the positivist suggestion of Colaizzi (1978), some phenomenological studies complete this procedure by returning to the participants in the study to ask whether the summaries are true to their experience. This is known as ‘member-checking’, a technique which is promoted within music therapy to enhance the merit of qualitative music therapy studies (Abrams, 2005; Smeijsters & Aasgaard, 2005; Wheeler & Kenny, 2005). However, the interpretivist-constructivist epistemology underlying this research posits truth in research as multifarious and largely constructed and interpreted by the researcher. In this case, member-checking is analogous to verifying a single truth and consequently it did not form part of the phenomenological analysis undertaken in this research.

*Collective interview analysis: Distilling the collective essence of individual experiences.*

The phenomenological process of data analysis commonly culminates in the distillation of all aspects of individuals experiences into one overall statement of its fundamental
essence. This is arrived at through a process of collective meaning unit analysis, whereby all views are treated as having equal value, regardless of who it came from. This is known as horizontalization (Moustakas, 1990). The following three steps are involved in this process:

1. Creation of Collective Themes: The EMU headings from each interview were collected and categorised according to similarity of meaning with EMUs from other interviews. Each category was given a title that reflected all of the EMU headings within it. In order to help compare and integrate the seven sets of information, the researcher assigned each set of statements a different colour in the Word document. This process made it easier to organize the EMU headings into discrete groups called collective themes and to improve the technique of horizontalisation by observing whether any of the collective themes were dominated by any one colour. Only those themes where at least three different participants contributed to the theme were included in the final distilled essence.

2. Creation of Global Meaning Units (GMUs): The collective themes were then sorted according to their underlying meanings and allocated to larger categories, known as GMUs. Each GMU was given a title that reflected the underlying meanings of the collective themes.

3. Creation of the distilled essence: The GMUs were then distilled further to form the essence, which is understood as the fundamental experience common to all of the women within the prison who participated in the present research. This essence is presented in chapter 7.

Value and Truthfulness of the Study

A qualitative study has merit when it is valuable to the intended audience and when it is truthful. The value of a qualitative study, according to Abrams (2005), “depends upon the rigor and integrity with which it is designed, conducted, and documented, as well as the richness, meaningfulness, relevance, and sophistication of the new knowledge it produces” (p. 246). The truthfulness of a qualitative study refers more specifically to the honesty and trustworthiness of the methods used (Abrams, 2005). Qualitative research in music therapy involves a variety of assumptions regarding music, health and therapy and this has resulted in music therapists offering a variety of guidelines for increasing the value and truthfulness of qualitative music therapy research. The most recent synthesis of these guidelines has been constructed by Abrams (2005). Some of these guidelines are now explained in terms of their relevance to the value and truthfulness of the present research:

- Reflexivity – where a researcher combines self-inquiry with disclosure. In this thesis, I have disclosed all the motivations, experiences and intentions of which I am aware and that I believe to have influenced this research. I have also maintained a process of self-inquiry in the form of a reflexive journal during all phases of the research in order to consider the breadth of my influence on the study. Rather than trying to separate this influence from the research process,
• Contextualization – where the contexts of the research participants, the phenomenon being studied, and the research itself are disclosed. A large part of this thesis is devoted to contextualising the research. The first section of this thesis contextualises the research questions in terms of existing and relevant literature. The second section contextualises the research within an interpretivist-constructivist epistemology and, more specifically, within my own experiences and beliefs. Finally, the third section contextualises the research participants in terms of relevant literature as well as real-life contexts such as the justice system and the prison environment.

• Groundedness – where a “researcher’s constructions of research phenomena are consonant with the way these phenomena were originally expressed and experienced” (Abrams, 2005, p. 249). This is aided by processes that include ‘triangulation’ and linking data to the research findings. In this research, I have explored multiple perspectives from a variety of data sources in order to ‘crystallise’ the data. I have also made transparent the link between the data and findings, through a consistent use of tables outlining analysis procedures and relevant data. Furthermore, I have enhanced the ‘groundedness’ of data analysis through the technique of negative case analysis, where the researcher searches for cases within the data that contradict the emerging theory (Becker, 1998). I began this process during the interview process, where I probed for ideas that contradicted what previous research participants had said. I continued to use this technique in the analysis phases of research, where I checked emerging theories or ideas against the data for any examples that contradicted them. An explicit example of negative case analysis is presented in chapter 8.

• Usefulness – where a study contributes practical knowledge and can be applicable to real-life contexts. One way of achieving this is through the development of theory (Abrams, 2005). The case study design enables the present research to draw from a real-life situation in order to contribute concrete, practical knowledge and theory regarding the therapeutic potentials for women in prison who create and perform music together.

• Aesthetic depth – the beauty, rather than the factual acuity, with which a study conveys the experiences and processes involved in the research. This thesis demonstrates aesthetic depth primarily through thick description as well as the use of multiple qualitative strategies with which to examine the data. Personal reflections, quotes, lyrics, song-recordings and script are interspersed with more formal chapters in order to convey the emotional, intuitive and value-centred dimensions of the research.

• Intersubjectivity – where the researcher integrates the perspectives of others throughout various stages of the research. The perspectives of others were
Coda

The research design and methods of sampling, data generation and data analysis have been outlined in detail in this chapter. The following chapter forms part of the second section of this thesis, where the case under examination is placed in its broader contexts. In particular, the next chapter situates the case within a review of the literature relating to women in prison, theatre in prison and the practice of music therapy in forensic settings. First, however, the fourth scene from the musical performed by the seven women in prison and the artists from the theatre company is presented. The reader may choose to supplement the lyrics in this scene by listening to the fourth track in Appendix 8.
Scene 4: The Mirror

*GALLI and LEO unfreeze. They move as two isolated beings, each talking to themselves.*

*Leo.* Sometimes I think I take one step forward and two steps back.
*Galli.* I thought Leo liked me.
*Leo.* Perhaps I was too harsh.
*Galli.* I did my best.
*Leo.* Maybe I should try again ... Nah.
*Galli.* I’m not meant to be here after all. I thought I was a great astrologer.
*Leo.* (to Galli) Astronomer! See, you don’t even know who you are!
*Galli.* I do so! I just haven’t looked at myself for a while, that’s all.

*GALLI and LEO freeze. A strong piano riff begins, joined by the drum-kit and guitar. Enter PLUTO, who sings:*

*(CD listening: Track 4)*

When I look into the mirror
What do I really see?
Half a shadow, half a smile
What do I mean to me?
I search inside to find a way
Through this map called life
But it seems that the harder I try
The more I end up in strife

*Cause this is not a life I know
Nor how I used to be*
When I look into the mirror
What do I really see?

They say the key to someone’s mind
Is through the eyes and smile
But can they see the memories
That seem to pass me by
Happy days and happy ways
Seem distant at a glance
Like a thunderstorm it seems to hit
I have a second chance

‘Cause this is not a life I know
Nor how I used to be
When I look into the mirror
What do I really see?
When I look into the mirror
What do I really see?
CHAPTER 5

Further Situating the Research Context through a Review of Literature related to ‘Prison’

The research that forms the basis of this thesis has so far been contextualised in a variety of different ways. The first chapter introduced the research, the research questions, the research rationale as well as the researcher herself. In chapter two, the theoretical contexts that relate to the research questions were explicated through a literature review. In chapters 3 and 4 the research design and the research methods were situated within broader philosophical and practical contexts. The present chapter is a literature review relating to the aspects of prison that are relevant to the immediate context of the case under examination. These aspects include women in prison, the use of theatre in prisons as well as the relevance of music therapy in forensic health.

Women in Prison

The number of women in prison is increasing rapidly worldwide (Byrne & Howells, 2002). Populations in Australia doubled between 1982 and 1998 in spite of a falling crime rate (Balfour, 2006) and between 1998 and 2003 the number of women in Australian prisons increased by 84% (ABS, 2006). This rapid increase may in part be due to a general shift in attitudes toward women in prison; a shift from perceiving them as oppressed or victimised to instead being responsible for their own actions (Balfour, 2006). Despite the increasing number of women in Australian prisons, they still make up a small proportion of the prison population. As of 2003, females accounted for 7% of the Australian prison population, with 1,594 women imprisoned compared to 21,961 men (ABS, 2006).

The rapid increase of women in prison is not matched by an increase in research in the area. Women in prison are almost silent, invisible to the rest of the world (Cabrera-
Balleza, 2003; Kilroy, 2002; McQuiade & Ehrenreich, 1998). There is no published work on the needs of Australian female prisoners (Byrne & Howells, 2002) and programs for female prisoners tend to be adapted from those developed for their male counterparts (Suter, Byrne, Byrne, Howells, & Day, 2002). This is especially problematic considering the different biological, social and cultural needs of women compared to men (Byrne & Howells, 2002).

Women face many issues while in prison. In addition to personal issues such as impending court cases and separation from their children (Cabrera-Balleza, 2003), women are generally offered poor medical support and poor mental health care within the prison system (Cabrera-Balleza, 2003; Schrader, 2005). The latter issue is especially important, considering the strong prevalence of substance misuse, mental illness and histories of sexual abuse amongst women in prison (Cabrera-Balleza, 2003; McQuiade & Ehrenreich, 1998). Approximately 89% of women in Australian prisons have been sexually abused (Schrader, 2005), compared with an estimated 18% of women in the general Australian population (ABS, 2006).

Women often come to prison from disadvantaged social and economic positions, due to low levels of education, limited employment skills and opportunities, inadequate housing, insufficient income and difficulties in establishing social networks (Schrader, 2005). The Queensland's Women Prisoners Health Survey (Turner, Hockings, Falconer, & O'Rourke, 2002) found that female prisoners in the Australian state of Queensland were relatively young, poorly educated and inexperienced with employment. This survey also confirmed the high proportion of indigenous Australian women in prison which is approximately 20% compared to 2% of the general population (Stern, 2001).

The cultures within prisons are complex. Prisoners are not uniformly disempowered; “the differential empowerings of gender, race, and class of the extraprison world penetrate the prison walls” (McQuiade & Ehrenreich, 1998). In other words, ‘pecking orders’ are strong parts of prison culture and often involve prison officers as well as prisoners (Cabrera-Balleza, 2003). The general culture in prisons creates an environment where it is usually not safe to disclose personal information. Consequently, female prisoners often feel the need to be ‘tough’ instead of expressing their emotions. Desensitisation may be a woman’s main form of coping (Kanter, 2007; Kilroy, 2002) and anger is often turned inward (Suter et al., 2002). Desensitisation also helps women to cope with prison procedures that involve strip searches, punishment, seclusion and isolation (Kilroy, 2002) but often leaves them dissociated from their thoughts and emotions.

A common response to this information is to empathise strongly with women in prison as victims of the overarching justice system. However, feminist researchers warn against this, arguing that we must not seek to unify our perceptions of women in prison nor assume that existing representations of these women are the only ones that fit: “To see her only as the prison creates her is to falsify her and to reduce her to her current social status” (p. 230). Furthermore, McQuiaide and Ehrenreich (1998) argue that:
"Researchers must search their own souls to determine whether they think of women in prison as victims, victimisers, or both and explore how this viewpoint shapes the narrative they construct of women in prison … In the same vein, how researchers deal with real or fantasised losses of freedom and psychological incarceration in their own lives may affect the way they perceive women in prison" (p. 231).

This argument is echoed and extended by Australian music therapists Daveson and Edwards (2001) who suggest that researchers also need to examine their own beliefs concerning the response of society to criminal activity and whether these responses should be punitive or rehabilitative. Perspectives on these issues undoubtedly influence the course of research and, in view of this, the following section makes transparent the attitudes I possess towards the idea of prisons as well as towards the women within them.

The Researcher's Attitudes toward Prisons and the Women within Them

My attitudes towards the idea of prison are fluid and have changed with my experiences working within one. They are based on contradictions, a point of tension of which I am comfortable living with rather than trying to resolve. At first I didn’t really know what to make of ‘prison’. It seemed like a big high school to me. Very quickly, I began to resent the prison system because it didn’t seem to help the women within it. I saw the women as victims of this ‘prison’ idea and advocated for their freedom. Later I began to think about victims of crime and didn’t quite know how to reconcile this with the empathy I felt for their female perpetrators. Sometimes I couldn’t believe what some of these women had done and yet the privilege of witnessing their stories through the theatre we all created enabled me to understand that I could easily be one of these women; that any woman could stand in their place under different circumstances. I tend now to try to adopt a stance of non-judgement and to help me in this I do not seek information about the women and the reasons for their imprisonment. This is common practice for the artists of the theatre company.

I believe that humans should take responsibility for their actions, especially because it seems to help them to become happier, better people. For that reason I understand how the idea of prison came about. And yet, prisons mostly don’t work. Certainly, they keep prisoners away from the public which perhaps increases public levels of safety; but they do not usually rehabilitate people. I think that this is because the notion of ‘rehabilitation’ is not embraced by sufficient numbers of the people who work in prisons and instead the punitive model is still rooted in many minds. The two attitudes can’t work together. For prisons to ‘work’, rehabilitation not punishment has to be the main goal of all people who work within them, including the prisoners themselves. I understand that this is difficult if not impossible to achieve which therefore leaves my perspectives on prisons and women in prison in an unresolved and ambivalent state.
Poole (2007) provides an example of how the clash between those who believe in punishment for prisoners and those who believe in rehabilitation manifests when trying to introduce theatre into prisons:

“The belief in deserved punishment repeatedly underlines arguments against initiatives in cultural projects proposed by outside organisations such as (ours). Thus, there is a critical lack of funding from the government for any such projects” (p. 143).

Despite a lack of funding and research (Thompson, 2007), some theatre programs have managed to be implemented in prisons. A few of these programs have been described within the relevant literature and will now be discussed in terms of their therapeutic potentials.

**Theatre in Prisons**

Despite the difficulties in gaining funding for theatre in prisons, the art-form has been used in this context all over the world. Perhaps the most important influence on the use of theatre in prisons was developed during the 1950s and 1960s by Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal. Heavily influenced by Paulo Freire, Boal developed interactive theatre involving dialogue between audiences and performers. His aim was to spark dialogue about important community issues and through this dialogue to inspire oppressed communities to act or rebel on their own behalf. Known as the Theatre of the Oppressed, Boal’s political work is largely used with economically and socially disenfranchised populations all over the world (Paterson, 1995).

Basing theatre on the interactions between audiences and performers is still an important principle for some of the theatre programs implemented in prisons. For example, Deeker (2008) discusses its importance in the context of the public theatre performances made by male prisoners in the Tegel Correctional Facility in Berlin: "Performances for prison officials, prominent visitors, or the curious public most often serve simply to showcase the accomplishment of the inmates, without necessarily making any larger statement about prison or about society" (p. 85). Deeker argues that it is more important to create meaningful encounters between the audience and prison performers and that this occurs when the story underlying the theatre-piece makes statements about prison and/or society.

Many theatre programs in prisons do not adopt such a radically political approach and instead focus on the therapeutic potentials for the individual prisoner. Thompson (2007) emphasises a prisoner’s capacity, through theatre, to express their individuality within the prison system. This is in part because theatre enables prisoners to express and reconnect with the emotions that are normally hidden from the general prison culture (Jones, 2008; Renner, 2007; Trounstine, 2001). Prisoners are more likely to reconnect with emotion through theatre partly because they see it as part of the actor’s craft rather than a weakness (Renner, 2007). The reconnection with emotions within the group-work necessitated by theatre also enables prisoners to empathise with each other through ‘witnessing’ the emotions of other group members (Jones, 2008). Furthermore, theatre techniques such as role reversal enable an individual to witness their own stories, thereby
increasing self-awareness (Jones, 2008; Kanter, 2007; Moller, 2003). Other therapeutic potentials for prisoners who participate in theatre, as identified by authors, include the sense of being transported to another world (Kanter, 2007; Moller, 2003), the reduction of anger (Blacker, Watson, & Beech, 2008), the stimulation of emotional and intellectual development (Moller, 2003) and finding the voice which is usually otherwise silenced (Moller, 2003).

An awareness of the paradox of facilitating creative work in a punitive, regimented system is important when implementing theatre in prisons (Kanter, 2007; Moller, 2003). Prisoners often perceive prison programs as punitive rather than rehabilitative, “a form of domination that tries to impose growth and change” (Thompson, 2007, p. 32) and usually resist anything overly therapeutic (Kanter, 2007). Thompson (2007) warns that theatre can easily become an extension of punitive justice when it involves the prisoner re-enacting their offences and reciting the details of their crimes.

Theatre in prisons is commonly described as inherently therapeutic, but not therapy (Kanter, 2007; Moller, 2003; Proctor, Perlesz, Moloney, McIlwaine, & O’Neill, 2008). This contrasts with much of the literature concerning music therapy in forensic settings. Here, music is commonly described as a tool of therapy, utilised predominantly to change the behaviours of prisoners.

Music Therapy with Women in Prison

Forensic health is a relatively new and unexplored area for music therapy practice, especially within corrective services such as prisons (Daveson & Edwards, 2001). Perhaps this is why authors involved in this area mainly communicate the therapeutic potentials of music in behavioural terms whilst also articulating a ‘supportive’ approach. If Wheeler’s (1983) hierarchy of psychotherapeutic approaches in music therapy is accepted, ‘re-educative’ or ‘re-constructive’ approaches may need to first be built upon a foundation of supportive therapy. Furthermore, theoretical orientations underlying the use of music therapy in forensic health may begin to diverge when there has been enough time for the ‘convergent processes’ discussed by Paulus and Nijisstaad (2003) to become sufficiently established within the music therapy literature.

The implementation of music therapy in prisons was first described in the literature by Wardle (1979), who explored her use of music therapy techniques with women living in a psychiatric unit in prison. In the following decade, some exploration into the use of different music therapy techniques and approaches in forensic settings ensued (Cohen, 1987; Thaut, 1987). A decade later, Loth (1994) examined the interpersonal dynamics of her music therapy group which consisted of female patients in a medium-security forensic psychiatry unit, while Hoskyns (1995) researched her work with adult offenders in a community rehabilitation setting and suggested that music therapy facilitates change in the self-perception of prisoners which then enables them to adapt more positively to their environment.
This suggestion emphasises music as a tool for behavioural learning and supportive therapy for prisoners and is reminiscent of Thaut (1992) who argued that the main goals of music therapists working in forensic settings could be to reduce stress, anger and hostility in prisoners while helping to orientate them to the ‘here and now’. This idea has been reinforced by Daveson and Edwards (2001) whose case study involving 5 women in prison suggests that music therapy in correctional settings can reduce tension and anxiety in an individual prisoner while increasing their ties to reality. The potential of music as a supportive therapy is further highlighted by Smeijsters and Cleven (2006) who emphasise the strength of music in helping adult prisoners to explore, express and subsequently change their emotions.

Behavioural and supportive therapeutic potentials of music are highlighted throughout an entire special issue of a music therapy journal devoted to forensic psychiatry and correctional facilities (See *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 2002, Vol 20, Issue 2). In this special edition, music therapy is described as an effective treatment in helping offenders to address issues of substance abuse (Gallagher & Steele, 2002), anger management (Codding, 2002; Hakvoort, 2002) and overall goals of rehabilitation (Reed, 2002; Rio & Tenney, 2002). Gallagher and Steele (2002) suggest that the effectiveness of music therapy in this area is because music “is of great interest to participants (and) it can reach those who are resistant to other therapies” (p. 122).

Within this special issue, songwriting, performance and voice-work are strongly considered to be effective and favoured forms of music therapy in correctional facilities. Gallagher and Steele (2002) observed that their clients, who were offenders in a substance abuse/mental illness program, favoured songwriting as a music therapy method. Reed (2002) noted that providing opportunities for performance enabled ‘mentally disordered offenders’ to experience being needed by others, while increasing individual pride and esteem through socially acceptable self-expression. Furthermore, Rio and Tenney (2002) observed that, of all the music therapy methods presented to female juvenile offenders, “singing elicited the greatest demonstration of unity amongst the adolescent girls" (p. 93).

*Coda*

This chapter has examined the literature relating to women in prison, theatre in prison and the practice of music therapy in forensic contexts in order to situate the case under examination within some of its broader contexts. The following chapter supplements this aim, by providing factual information concerning the Australian justice system and, more specifically, the prison involved in the case under examination. These factual accounts provide the background for an interpretive explanation of the work of the theatre company in this particular prison. The explanation has been interpreted and constructed from grounded theory analyses of the interviews with the artists of the theatre company and provides an important context for the 10-week creative process that features in this research. First, however, the fifth scene from the musical performed by the seven women in prison and the artists from the theatre company is presented. The reader may choose to supplement the lyrics in this scene by listening to the fifth track in Appendix 8.
Scene Five: Awaken

GALLI and LEO unfreeze. GALLI examines herself in the mirror.

Galli. I like Galli! I’m happy with what I see. So, you can take your big mirror away ‘cause I don’t need it anymore. It’s all in here. Y’hear that, Leo? It’s in here! You can keep looking outside of yourself, searching whole galaxies for the answers. You can try to change as many astrologers as you like! But in the end it comes back to what’s in here. Yep, I’m happy with what I see and happy with who I be!

An up-beat riff begins to be played on piano, guitar, flute and drum-kit. All on stage begin to dance, including GALLI and LEO who become friendly with each other again. Enter NEPTUNE, who sings:

*(CD listening: Track 5)*

I’ve always been searching
For a place to belong
A place where everybody
Is singing my song
In this mechanical world
I’ve been a broken girl

But I never really saw it before
Never really thought there was more
But now, hang on a minute, I’m awake
And I’m loving myself for my own sake

I’ve always been a seeker
Of harmony
Sensations of painlessness
Have waited for me
But to think I never cared about tomorrow
And now I know

That I never really saw it before
Never really thought there was more
But now, hang on a minute, I’m awake
And I’m loving myself for my own sake
Knowing the choices I need to make
Loving myself for my own sake
CHAPTER 6

Further Situating the Case within Broader Contexts

This chapter provides the final pieces of factual information that help to situate the present case within broader contexts, such as the justice system in Australia and the particular prison involved in the case under examination. In addition to factual information, this chapter presents the construction of a theoretical framework that explains the work of the theatre company, via a grounded theory analysis of interviews with the artists. This framework provides particularly important contextual information for the 10-week creative process that is to be described in the following chapter. It also gives the reader some insight into how the work of the theatre company may influence this research. Other potential influences can also be identified in this chapter through an explanation of my attitudes towards the work.
Before this occurs, however, some of the broader contexts relating to the case are described. The chapter begins with a brief explanation of the justice system in Australia and provides factual information about the prison where this research took place. The theatre company is then introduced, followed by a presentation of the theoretical framework for how the artists within the theatre company explain, execute and understand their work. Finally, the particular case under examination is related to this framework, in terms of how certain aspects of the case rendered it quite different to the usual creative processes facilitated by the artists of the theatre company.

The Justice System in Australia

The information presented in this section, including the subsection regarding the particular prison where this research took place, has been retrieved from the official website of the Australian Department of Justice (www.justice.vic.gov.au).

The Australian justice system is based on the common law system developed in the United Kingdom which separates legislative, executive and judicial powers. This means that parliament makes the laws, the executive puts the laws into operation and the courts or judiciary interpret the laws. The separation of these powers is believed to aid in the equal treatment of all people before the law. The common law system is distinct from the civil law systems that operate in Europe, South America and Japan, which are derived from Roman law. Other countries that employ variations of the common law system are the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Malaysia and India.

The justice system is not uniform across all Australian states and territories. This is because the states and territories have independent legislative power in all matters not specifically assigned to the federal government. Where there is any inconsistency between federal and state or territory laws, federal laws prevail. In effect, however, Australia has nine legal systems—the eight state and territory systems and one federal system.

In the Australian state of Victoria, the executive function of the justice system is supported by Corrections Victoria, an organisation that manages the corrections system for adults and subsequently oversees the 13 prisons and 50 correctional facilities that exist across the state. The prison where this research took place is one of 13 prisons in Victoria.

The Prison in this Research

The prison provides maximum security, medium security and specialist accommodation for remanded and sentenced women prisoners. It currently has a capacity to incarcerate 260 women at a time. All women sleep in separate rooms in units that house up to ten women. Each unit has a kitchen and laundry and the prisoners are required to cook and prepare their own meals as well as do their own washing and housework. Under the management of Corrections Victoria all prisoners under the age of 65 are also required to
work in industries such as horticulture or metal fabrication, for at least six hours a day and ten days a fortnight. These hours are reduced if prisoners elect to study or participate in programs provided by the prison. While the programs available differ from prison to prison, they are all designed to help prisoners to develop personal and practical skills that are relevant in the world outside prison. Some of the programs offered at the prison include cognitive skills, parenting skills, drug and alcohol treatment and ‘caraniche’, which is a Melbourne-based consulting firm that predominantly delivers a variety of psychological services in prisons. It is not compulsory for women to participate in any of these programs, although it is viewed favourably by the Adult Parole Board when the prisoner is being considered for release from custody.

The program offered by the theatre company within the prison is unique in that it is focused on creativity and entirely independent of the prison system. Although the artists within the theatre company work closely with prison staff to recruit women and to implement the program, the organisation is in no way funded by the prison. Instead, it is supported financially by a multitude of philanthropic trusts, ensuring its overall autonomy within the prison system.

**The Theatre Company**

The theatre company involved in this research began working in a maximum-security women’s prison in 1980. Women who were imprisoned there saw a play involving actors from a local performing arts institution. Some of these women asked one of the actors if she would introduce a theatre program at the prison. Under the direction of this actor, these women began a long tradition of telling their stories through theatre. Today, this work continues in and outside of the prison and is a prime example of Community Cultural Development (McDowell, personal communication). The theatre company has now extended its work to other communities such as young people who don’t attend school but has sustained its core creative role in Victorian women’s prisons, running regular workshops and mounting high-quality dramatic performances and art exhibitions every year for the last two decades.

The following section offers a detailed framework for explaining the work of the theatre company in terms of its therapeutic potential. This framework emerged from a grounded theory analysis of the information gathered from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the artists from the theatre company. The section begins with a brief summary of the relevant characteristics of the artists who participated in the research followed by an explanation of the grounded theory processes used to analyse the data. The resulting theoretical framework is then presented in detail.

**The Artists**

All of the artists interviewed were part of the theatre company involved in this research. Seven out of eight artists from the company agreed to participate in the study; they were all women and were aged between 35 and 50. The artist who chose not to participate explained that he was too busy at the time. Three of the participating women were
involved in the company as actors, while the other four fulfilled the roles of writer/director, artistic director, visual artist, and choreographer.

Analyzing the artist interviews.
Each artist interview contributed to the development of a theoretical framework that explains the work of the theatre company in terms of its therapeutic potential. In order for the reader to become more familiar with how these grounded theory techniques were applied in order to articulate the following theoretical framework, the main categories and their dimensions are outlined in Figure 4. Underscoring these major categories and dimensions are two categories of beliefs or assumptions conveyed by the artists of the theatre company (denoted by circles in Figure 4) which I interpreted as integral to the framework developed in this chapter. Despite their importance, however, these beliefs or assumptions have not been developed with properties and dimensions; they are presented more as a background to the theoretical framework that underpins the work of the theatre company.

Figure 4. The categories, properties and dimensions involved in the theoretical framework that explains the work of the theatre company.
The following information is an explanation of the therapeutic potentials of the work of the theatre company, based on my interpretations of the interviews I conducted with the
artists from the company. In developing this theoretical framework, I formed the categories from Figure 4 along with their properties and dimensions into a narrative which was fleshed out with additional information contained in the artist interviews. Tables of the codes, categories and raw data are located in Appendix 5 (p. 208). These tables clearly represent how the following framework has been constructed from, and related to, the raw data. Although the framework has been built using the words of seven artists, it is presented here in a singular voice as if it were from one artist telling us about the work of her theatre company.

**Framing the Work of the Theatre Company through ‘The Creative Journey’**

The artists who comprise the theatre company involved in this research facilitate a creative journey for all women involved; a journey through space, body, voice, story and feeling; a journey ‘home’, back to the true self. It is largely a journey through internal terrain although it occurs in the external environment of the women’s prison. The creative journey is simultaneously an individual journey for each person participating and a collective journey for the group of participants. Its duration differs from journey to journey, however it spans across initial efforts to create a new theatrical work right through to its performance. The depth that each journey penetrates depends upon whether or not individuals are new to the experience. Longer creative journeys are more ideal for traveling further and deeper, however the duration of each journey is mostly dependent on the timetables of the prison and of the theatre company. The pace of the creative journey gathers momentum when participants make creative offerings and, more particularly, during the final two weeks leading up to the performance when there are more frequent rehearsals.

The notion of a creative journey as opposed to any other type of journey stems from a particular belief shared by the artists; a belief in the humanising potential of creativity and participation in the creative arts. Humans are meant to be creative, they argue. Once experienced, creativity can become a need. It can free you up, make you less guarded. It accesses and strengthens healthy, natural parts of the self. Creativity can be an alternative way to process stress by using a different language to express difficult emotions. It can help you to understand yourself and others. It is humanising, nourishing and enlivening; the opposite of destructive. It transforms negative energy and affords new spaces. It can also make tangible and practical changes. Creativity is not bound by class, money or power; everyone has the potential and the right to be creative. Although creativity is not limited to the arts, the strength of the arts is in their ability to bring people back to themselves, to make them feel human again. This is particularly important for women in prison, who commonly describe their experiences in prison as dehumanising.

**The External Environment: The Prison**

The prison is a tricky, dehumanising environment in which to traverse the creative journey. The overall energy in prison is low, dense, negative, dark and pained. It’s an energy that can devour people or force people to become extremely self-protective. Despite this unified energy, the environment is chaotic and disparate. People are always
coming and going and life is usually extremely unsettled. Women in prison have commonly been given psychiatric diagnoses, however these are usually not known by the artists of the theatre company. It is enough for the artists to understand that something must have gone wrong in a woman’s life in order for her to be in prison. Most women have been sexually or physically abused prior to entering prison. This may mean that they have a particularly difficult relationship with their body and with their voice. Women participating in the theatre program are always facing issues much bigger than those they face within the program, such as court and the loss of their children. It is no wonder that their attention spans are usually short and attendance is often irregular.

Although they are just as creatively capable as anyone else, women in prison are usually humble about their creative abilities. Often they’ve had no previous experience with creative arts. They usually have few pretences and can be more open to trying things. This enables the artists to focus more on building skills rather than stripping away guises during the creative journey. Women in prison can see their involvement with the theatre company as a refuge from the prison environment, particularly because the theatre company is completely autonomous within the prison system. Sometimes women may even see their involvement as an easy way out of an obligation to work while in prison. However, as they commit to their creative journey and are confronted with difficult aspects of themselves, they learn that it is actually a challenging path they have taken.

*The Individual’s Creative Journey*

The individual’s creative journey traverses internal terrain and therefore the destination will differ for each participant; however the common goal is to move forwards in some way. Moving forwards internally can be described as change or growth and is potentially healing. More specifically, it is described as reaching important milestones in life (obtaining an enjoyable job, being in relationship with others, finding a degree of stability in housing situations), learning about oneself (learning you have something to creatively contribute, developing aspirations for oneself, building confidence and self-worth) and moving from the self to others (learning to look outside one’s self, focusing less on what the self can get and more on what the self can give).

Traveling outside one’s comfort zone is seen as the key to moving forwards internally. Figure 5 highlights the non-linear path that this may take. Throughout the creative journey individuals will travel outside their comfort zones, and the ensuing experience of challenge or discomfort may at times cause individuals to appear to move backwards. These experiences are critical and normal moments along the individual’s creative journey and the direction and depth at which they are navigated largely depends on two factors: 1) how safe the individual feels along the journey, and 2) how ready the individual is to change.

Figure 5 – Moving forwards outside comfort zones
The destination for an individual.
The destination of each creative journey is different for each individual due to the internal terrain covered. However, if the individual is sufficiently ready for the journey before she begins and if she feels relatively safe throughout, her destination will usually be somewhere further forward than before. Negative cycles, such as drug addiction and recidivism, can and have been broken. More positive futures have been mapped and lived out. New alternatives have been discovered. Individuals have begun to believe in themselves and their potential. They have grown in skills and confidence.

The Collective Creative Journey

The collective creative journey is a more external, artistic one. Its destination is the performance of a story to an audience. This common goal invigorates individuals within a group and creates strength in doing it together. The destination necessitates an ongoing session structure, using the creative tools of body-work, breath-work and voice-work, as well as three main steps: 1) creating a safe space and developing trust in the group, 2) devising the story, and 3) performing the story.

The creative tools.
Each session usually begins by clearing the space of chairs and tables and any other objects. Everyone stands in a circle to emphasise the group and three creative tools are worked through. These are body-work, breath-work and voice-work. These tools lay the foundation for each session, help participants to develop performance skills, and unite the company’s artists. Each of the three tools encourage participants to be in their body. The creative journey is ideally made in the body as opposed to the head/intellect because this is what enables us to truly and creatively play.
Body-work includes stretching, massage, physical games, dance and interactive movement. Intentions behind this work are to provide opportunities for a story to emerge via the body, while conveying the magic of the body and increasing body awareness, body potential and physical well-being so that participants feel ‘at home’ in their body. People who have been physically and sexually abused may find interactive body-work challenging. Massage, in particular, is seen as the key to breaking through these issues.

Breath-work focuses on bringing awareness back to the breath and to breathing more fully, into the whole body. Breath-work involves work in a dyad, where full breaths are encouraged and supported by placing the hands on the back ribs of another person. Voice-work is a natural extension of the breath-work. It focuses more on breath-control, resonance and pitch. Voice-work is potentially very healing; it can clear energy and raise energy vibrations while bestowing physical, emotional and cognitive benefits. In particular, changes in the voices of participants often reflect inner changes on their own creative journey.

Steps on the collective journey.
Creating a safe space is the first and most important step in the collective creative journey. A truly safe space enables creative potential and creates equal opportunities for each individual to express it. Developing a truly safe space may take months or years and it is particularly important in a prison where feelings of safety and trust in others is not necessarily a given. The artists work toward creating a safe space primarily by encouraging all people in the group to be non-judgmental towards themselves and others, particularly towards the vicissitudes experienced by another group member. A safe space can also be enhanced if the artist is uninhibited and open and if people outside of the group are not permitted to observe. This enables participants to feel safe enough to move from thinking and judging to playing creatively and exploring internally with and in the presence of other group members. The artists also try to ensure that they don’t set participants up to fail, either in the sessions or in performance, thereby enhancing their sense of safety. From this safe space, trust in the creative process, the creative tools used by the theatre company, the effects of the work, the skills of others and one’s own abilities can be developed. The ‘coming and going’ of women can make this first step difficult, but as trust develops the group’s composition becomes more consistent. Those who regularly attend become the bedrock for the second and third steps along the collective creative journey.

Devising the story is the second major step in the collective creative journey. This is a process of exchange between the writer and the participant. The writer constantly reflects material that emerges from creative play back to the group and negotiation between each participant and the writer follows. This empowers participants by enhancing their sense of control and ownership. Ownership, however, is not patronizingly given away to participants. The artist’s input and part-ownership is also acknowledged. The process of negotiation also encourages participants to feel safe in directing what part of their truth they will tell. The devised story is based on the truth of participants’ life stories due to the belief that we can only ever create with what we’ve experienced. Experience also gives us the emotional range to perform our truth. However, the truth can at times be
confronting for the participant and for the audience. The writer/director must therefore be careful to balance the quest for truth with the need for protection. Character provides some helpful distance and the truth is often embellished.

The group always dictates what the story will be and how it will be told. Furthermore, the story is considered to be bigger than the group; that is, the group serves the story and the individual serves the group. This is depicted in Figure 6. The group becomes bigger than the individual in that the individual begins to feel that they can’t let the group down by choosing to give up. In that sense, there is usually a certain relinquishment of self and fear for each individual. Despite the fact that the individual is not the central focus, the collective journey is ultimately seen only as a small part of the individual’s bigger life journey.

Figure 6. A depiction of who serves whom along the creative journey.

The writer is usually the driving force behind the creation of the story. She is concerned with capturing what she perceives to be people’s true voice, and tries not to reinforce a ‘victim’ voice. The story usually involves individual stories which are tied together by an overarching story. The overarching story is not necessarily based on the truth, but usually involves universal themes. With the overarching story, the writer always tries to posit hope and create empathy, especially due to the belief that the energy behind the story is reinforced in the wider world. Partly in reaction to the association between community arts and poor aesthetic standards and mostly to reflect the dignity and spirits of everyone involved, the artists always aim to devise the best possible story while helping the women to perform it in the most professional way possible. In this way, the artists drive and ‘own’ the aesthetic choices made along the journey.
Performance is the third major step on the collective creative journey. This is the culmination of the creative journey, the outcome toward which everyone has been working. Outcomes are seen as very important to the creative journey as they push people to a new level by providing focus, energy and a sense of achievement. Perhaps most importantly, however, they shape the creative journey by building momentum to a climax. If there were no climax, the journey would be a very different ‘shape’ with possibly less gathering of energy and less sense of completion.

As a ritual, performance in theatre has the uncanny power to reinforce and manifest performed ideas, both positive and negative; things such as patterns of behaviour, dreams, destinations. Performance enables participants to receive positive feedback from their family and friends. Having their stories witnessed by others can also inspire them to act on what they have just performed. Furthermore, as participants move from focusing on what they can get to what they can give, performance enables them to give to those people in the audience who identify with their stories. It can also reduce ignorance by informing audience members on important issues. Other performance upsides are that the adrenalin can be an enjoyable experience; people can even get ‘hooked’ on performance as a result. Not everyone can perform however so for those who can, there are usually feelings of courage and pride.

Nevertheless, performance is undoubtedly challenging. Women in prison are used to putting guards up for self-protection and performance forces them to be vulnerable again. They can’t choose who they perform to, and they may particularly find it hard to show the prison guards their human side. More generally, the exposing nature of performance makes it one of the more anxiety-inducing artistic outcomes. It doesn’t usually come naturally. It is like being on a tightrope, a rollercoaster. It challenges performers to stay in the moment and to let go of bad moments.

*After the journey ends.*

After the journey ends the program offered by the theatre company continues in the prison, albeit in a different way with no outcome shaping the process. This allows contact to be maintained with participants and enhances the potential for further and deeper journeys to be made with the same participants on subsequent collective journeys. Contact is also maintained with participants even if they are no longer in the program.

*The Wider Effects of the Creative Journey: Social Action*

The creative journey is understood as a form of social action, where the action of performing true stories ripples out in many unknown and unforeseen ways. The performance part of the journey not only affects the individual but also opens their social networks and overarching systems to change. Audience members, who usually consist of government officials, health professionals as well as each performer’s family and friends, are commonly moved by performances and feel that they have more understanding of the issues presented as a result. Governmental policies have also changed as a direct result of these performances.
The Line between Therapeutic Destinations and Therapy

The creative journey undoubtedly arrives at healing destinations and because of this it is often seen as therapy. However, the artists of the theatre company do not present their work as therapy primarily due to the belief that everyone is equal and that the processes of therapy counteract this natural equality. In reality the women in prison and the artists who work with them are not equal in their access to freedom, opportunities, choices and skills; however they are equal in their potential as humans, both positive and negative, and as participants in the creative journey. A truly creative space creates an equal space for potential to be fulfilled by all within it. The creative space nurtured by the artists and participating women is the only context in the prison where a woman is not labeled and therefore power is not unnecessarily imbalanced.

The work is not presented as therapy for additional reasons. Teaming therapy with music, for example, can muddy the potency of the latter because it brings in another agenda. Music is music; it can be therapeutic but it is not therapy. Furthermore, the process of therapy is critiqued for its use of professional boundaries that dehumanise the individual and cut her off from the therapist. This does not mean that the relationships between artists and participants are naively unbounded; it is just that they are more flexible, natural and therefore more humanising. Therapy also requires the therapist to plot and formally evaluate an individual’s progress which is a form of judgement. To some extent, the work of the theatre company is similar: certain steps along the creative journey are plotted and evaluated but only those concerning the group as a whole, such as steps to devise the story and ensure a successful performance. The individual’s creative journey is not plotted at all, although the artists sometimes informally evaluate such things in terms of how an individual seems to have moved forward. Any evidence of change in the individual, however, is seen as an off-shoot of the larger collective creative journey.

Summary of the Framework

If you were to participate in a program conducted by this theatre company, you could expect to embark upon a personal journey and a journey with others that involves the performance of a shared story. How far you travel on your personal journey depends upon how ready you are to change and also how safe you feel within the group. You can expect to travel outside your comfort zone on many occasions. Stick with it because this is what creates change; this is how you move forward. You will serve the group; and the group will serve the story. This will help you to relinquish your self-focus; you’ll feel relieved to remember that there is something bigger than you. You’ll begin to focus less on what you can get and more on what you can give. The journey will be challenging but if you are ready, trusting and courageous you will return to a truer sense of yourself. It may feel as if you’ve come ‘home’.

How the case fits within the framework.
The artists of the theatre company described the year in which the case under examination occurred as an odd year, mainly due to the major renovations that were
 occurring at the prison at the time. The artists suggested that the resulting physical upheaval in the prison may have caused the women to feel more unsettled than ever. Perhaps more concretely, the renovations and resulting security concerns meant that the performance had to be of a smaller scale with no admission to the general public. It also needed to be a one-off performance, rather than the usual series of three nightly performances plus a matinee. Furthermore, the large focus of all theatre company artists on a project outside the prison meant that the creative process inside the prison was given less focus than usual. There was less input from the writer, the actors and the visual artists, and therefore the process was led more by the music, with script weaving the songs together, rather than the other way around. This resulted in a much ‘lighter’ show, with less dramatic depth in the exploration of issues raised by the central theme. As musical director, I largely worked alone which is also not usual. Finally, there was a ‘changing of the guard’; some regular participants who had been performing in prison for years with the theatre company were released. Six of the seven participating women were new and had not experienced a creative process led by the theatre company before.

The smaller scale performance necessitated by the prison renovations meant that the duration of this particular creative process was shorter than usual; it spanned 10 weeks and involved a total of 22 sessions. Generally, sessions were conducted twice a week for two hours, however approximately one week before the performance the sessions involved entire days in succession.

**Coda**

This chapter represents the final part of section 2 of this thesis, which has focused on situating the case within its broader contexts. In this chapter, factual information regarding the Australian justice system and the particular prison involved in this research has been provided. Following on from a discussion of different programs in the prison, the second part of this chapter has detailed an interpretive explanation of the work of the theatre company within the prison in order to situate more clearly the 10-week creative process that is described in detail in the next chapter. Before this new chapter begins, however, the final scene from the musical performed by the seven women in prison and the artists from the theatre company is presented. The reader may choose to supplement the lyrics in this scene by listening to the sixth track in Appendix 8.

**Scene 6: Moving Forward**
NEPTUNE and dancers move off-stage. GALLI and LEO remain.

Leo. Gotta go!
Galli. But we’ve just become friends again!
Leo. Gotta go home!
Galli. What’s wrong? It’s not your family, is it?
Leo. No. It’s my stars. It’s a very bad day for Leos today.
Galli. Don’t be ridiculous!
Leo. I’m not being ridiculous. The sun’s conjunct Uranus.
Galli. Now you’re being rude.
Leo. Saturn’s the hard task-master and with Orion’s belt – it means unexpected change!
Galli. What’s wrong with that?
Leo. I hate change! I’m a fixed sign.
Galli. We can’t all be cardinals, I suppose.
Leo. Don’t you see? That’s why we’ve had such a bad day! I’ve been projecting onto you, Galli. I’m going home before Saturn’s influence increases and there’s even more change!
Galli. But you can’t run from it Leo. You can only choose how you respond. Saturn’s telling you to stop. Stop and listen to what’s in here.(Points to heart). Listen, even now it’s trying to tell you something. Ssshhhh ...

Soft, sparse, meandering piano begins again. Enter NEPTUNE, JUPITER, PLUTO and DARK STAR.

Neptune steps forward. You’ve got to stop giving yourself such a hard time.
Viene de mi corazon – it comes from the heart.
Jupiter steps forward. You know, there’s some things I might not be able to change but I can change the choices that I make.
Pluto steps forward. When I look into the mirror, I’m going to be happy with what I see.
Dark Star. I won't always be the dark star staying in the shadows. A bit of daylight won't hurt.

The piano heralds the final song. All performers dance a joyous, choreographed sequence. All sing:

*(CD listening: Track 6)*

It begins with good intentions
Like the morning of a new day
But by evening the sun has set
And I’m pulled the other way
Pulled the other way

The darkness pulls me back
And I slip into my old skin
Old ways, old thoughts
The wrong thing

And it seems that I’m traveling round in circles
I never really ever get past ‘go’
But the patterns in my mind are always fading
I’m moving forward and one day you will know

The darkness in my atmosphere
Blinds me from the path
It holds me close, keeps me whole
I am ripped apart, I am ripped apart

There comes a time when I must look up
There’s nowhere left to go
Shining brighter than they did before
Stars pull me out of the black hole
They pull me out of that black hole

And it seems that I’m traveling round in circles
I never really ever get past ‘go’
But the patterns in my mind are always fading
I’m moving forward and one day you will know
You’ll know!

--------- THE END ---------

CHAPTER 7

Describing the Creative Journey

This chapter provides a thick description of the 10-week creative process in an Australian maximum-security women’s prison during which time a musical was created and performed there by seven female prisoners in collaboration with a theatre company. The chapter begins by introducing the seven women from prison who were involved in the research. Following this, the steps involving the qualitative content analysis of the session notes are explained and illustrated by tables of information. This enables the 10-week creative process to be described collectively, in terms of how the creative process generally unfolded for this particular case. Presented next in the chapter are descriptions of each woman’s creative journey, constructed from phenomenological analyses of interviews. The chapter concludes with a phenomenological analysis of session notes in order to construct my experience overall as musical director during the 10-week process. This is presented in order to increase the transparency of the research while providing yet another angle from which to understand the case.

Introducing the Research Participants

Although there were nineteen different women who were part of the collective creative journey, the group ended up comprising seven consistent members. It was these seven women who, together with two artists from the theatre company, ultimately formed the
cast for the musical and who also agreed to participate in this research. Each of the seven women will now be introduced under pseudonyms. The details provided in these introductions are those that were known to me before the collective creative journey began.

Jane – is a 24-year-old woman who is as yet unsentenced. It is her first time in prison. She has a young daughter who currently lives with Jane’s mother. Jane came into the prison with strong guitar skills and immediately began to write her own songs. Some fellow prisoners suggested to Jane that she should participate in the theatre program. Consequently, Jane involved herself in the drumming and music sessions offered as part of the theatre program, where she demonstrated a natural flair for rhythm and a lack of fear with singing. She had been attending sessions for approximately nine months before the research began. When she is released, Jane wants to focus on writing and performing songs.

Gillian – is a 35-year-old woman who recently came into prison for a second time. She is unsentenced and lives in a specialist mental health unit. She has young children on the outside but it is unclear with whom they live. Gillian has enjoyed writing, dancing and singing ever since she was a young girl. She writes prolifically in her journal during her time in prison and sings readily in the music sessions. Gillian began to attend the music sessions just as the 10-week creative journey was underway.

Sarah – is a 33-year-old woman who very recently came into prison for the first time. She has no children, is unsentenced and lives in the specialist mental health unit. Sarah has a very strong singing voice and can improvise on the flute very competently. She also has past performance experience with a theatre company. Sarah began attending the theatre program a few weeks after the collective creative journey began.

Lucinda – is a 33-year-old woman and a long-term prisoner. She has been involved with the theatre program on and off for many years. Her role in performances has been mainly as a musician behind the scenes, but in recent years she has begun to take on acting roles as well. Lucinda can play guitar and the drum-kit and also sings quite confidently. She writes her own songs. When she is released, she wants to teach drums to disadvantaged children. Lucinda began to participate in this particular 10-week creative journey approximately halfway through its duration.

Spark- is a 26-year-old woman who is in prison for the second time. She has a son who lives with her mother. Spark is more interested in theatre than music however she is willing to give anything musical a try. Due to a timetabling clash with cognitive skills therapy, Spark could only begin to regularly participate in the 10-week creative journey in the fourth week.

Matilda – is a 28-year-old woman and a long-term prisoner. She has no children. She is a talented writer and has studied professional writing during her time in prison. She had previously participated in music and visual art sessions as part of the theatre program but a strong fear of groups and performance kept her away from the program for
approximately five years. This is despite her love of music and her desire to learn the guitar. She recently became involved in the drumming sessions offered within the theatre program, where she demonstrated a natural flair for rhythm. When these sessions amalgamated with the music sessions, Matilda became involved in the 10-week creative journey.

Majella – is a 40-year-old articulate woman who has been in prison for three years and will be released within a year. She is friends with Matilda and shares her desire to learn the guitar as well as her fear of performances and groups. Like her friend Matilda, Majella became involved in the drumming sessions offered within the theatre program and commenced the 10-week creative journey when the drumming sessions amalgamated with the music sessions.

**Constructing a Description of the Collective Creative Journey**

The term ‘collective creative journey’ is derived from the theoretical analysis presented in chapter 6; in the current chapter it refers to the overall ten-week creative process that forms the particular case investigated for this study. I constructed a chronological description of this collective creative journey using conventional techniques of qualitative content analysis, as described in chapter 4. The interpretations resulting from this analysis are supplemented throughout by the perspectives of the individuals involved, in the form of both raw and processed data. The inclusion of these perspectives in the description is an attempt to reflect and refract the case from a variety of angles, thus enhancing ‘crystallisation’.

The following section provides a detailed explanation of how the description was constructed through a content analysis of my session notes. In this analysis, three types of textual units emerged inductively through several readings of the session notes. Textual units were defined as passages of writing, of any length, that could be linked to other passages of writing by common themes. The three textual units for this analysis were:

1. Creative actions
2. Session participation
3. Events that I interpreted to be significant to the collective journey

**Step 1 – Creative Actions**

After the three textual units had been inductively derived from the session notes, I searched through the session notes again looking for examples of the first textual unit, ‘creative actions’. I defined these as any action performed by myself, the artists of the theatre company or any of the seven women participating from prison which led to or resulted in a tangible creative product, such as a song or script for a scene. Once I had assembled these creative actions sequentially, I grouped them into five main categories or phases. Table 4 presents these phases and the sequence of creative actions that occurred in each phase.

Table 4: Phases of Creative Action
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Number</th>
<th>Creative Action</th>
<th>Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• A theme that emerged from last session’s drama improvisations is reflected back to the group by the</td>
<td>Phase One – Creating the foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>musical director and theatre company artist</td>
<td>for the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The group discusses, researches and writes about the theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Journals and pens are given to the participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The theme is brainstormed further using drama improvisations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• The musical director reflects the lyrics that she has formed between sessions back to the group. The</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lyrics are based on the verbal, dramatic and written material from sessions 1 and 2. They are approved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>by the group without suggestions for improvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The group puts music and melodies to these lyrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The group begins to orchestrate Jane’s song, which she recently wrote by herself and completed in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration with the musical director. Jane wants to include this song in the performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>• The group attempts to add lyrics to those already composed by the musical director, however none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are finalized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The musical director tries to interest Gillian and Matilda in writing a song in future sessions. They</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are both willing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>• The group successfully add to the lyrics begun by the musical director and the song is completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Matilda shares some of her past writings with the musical director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The musical director and Gillian begin to brainstorm song ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>• The musical director reflects the lyrics and music she has composed between sessions back to Gillian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>following their brainstorming last session. Gillian approves of the song and begins to learn it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Together, the musical director and Gillian perform the song to the rest of the group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The group continues to orchestrate Jane’s song</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>• The musical director and Gillian brainstorm ideas that may help to introduce her song dramatically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jane’s song, Gillian’s song, and the group-composed song are rehearsed and orchestrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>• An artist from the theatre company guides Matilda in creative writing in an attempt to formulate lyrics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Lyrics, chord charts and potential dramatic lead-ins to the three songs are handed out to each woman
- The three songs are rehearsed
- Lead-ins are read through as a group
- The musical director encourages Sarah to write a song between sessions

9
- Sarah shares lyrics she’s written between sessions with the musical director. They begin to put them to music
- The group rehearses and arranges the three completed songs
- Rather than compose new lyrics, Matilda offers her past writings to the musical director and asks her to form some of them into lyrics in between sessions

10
- The musical director reflects the song she composed between sessions, based on Matilda’s writings, back to Matilda. She approves.
- The musical director asks Spark if she’ll sing Matilda’s song, since Matilda doesn’t want to sing in public. Spark is nervous but willing
- The group rehearses the three completed songs
- The musical director and Sarah work more on Sarah’s song

11
- The musical director and Sarah continue to work on Sarah’s song
- Matilda makes a small change to the lyrics of her song. The musical director performs this song to the group. The group then learns and orchestrates the song
- The choreographer puts movement to Jane’s song
- The musical director works with Spark to teach her how to sing Matilda’s song

12
- The musical director and Sarah complete her song. They perform it to the group. The group then learns and orchestrates it
- All five songs are rehearsed

13
- The group shows the songs and script ideas to the Artistic Director/writer
- The Artistic Director/writer tries to flesh out characters and plot through discussion and drama improvisations

14
- All five songs are rehearsed
- The choreographer develops more movement to the songs

Phase 2 – Consolidating and Fleshing Out
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 3 – Bringing it All Together</th>
<th>Phase 4 – The Climax: Performing the Show to an Audience</th>
<th>Phase 5 – Winding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Songs are rehearsed</strong></td>
<td><strong>All songs are rehearsed</strong></td>
<td><strong>All artists liaise with prison staff to ensure that the lighting, props, backdrops, and audio equipment are approved to enter the prison</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lucinda shares original songs with group as possible inclusions to the show. The Artistic Director doesn’t think they are suitable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lucinda improvises a ‘coda’ to the show and the idea of an audience singalong to end the show is discussed. This raises aesthetic concerns for the Artistic Director, however no decisions are made</strong></td>
<td><strong>Script to weave the songs together is improvised by the theatre company artists</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The musical director buys props and costumes and hires sound equipment while the group rehearses lines as well as stage entries and exits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Extra equipment and costumes are brought in</strong></td>
<td><strong>The group rehearses full run-throughs of the show three times</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The women try on their costumes</strong></td>
<td><strong>The musical director asks a woman from the visual arts program to monitor sound levels during the performance</strong></td>
<td><strong>The group performs the show to fellow prisoners, prison staff and staff from outside agencies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The group rehearses a full run-through of the show, with lighting, movement and costumes</strong></td>
<td><strong>The songs and their lead-ins are rehearsed</strong></td>
<td><strong>The group debriefs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After I had assigned the creative actions to the five main categories of creative phases, I examined the particular creative actions in phase 1 and constructed five new categories to describe the types of creative actions that occurred in the process of creating the foundations for the performance. These five categories are:

1. Play
2. Transformation
3. Reflection
4. Negotiation
5. Collaboration

Table 5 shows how these five categories are related to the specific creative actions that occurred in creating the foundations for the performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Number</th>
<th>Creative Action</th>
<th>Type of Creative Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1              | • A theme that emerged from last session’s drama improvisations is reflected back to the group by the musical director and theatre company artist  
• The group discusses, researches and writes about the theme | Play, Reflection, Transformation, Collaboration |
| 2              | • Journals and pens are given to the participants  
• The theme is brainstormed further using drama improvisations | Play |
| 3              | • The musical director reflects lyrics that she has formed between sessions back to the group. The lyrics are based on the verbal, dramatic and written material from sessions 1 and 2. They are approved by the group  
• The group puts music and melodies to these lyrics  
• The group begins to orchestrate Jane’s song, which she recently wrote by herself and completed in collaboration with the musical | Transformation, Reflection, Negotiation, Collaboration |

Table 5. Types of creative actions involved in creating the foundations of the musical
| 4 | The group attempts to add lyrics to those already composed by the musical director, however none are finalized.  
The musical director tries to interest Gillian and Matilda in writing a song in future sessions. They are both willing. | Collaboration |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | The group successfully add to the lyrics begun by the musical director and the song is completed  
Matilda shares some of her past writings with the musical director  
The musical director and Gillian begin to brainstorm song ideas | Collaboration  
Play |
| 6 | The musical director reflects the lyrics and music she has composed between sessions back to Gillian following their brainstorming last session. Gillian approves of the song and begins to learn it  
Together, the musical director and Gillian perform the song to the rest of the group  
The group continues to orchestrate Jane’s song | Transformation  
Reflection  
Negotiation  
Collaboration |
| 7 | The musical director and Gillian brainstorm ideas that may help to introduce her song dramatically  
Jane’s song, Gillian’s song, and the group-composed song are rehearsed and orchestrated | Play  
Collaboration |
| 8 | An artist from the theatre company guides Matilda in creative writing in an attempt to formulate lyrics. An overall idea is formed but no lyrics created  
Lyrics, chord charts and potential dramatic lead-ins to the three songs are handed out to each woman  
The three songs are rehearsed  
Lead-ins are read through as a group  
The musical director encourages Sarah to write a song between sessions | Play |
| 9 | Sarah shares lyrics she’s written between sessions with the musical director. They begin to put them to music  
The group rehearses and arranges the three completed songs | Collaboration  
Collaboration |
Rather than compose new lyrics, Matilda offers her past writings to the musical director and asks her to form some of them into lyrics in between sessions.

The musical director reflects the song she composed between sessions, based on Matilda’s writings, back to Matilda. She approves.

The musical director asks Spark if she’ll sing Matilda’s song, since Matilda doesn’t want to sing in public. Spark is nervous but willing.

The group rehearses the three completed songs.

The musical director and Sarah work more on Sarah’s song.

The musical director and Sarah continue to work on Sarah’s song.

Matilda makes a small change to the lyrics of her song. The musical director performs this song to the group. The group then learns and orchestrates the song.

The choreographer and some group members put movement to Jane’s song.

The musical director works with Spark to teach her how to sing Matilda’s song.

The musical director and Sarah complete her song. They perform it to the group. The group then learns and orchestrates it.

All five songs are rehearsed.

---

**Step 2 – Session Participation**

Following the construction of Tables 4 and 5, I examined the session notes for recordings of group attendance in order to explore how the group formed over time. This is represented in Table 6. The reasons participants gave for their absences have been noted in the table. ‘Floaters’ refer to other group participants who did not regularly attend or ultimately perform. These participants are denoted by the first letter of their names.

**Table 6. Group Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Number</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Gillian</th>
<th>Spark</th>
<th>Lucinda</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Matilda</th>
<th>Majella</th>
<th>Floaters</th>
<th>Group numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>L, C, J, M, B</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>L, J, M, B</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During several readings of the session notes searching for group attendance and reasons for absences, it became apparent that the prison system directly influenced session participation, and therefore the ways in which the group formed, in seven different ways:

1) women needed to take time out from sessions in order to organise their ‘special spends’ (individual purchases) with staff
2) women were randomly ‘urined’ (tested for drug use) during sessions
3) women needed to complete their prison duties during sessions
4) women could only go to the canteen during their unit’s assigned time, which was often during the assigned time for sessions
5) women needed to go to medical appointments during sessions
6) women’s cells were ramped (searched) during sessions
7) the session space was closed due to a shortage of staff
Despite having consistently experienced the chaos of the prison environment for five years, I still became frustrated when it impeded the flow of the collective creative journey in the ways outlined above. I experienced the prison system as such a ‘block’ to creativity and felt frustrated at my helplessness in removing these blocks. Instead, the challenge was to navigate ways around them and this often required a headstrong attitude to push ahead regardless of which women were able to participate in each particular session. Through this particular analysis of the session notes, I experienced a sense of surprise in discovering just how influential the overarching prison system was in fostering the chaos that typified session participation. Previously, I had attributed the bedlam that often characterised sessions more to the women themselves.

Session notes also indicate that the systems governing the theatre company also influenced the collective creative journey. Due to a constant need for funding, the work of the theatre company is not confined to the prison; the company of artists is also involved in many other creative projects with a variety of different communities of people. Sometimes these projects occur simultaneously. In this case, the main focus of the theatre company was on a large external performance project which meant that I sometimes needed to shorten sessions within the prison in order to focus on the external project. It also meant that other artists from the theatre company were not as present in the prison as usual, nor as heavily involved with the prison project.

As musical director, I found this very challenging and frustrating. My focus was on the prison-work while the other artists were focused on a different project. I often felt isolated from the theatre company and heavily burdened by facilitating the performance in the prison largely on my own. Previously, I had always worked within the team of artists and in this context responsibilities were shared among us all. I had never experienced having to lead the entire journey before, nor did I have a strong sense of how music would lead a process that was ordinarily led by drama. I also felt added pressure due to the fact that I was basing my doctoral research on this creative process, desiring more than ever that the process be successful while questioning my ability to make it so without help from the other artists.

**Step 3 – Significant Events**

In this final step of the content analysis, I searched through the session notes again looking for any events that I interpreted to have had a significant impact on the overall journey. I interpreted an event as significant if it affected most of the group members. I compared the timing of these events with the sequence of group formation and creative actions in order to substantiate my interpretations of their significance. These events are represented sequentially in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Number</th>
<th>Significant Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The writing of songs for the performance is completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The musical director is momentarily but visibly upset during the session

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 15 | Gillian pulls herself and her song out of the process  
    | Majella pulls out of the process |
| 16 | Gillian and Majella return to the group |

I cross-referenced tables 4, 6 and 7 and found that the sequence of significant events and group formation could be linked to the five phases of creative action, represented in Table 4. Consequently, I chose these five phases as the overarching framework for describing the collective creative journey. These five phases are:

1. Creating the foundations for the performance
2. Consolidating and fleshing out the foundations
3. Bringing it all together
4. The climax: Performing the show to an audience
5. Winding-down

A Description of the Collective Creative Journey

Each phase is now described in detail, in terms of the creative techniques that were utilised, as well as group formation and significant events. The description of these aspects is supplemented with quotes from raw and processed data.

Phase 1: Creating the Foundations for the Performance; Sessions 1 – 12

“Even though I’ve been doing this for five years now, I still couldn’t trust the process this year. I particularly found it hard to trust that we wouldn’t get stuck in the initial creative phase. I felt that I was dragging creativity out of people and forcing the process in order to create the show, even though there were some moments when women offered their creative material freely and generously. It was a relief when that phase was over.” (Musical director, distilled essence)

The initial phase in the collective journey developed over the first twelve sessions and involved the creation of the foundations for the performance. These included an overall theme, five original songs related to the theme, and script ideas for how each song could be introduced. Phase one was also characterized by a lack of stability in the formation of the group, which was in part influenced by the prison system and the theatre company itself. This will be discussed after a description of the techniques that were utilised in creating the foundations for the performance.

Techniques for creating the foundations.

The journey began with the emergence of potential ideas to explore in a show:
“We talked about the theme of ‘Moving forward the hard way’ and the metaphor of planets and stars and their gravitational pulls. This had emerged from improvisations and discussions with Jane and other women in previous sessions. The women cottoned onto this straight away – L even went to the library next door and got a book out for us to read up on the significance of all the planets” (Session Notes)

Throughout the first phase, the ideas surrounding the theme of ‘Moving forward the hard way’ were subjected to a continual process of play, transformation, reflection, negotiation and collaboration (as represented in Table 5). Play involved drama improvisations, musical improvisations, creative writing and verbal discussions. The musical director or participants transformed this play material into song or script form and reflected it back to the group. The participants then negotiated any changes with each other and with the musical director. They then collaborated as a group to complete lyrics and script or to orchestrate and arrange the songs. Emerging from this process were five original songs related to the theme of ‘Moving forward the hard way’ as well as script ideas for how each song could be introduced.

Group formation.
Yeah, I think … people not showing up when they should, yeah, a bit unorganized. (Jane, Interview)

The formation of the group was inconsistent and unstable during phase one. A total of 19 women participated in sessions at various points during this phase. Only one of these women had previous experience with the theatre program. The average group size per session was seven, however Table 6 shows that this number did not commonly comprise the seven women who ultimately completed the journey and participated in this research.

Despite the unpredictability of the group constituency that characterized this early phase, the group had begun to stabilise by the time phase 1 concluded. Session 12 was the first time that the seven ultimate group members were involved in a session together, and they each attended fairly consistently from then on. When they were absent, the women gave three different reasons: a) court appearances, b) visits with children, and c) not feeling up to it.

The attendance of women who did not ultimately complete the creative journey was also not as strong or consistent by session 12. These women did not complete the journey for three main reasons: a) they didn’t feel like continuing for reasons that were not communicated to the musical director, b) they were ‘slotted’ as punishment, or c) they were going to be released before the performance. The latter two reasons demonstrate the influence of the prison system on the way in which the group formed. The influence of the prison system on session participation has been discussed in more detail earlier in the chapter.
Significant events.
The relative stability of the group from session 12 onwards may have been influenced by two significant events related to the twelfth session: a) all the songs to be included in the performance had been created by the end of this session. This signaled the beginning of a new, more structured phase, and b) as musical director, I was transparently upset at one point during session 12 after which the group seemed to pull together. The latter event is one that now causes me significant embarrassment and sparks a sheepish desire to defend myself and convince the reader that this is not something I often do in my work, nor is it something I condone. Nevertheless, the ‘crying’ event is important to include in this description of the collective journey, since it did seem to influence the ensuing level of cohesion in the group. This is evidenced by the following quotes:

“The group sort of came together … (laughing) after you cried” (Matilda, interview).

“As we were playing the song I began to feel really upset, like I was forcing people to do something they didn’t want to do. Unfortunately, I couldn’t hold back my tears as I was asking Matilda to play a rhythm … Not that I want to make that a habit, but somehow they all pulled together after that.” (Musical Director, Session notes)

“(Laughing) And then, all of a sudden, when everyone participated she wasn’t a crybaby anymore” (Spark, Interview).

Phase Two: Consolidating and Fleshing Out; Sessions 13-17

Phase two began in session 13 and spanned five sessions. Creatively, it involved fleshing out the foundations produced in the first phase and consolidating them through rehearsal. This phase was also characterised by consistent attendance by the ultimate group members. This apparent stability in the group, however, was rocked in the final half of phase two when Gillian pulled herself and her song out of the program. This will be elaborated upon, following a description of the techniques that were utilised to flesh out and consolidate the creations of phase one.

Techniques for fleshing out the foundations.
Other art-forms utilised within the theatre company were central to the ‘fleshing out’ process in phase two. The artistic director, in collaboration with the participating women, developed an overarching storyline based on the theme of ‘Moving forward the hard way’ through the same process outlined in phase one: play, transformation, reflection, negotiation and collaboration. In this way, the script that weaves the songs together was finalised. A ‘coda’ for the show, involving audience participation, was also developed based on Lucinda’s playful improvisations and the desire of some of the women to play cover songs at the end of the performance and invite the audience to sing along. This ‘coda’ was an unusual inclusion for the theatre company and it did raise aesthetic concerns for the artistic director. In particular, she worried that the performers would not be able to maintain high singing standards in the ‘coda’ and that the performance would descend into singalongs reminiscent of drunken Christmas parties outside the prison. Ultimately, however, the ‘coda’ was included in the performance and, to my knowledge, did not cause the artistic director any shame.
Body-work and elements of theatre also helped to flesh out the creations from phase one. The choreographer developed movement or dance for the songs, generally through a process of suggesting moves to the participating women and then negotiating with them according to their abilities and level of comfort. Costumes, props, lighting and stage backdrops were also organised in this phase. The end of phase 2 was signified when all of these elements began to be brought together with the script and songs in Session 18.

**Techniques for consolidating the foundations.**
The songs written in phase one were consolidated via regular rehearsal where the group continually honed the ways in which the songs were orchestrated and arranged. Suggestions for the orchestration and arrangement of the songs were sought and made by all involved. Typically, each woman in this phase was concerned with fitting her musical part to the whole:

“Jane is very good because she sort of led us other times with the guitar and it’s like, ‘That fits into that’ and it’s a bit exciting, you know?” (Majella, Interview)
“I think as we were rehearsing I’d try to listen to the different instruments and try to fit something in somewhere” (Matilda, Interview).
I’d say to Jane, “What flute do you want in it? What do you not want in it? What sort of things could I possibly add to your song to attribute it, not to embarrass it?” (Sarah, Interview).

**Group development and significant events.**
For the first two sessions in this phase, the group remained quite stable, with consistent attendance and uneventful but thorough rehearsals. In session 15 however, five sessions before the performance, Gillian pulled her self and her song out of the show: Gillian no longer wanted to be a part of it and she wanted her song pulled from the performance and she was very adamant about it. Some of the women, especially Sarah, were quite upset by this news. Jane asked me if the music to the words was mine (which technically it was) and suggested that we write new words to it. (Session notes).

Notes from the previous session suggest that Gillian was feeling fearful about how people would react to her song:
Gillian started getting really angry, muttering that she didn’t want to do it anymore, that they were all her words and the women from the jail wouldn’t understand her sentiments about loving yourself because most of them didn’t know how to. Lucinda tried to talk rationally to her about how the women always love the performances but she wasn’t listening. The artistic director stepped in and reinforced what Lucinda was saying but Gillian kept muttering to herself and then left for a cigarette (Session Notes).

I tried talking to Gillian to find out her reasons for leaving but she was very angry and unable to tell me. I also tried asking Gillian if we could still use her song in the show but this inflamed her further. Members of the group were quite anxious about this event but we continued to rehearse the other songs and think about how we might re-write the show without Gillian’s involvement.
In session 15, the same session in which Gillian pulled out, Majella sent a message via Matilda that she also wouldn’t be participating any longer because of her fear of performing. The group did not receive this message with as much angst as they had when Gillian pulled out of the process; this may have been because Majella often expressed her doubts about performing so it was therefore less of a shock and also Majella was not pulling a song from the show nor causing anything to be re-written.

The following session, both Gillian and Majella returned to the group. I suspect that this may have been due to the efforts of Jane and Lucinda in between sessions but neither of them elaborated upon exactly what they said or did to encourage the two women back to the group. Majella was immediately re-incorporated into the group but for Gillian’s return the artists needed to consult the group first to see how each member felt. All participants except for Spark were in favour of Gillian’s return. Gillian explained to the artists that she had been having a hard time since her court case: Then she moved to what happened on Monday, saying that others had told her to pull out of it and to take her song with her, and that now those people weren’t even talking to her or sitting next to her at lunch. She was saying that she shouldn’t have listened to them, that she should have listened to herself ... She apologised for everything really sincerely and said she felt very good to be back (Session Notes).

Majella also apologised during the session. I told her how I totally understood her fear of performing and that the group would understand if she didn’t want to do it anymore. She said that she wanted to do it for Matilda who had supported her in things before. She also said that it was much more personal than a fear of performance. She said that she didn’t feel comfortable in group situations – she’d come from a small family and saw herself in a different way to the way that the other women saw her (Session Notes).

Phase 3: Bringing it all together; Sessions 18-20

I loved seeing it all come together … I’m rapt we followed it through as a team (Sarah)
I liked how we supported each other (Spark)
I enjoyed seeing it all come together (Gillian)
I loved how we all came together (Lucinda)
I enjoyed seeing it all come together (Majella)

I enjoyed seeing it all come together, especially when my friends were around to see it;
I liked the songs because everyone pulled together; It was OK because we were all up there together (Matilda)

We got it together; I liked the last song because we all did it together (Jane)

(Collective themes)

Phase three began two days before the performance when all of the creative parts began to come together in full run-throughs of the show. Sessions were lengthened to full days during this phase. Full run-throughs entailed the use of costumes, props, lighting, sound equipment and back-drops while the script and songs were rehearsed in their full sequence. The songs were no longer arranged or orchestrated; merely rehearsed. Sound levels were monitored and entries and exits on and off stage were worked out. Details
such as the show’s ‘coda’ were still being finalized. Phase three continued until an hour before the performance.

The group was at the peak of its development in this phase. The entire group attended all of the time, except when Spark had a visit with her son for part of one of the sessions. One woman who had been attending sessions fairly regularly was quite suddenly released from prison two sessions before the performance. Therefore, it wasn’t until session 18 (two sessions before the performance), that the group finally became the group that was to perform.

Phase Four: The Climax - Performing to an Audience; Session 20

“On a personal level I wouldn’t want to ever do it again, be on stage, be performing, because it takes too much from me personally” (Majella, Interview).

“I used to be a little wary about it to start off, with the whole jail thing, but over the years after doing it a few times you realize that half of them are crying and they can all relate to it really well … I think it’s like offering a present to everyone” (Lucinda, Interview).

In this case, phase four was short as there was only one performance. In the afternoon of session 20, following a morning where three full run-throughs of the show were rehearsed, the group performed the show to fellow prisoners, prison staff and staff from outside agencies. Group ‘pep’ talks were given by the artistic director, both before and after the performance. The entire momentum of the 10-week creative journey was directed to the performance; it ran smoothly and was over within 25 minutes. Afterwards, the performers milled with the audience and received feedback from them.

Phase Five: Winding Down

I felt that this was the first time I really had the space to get to know the women a little … It’s nice when you don’t have the stress of working to a performance! (Musical Director, Session Notes)

Phase five is also a short phase but an important inclusion in the overall creative journey. In this case, it spanned across sessions 21 and 22. The first of these sessions was an informal gathering where people chatted and shared food. The artists were able to check in with each participant to see that they felt OK post-performance. Hopes and plans for the next collective creative journey were also discussed. In session 22, the songs were recorded. This is considered part of the winding down phase because it was framed as a chance for the group to play the songs for a final time without the looming pressure of performance. Participants were also able to wind down prior to each ‘winding down’ session by debriefing about their experiences along the collective creative journey during their interviews with me as researcher.

The Creative Journey for Each Individual: What was their Experience?
The following section adds individual perspectives to the collective tale already told. It draws mainly upon phenomenological analyses of interviews with the women in prison in order to describe the essence of their individual journeys. The emphasis in this section is on the *experiences* of each woman and is a direct result of the distillation process common to phenomenology. As explained in chapter 4, the distillation process includes the construction of structural meaning units (SMUs) and experienced meaning units (EMUs). The particular SMUs and EMUs constructed for each woman’s summary are contained in Appendix 6 (p. 278) and provide detailed information about exactly how these summaries were constructed.

The following section begins with the presentation of individual summaries for each of the seven women who participated in this research from prison. Each of these summaries are then integrated into a collective summary, known in phenomenological terms as a global distilled essence. Following this, a summary of my own experience is constructed from a phenomenological analysis of the session notes.

*The Individual Summaries*

The following summaries are written from each woman’s perspective and in her original words wherever possible. For those women who wrote an original song, the titles of their summaries are accompanied by a speaker symbol and a track number. This refers the reader to the audio CD (Appendix 8) of songs that forms part of this thesis. The lyrics of each song can also be found within the script that is interspersed throughout this thesis. The summaries are now presented in no particular order.

*Sarah’s individual journey.*  
*(Track No. 4)*

I was a mess when I first came into prison. I still wanted to better myself but I knew I needed to do something that would meet me where I was at. I wanted to go back to basics, to something I was familiar with rather than learning something entirely new. Music, for me, was that familiar thing which gave me something to offer to others.

I haven’t been musically creative for so long. My song is about my past and how I’ve changed. Writing songs like that can feel too exposing in here. I was worried that others might think it was too full-on and self-absorbed.

The process leading up to the performance was difficult emotionally. I held it together more than some of the others even though I was becoming nervy. I trusted you because you’d been there from the start and I knew you’d been doing this for years.

Initially I just wanted to enjoy making music, however the performance gave us something to aim for. It kept me on my toes. I enjoyed the actual performance and I felt that this radiated out to others, but I was also very nervous and scared to look at the audience during the performance. Whenever I did, though, I could see they were very
appreciative. I was particularly rapt that the people in charge of me came to watch, especially the regional manager of Victorian prisons and all my psych nurses.

I copped a lot of positive feedback, which at times made me feel overwhelmed or shy, so I lay low after the performance. I’m beside myself that I was able to give others a good time by performing to them.

I feel that I played a strong and vital part within the group. I was one of the leaders. I helped others to build their musical skills and to take ownership of their songs. I’m rapt we followed it through as a team. I loved seeing it all come together.

The music program made me very happy and this radiated through my unit. It got me out of the nasty environment in my unit and enabled me to vent with others about prison and to talk with you about music. The music program became a large part of my life, especially as our involvement increased leading up to the performance. As a result of my participation in the music program, I became more and more trusted by those in charge of me and therefore given more liberties.

I’m rapt with how I was throughout the process. I’ve come a long way in a short time. It’s reminded me I’m human.

Lucinda’s individual journey.

I was going through a rough patch during the whole process. I had been stressed and it just snowballed. I was feeling self-critical, out of control emotionally and paranoid. This process showed me how flat I really was. I dragged myself to music knowing that it would be better than staying in the compound but I worried that I was too withdrawn and that it would annoy you.

Despite how I was feeling, every year I’m becoming more and more confident with this process. It’s nice to do something positive where you get what you give with it. It gives you a window out of jail and out of your mind. It gets you out of an institutionalized mind-set and you can meet people you wouldn’t ordinarily get to know from other units.

I enjoyed playing the drums again after such a long time, especially in songs where they didn’t overpower others and the beat was familiar.

I became more nervous as it got closer to the performance and needed some reassurance that what I was doing was right. I reassured others about their nerves even though I felt stressed myself. The stress leading up to it always pays off in the end, though. I love seeing it all come together.

I really enjoyed performing even though part of me didn’t feel like doing it. You can vent, air, blast your lungs out. It feels good to put everything into the performance. You can say things your way, loud and proud. I prefer performing for the jail because they
know me. It’s like offering a present to everyone. I was able to bring something beautiful and deep to the jail. I always get emotional when I watch the others pour their hearts out up on stage. It’s moving and gutsy. I also like the applause and the positive feedback. The women in jail are always really appreciative and can relate to the shows really well.

**Gillian’s individual journey.**

*(Track No. 5)*

I really enjoyed the experience. It took me away from being in such a dark place as prison. I was surprised at what I was capable of doing. A bad experience when I was little stopped me from writing but now I’ve realized I can write and express myself as much as I want to. I’m writing heaps now.

I’ve always loved music and that’s why I came back to the group. People outside the group were encouraging me to quit but I realized after a while that I shouldn’t listen to them. Initially I needed Sarah to help me sing my song but the more I rehearsed the more confident I became and I didn’t need her support anymore. I didn’t feel comfortable telling her this, though, so I spun out a little bit. I felt she was trying to dominate me and take over my song. I got really confused.

I loved how we all came together towards the end. We gave it our best and it turned out well. Most of the women loved it and a lot of people were surprised at the talent we have here in the prison.

I wish we could have done more than one performance after all that work. I feel much more courageous about performing now.

**Majella’s individual journey.**

Working towards a performance was difficult and confronting. It made me feel shithouse, nervous and anxious. My counselor thought it was good for me but I felt like I was doing it for the group, not for me. I didn’t feel like I could try it out and then leave the group, even though you didn’t hassle me. I just didn’t want to let everybody down. So, I didn’t get much personal satisfaction from the group experience although I enjoyed playing the drums and fitting my part in with the others.

I used to wish I could be someone who was assertive and confident, able to perform. Things may have been different. It can be good to confront your shyness and self-consciousness if you have someone to help you through, but it’s also good not to constantly be stepping outside of your comfort zone, which is what drama is about. At my age I don’t need to push myself to change who I am or become comfortable with performing. It’s not important in my life. I wouldn’t ever do it again because it’s too challenging personally.

Even so, I’m not sure if it would have been better without the performance. It probably would have been better for me, but not for the group. I did enjoy seeing it all come together and I’m glad I followed it through, for the group and because that’s important in
other areas of life. I’m really happy that I wasn’t as anxious as I could have been. You guys and the prison made me feel safe. I also knew that the other women weren’t going to boo us or make a joke of us.

I’m glad I was part of it. It was good for me, even though I’m not sure why yet

_Matilda’s individual journey._

(Track No. 2)

Music is something I’ve always loved. I was able to play it more when I came to prison because it’s safe here. However, many moons ago, I dropped out of everything I loved, which included music. My fear of groups and people kept me from coming back.

My experience of writing a song was a little rushed. In fact, everything felt a bit chaotic. It’s easy to feel vulnerable writing songs in such a judgmental place as prison. I also tend to be critical of myself and a bit of a perfectionist when it comes to writing. It stops me from finishing things. Putting music to my words took them to a different place. It gave them a different context and gave me a different perspective. I learnt not to be so picky with my words. I wasn’t so attached to them because I was sharing them with others. It wasn’t exactly perfect but it was still fun and now that I understand the process I think I would be able to write more and bring it in to class more regularly.

I liked the other songs mainly because everyone pulled together. I also liked them more when I knew what I was doing. I liked learning more about other people’s experiences through the songs and I especially liked how one of the women boomed her song out. Everyone liked playing the song with the wicked beat. With each song, I would just listen to the different instruments to try and fit something in somewhere but I would have been more confident about doing that if I’d been to more classes. I enjoyed seeing it all come together, especially when my friends were around to see it with me.

The performance itself was nerve-racking. It freaked me out. The governor even came in on his day off to watch me. Me and Majella just wanted to hide but it was OK because we were all up there together. Having Majella there was good. I just needed someone. Performing isn’t for everyone. I would have preferred it if there were no performance because it’s the classes that I really love, but I coped anyway.

In amongst this process, so many people in charge of me noticed how well I was going. They think I’m moving forwards so they were more lenient on me when I got a dirty urine. I’ve also had positive feedback all around the place which makes me happy and sometimes embarrassed. I saw something through for once. I actually get out of bed now and I want to learn more and more, musically. Apparently I’m already much more musical at home (in my unit). It’s like coming home, in a way. It’s brought me back to what I love – music!
It’s a bit of a contradiction but even though I still don’t like people or groups, I prefer learning music in groups now because you learn more. I may play instruments in the group now but I’ll never sing.

*Spark’s individual journey.*
I’ve always liked drama, ever since I was little; the singing side of things, not so much. The performance was scary. I didn’t want to sing in this performance, especially not in front of the people I live with. I didn’t want to have to face their crap. I don’t believe the people I live with when they tell me I did well because they’re either just being nice or want something from me. Personally, I don’t think I performed or sung very well. I wish you had have been more critical about how I sounded from the beginning so that I could focus more on making it sound less like mumble. We also could have practiced the drama and dance elements a whole lot more. I liked how we supported each other, though.

I liked the depth and meaning behind the songs in the performance. I didn’t write my own song, however, because I’m not the sort of person who writes down their feelings.

During the lead-up to the performance I thought it was really unnecessary that one woman in the group ranted and raved and said things that weren’t nice and then came back to the group. She’d had her go. And when you cried I just thought, “Pansy” but I did feel like it was my fault.

The program gave me something to do. It also kept me busy from thinking about the worst day of the year for me.

*Jane’s individual journey.*
*(Track No. 3)*

Playing music gets me through each day and sometimes makes me think that I’m not in here. The process was fun but it seemed to drag sometimes because we rehearsed the songs so many times and people often didn’t show up. But we got it together. Working towards the performance made us do something properly. It was harder than if we’d not had a performance but it was good to build momentum. I enjoyed getting together with the others and helping them with their music skills. Some of us had to talk some of the girls through staying. It was good to get them into something different that they could enjoy.

Writing songs as a group is different. I like writing the music to group songs but I don’t usually help with the lyrics because they don’t usually match up with what I want to say. So I just write my own!

I loved most of the songs for different reasons. I loved playing the guitar to one of them. I liked the words to it too. I liked another one because it had a fun, happy beat. I liked the last song because we all did it together. And I liked my song. My voice has become stronger from all the practice. I’m thinking more about how I use it so my throat isn’t getting sore much anymore.
A Global Distilled Essence.

Using further phenomenological techniques, all aspects of these individual experiences were processed into one overall statement which is referred to in phenomenology as a global distilled essence. The construction of the global distilled essence involved three steps: 1) creating collective themes, 2) creating global meaning units and 3) creating the global distilled essence. The final step is now presented as the fundamental essence of experience for all the women who participated in this research from prison:

The women experienced the creative journey as uncomfortable, exposing and challenging but worthwhile. Many women described a return to creativity and were proud of how they navigated the process, both by themselves and with others. Each woman particularly enjoyed seeing all the parts, including their individual selves, come together.

My Individual Journey

In order to provide another angle from which the reader can understand the case under examination, I have undertaken a phenomenological analysis on my session notes in order to summarise my own experience of the creative journey. In this analysis, any session notes that directly recounted my personal experience of the creative journey were treated as key statements from which SMUs, EMUs and a summary could be constructed. The SMUs and EMUs are contained in Appendix 7, (p. 367) and the summary is presented below. The inclusion of this summary also heightens the transparency and reflexivity of the case study, as it presents a process of self-inquiry to the reader.

The summary.

Even though I’ve been doing this for five years now, I still couldn’t trust the process this year. I particularly found it hard to trust that we wouldn’t get stuck in the initial creative phase. I felt that I was dragging creativity out of people and forcing the process in order to create the show, even though there were some moments when women offered their creative material freely and generously. It was a relief when that phase was over.

Directing the process was a new and unfamiliar experience for me. As a musician belonging to a theatre company, leading the sessions alone made me feel anxious and so I felt supported and relieved when working with my colleagues.

Creating something as a group was loud, chaotic and challenging. Developing cohesion in the group was problematic, however it did come together in the end. I felt particularly vulnerable leading into the session in which I cried and, although it wasn’t an ideal reaction for me to have, I felt that the group really pulled together after that.

Initially I thought that the music would weave the drama together, as it usually does, and I felt more and more anxious as the drama failed to be a presence. But I relaxed once I let go of that idea. It was interesting to see the different outcomes when music leads such a process, even though ultimately the story still dominated. I saw how the naked word in
drama can expose a person’s truth more honestly than lyrics dressed up by music and how all the elements of theatre can make music a more powerful medium.

I often felt frustrated and powerless within the prison system and when other company projects conflicted with the prison program. The prison sometimes felt like a foreign country whose inhabitants I couldn’t communicate with or understand. I oscillated between feelings of frustration and a desire to be more compassionate towards the huge levels of fear and fragility I encountered in some of the women.

At times I felt the tension between wanting to maintain high aesthetic standards and allowing people to express themselves. I also wondered whether the challenges were worth the effort, particularly after the performance when I was feeling exhausted. However, once I wasn’t focused on working towards a performance I felt I could relax and get to know the women.

Coda

The focus of this chapter has been to describe in detail the 10-week creative process, mainly through qualitative content analyses of the researcher’s session notes as well as phenomenological analyses of the interviews with the women in prison. The next chapter begins the final section of this thesis, which focuses on analysing and discussing the case in terms of the three research questions. The first research question is addressed in the next chapter.
What were the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case?

This chapter provides an answer to the first research question: “What were the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music that were available in this case to the women in prison?” Through a grounded theory analysis of session notes and interviews with the women in prison, this chapter offers a theoretical explanation as one way of answering the first research question. The use of the word ‘potentials’ instead of ‘outcomes’ in this context implies that the therapeutic outcomes reported in the interviews were not the same for each woman in the group, nor were they experienced in the same way. An explanation of how these therapeutic potentials were fulfilled as therapeutic outcomes for individual women is detailed in the next chapter.

The therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case have been examined through the use of grounded theory analysis techniques. These techniques were outlined in detail in chapter 4 and are demonstrated in the present chapter through the use of a table outlining the codes, properties and dimensions of the major categories that form the basis of the following theory explaining the therapeutic potentials for the women in prison who created and performed music together. Grounded theory was chosen for this analysis because of its capacity to build any identified therapeutic potentials into an integrated, abstracted and cohesive explanation.

The chapter begins with an introductory background to the central idea that forms the basis of the theoretical explanation. A table is then presented that contains the main codes, categories, properties and dimensions that were used to construct the explanation. These analyses are then presented as a detailed narrative which is supplemented by raw data. Finally, the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case are summarised and outlined in a table.

Creating and Performing Music in Prison: Bridging the Inside to the Outside

As humans, we commonly make distinctions between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ in terms of physical space: for example, our house may be divided into ‘inside’ areas and ‘outside’ areas. For women in prison, the razor wire surrounding the prison creates a physical space ‘inside’ which is very much separate from the ‘outside’ world. However, this divide between inside and outside permeates much more than just physical space for women in prison; it manifests itself in many more symbolic and complex ways and these permeate the following explanation of the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in prison.

The therapeutic potentials for the women in this case who created and performed music together can be explained using an overall metaphor that describes these musical actions as a type of bridge from the inside to the outside. The metaphor of a bridge emerged as the central category in the grounded theory analysis that was undertaken for this chapter. In effect, creating and performing music in this case provided bridges for the women
involved between inside and outside places, between privacy and public, between self-focus and a focus on others, between solitude and togetherness, and between subjective and objective thought processes. Table 8 denotes these potentials in more detail and, through the use of codes, highlights the dimensions in which they occurred in the data.

### Table 8 – Axial coding for ‘Music as Bridging the Inside to the Outside’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Properties of the Major Category</th>
<th>Dimensions: Inside --------------- Outside</th>
<th>Major Category: Bridging the Inside to the Outside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It kept me in touch with the outside; Music is a window out of prison; It got me out of my cell</td>
<td>Physical Places</td>
<td>Prison-outside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took me away from such a dark place; It takes me out of my mind for the day; Music is a safe haven</td>
<td>Symbolic Places</td>
<td>Dark/scary----safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People tell us what to do 24/7; I remembered I have initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional --- humane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It took my lyrics to another place; Music gives the feeling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rational----emotional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I normally keep to myself, try to slip under the radar; I have a fear of people and groups; don’t want to attract dramas</td>
<td>Women’s usual domain in prison</td>
<td>Private --public</td>
<td>1. A Bridge Between Places, both Physical and Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can feel a little naked writing songs in here; we live in a very judgmental place</td>
<td>Level of exposure in music</td>
<td>Hidden--------uncovered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music is less exposing than drama in performance; you can hide behind your instruments; it cloaks the naked word; singing is more honest than acting</td>
<td>Level of exposure in performance</td>
<td>Hidden ---- uncovered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s scarier to perform in front of the people I live with; I prefer to perform to the people I live with</td>
<td>Preferred Audience</td>
<td>Peers -strangers</td>
<td>2. A Bridge between Privacy and Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You feel like you’ve had a venting session; you have a chance to say things your way and be as loud and as proud as can be</td>
<td>Self-expression in performance</td>
<td>Withdrawn-----venting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was wrapped with my performance; I am more confident about performing now; I coped; I didn’t overcome my fears The feedback was positive; to the point of overwhelming</td>
<td>Performer’s response to exposure</td>
<td>Voiceless-------heard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have more compound access now; they didn’t fine me</td>
<td>Audience’s response to exposure</td>
<td>Confident ---coped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I needed to do something for me</td>
<td>Level of punishment after exposure</td>
<td>Supportive---unsupportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usual focus</td>
<td>Less--------more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self -----Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I was wrapped to be able to help others; My happiness radiated out to everyone in my unit. I used my musical skills to help others; I supported others; I felt I was doing it for the group, not for me; I needed support from others.

Her lyrics really grabbed me; That song had a wicked beat. Performance is like a present to others; everyone’s singing the songs around the compound.

Lockdown is the only chance we have to be by ourselves. I have a fear of people and groups.

I looked forward to lock-down in order to write lyrics; I prefer to write lyrics on my own. You bounce off each other and learn more in a group; I loved fitting my musical part into the whole song; I needed reassurance that my musical part fitted; All the musical parts are vital, otherwise there’s a hole.

It’s easier to perform as a group. I loved how we all pulled together; I loved how it all came together; Music stitches the parts together.

That song is about my past; I worried what others would think of my song; I worried it was too self-indulgent; I’m more aware of how I use my voice; I wish we could have worked on articulation from the start.

You’re less attached to the meaning of the lyrics when you collaborate with others; I wasn’t so picky on some of the words. I needed to go back to basics, to something with which I was familiar.

I haven’t done anything like that for ages; I got to play the flute, guitar, drums. I’m much more musical at home now; I’m inspired to do more musically. It’s coming back to what you love.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I was wrapped to be able to help others; My happiness radiated out to everyone in my unit. I used my musical skills to help others; I supported others; I felt I was doing it for the group, not for me; I needed support from others.</th>
<th>Main focus in music</th>
<th>Self ---- Others</th>
<th>3. A Bridge between Self-focus and Others-focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Her lyrics really grabbed me; That song had a wicked beat. Performance is like a present to others; everyone’s singing the songs around the compound;</td>
<td>Connectivity through songs; connectivity through performance</td>
<td>Self ---- Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockdown is the only chance we have to be by ourselves. I have a fear of people and groups.</td>
<td>Usual state of being, in prison; Preferred state; Preferred way to write lyrics</td>
<td>Alone--together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I looked forward to lock-down in order to write lyrics; I prefer to write lyrics on my own. You bounce off each other and learn more in a group; I loved fitting my musical part into the whole song; I needed reassurance that my musical part fitted; All the musical parts are vital, otherwise there’s a hole.</td>
<td>Preferred way to be musical</td>
<td>Alone--together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easier to perform as a group. I loved how we all pulled together; I loved how it all came together; Music stitches the parts together.</td>
<td>Preferred way to perform; Sense of unity</td>
<td>Alone--------with group Separate ------- Together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That song is about my past; I worried what others would think of my song; I worried it was too self-indulgent; I’m more aware of how I use my voice; I wish we could have worked on articulation from the start.</td>
<td>Modes of thought</td>
<td>Intuitive-------Analytical/Critical</td>
<td>5. A Bridge Between Subjective and Objective Thought Processes: Moving Outside the Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re less attached to the meaning of the lyrics when you collaborate with others; I wasn’t so picky on some of the words. I needed to go back to basics, to something with which I was familiar.</td>
<td>Distance from own creation</td>
<td>Close --- Far</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven’t done anything like that for ages; I got to play the flute, guitar, drums. I’m much more musical at home now; I’m inspired to do more musically. It’s coming back to what you love.</td>
<td>Familiarity with music Musically Active Love of music</td>
<td>Strange-familiar Recently--never Rarely--always Lost-- rekindled</td>
<td>6. Destinations: Coming back to music, returning ‘home’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Careful reading of the column in Table 8 that contains codes highlights how creating and performing music in this case served as a one-way bridge; these actions nudged the women, sometimes gently, sometimes more forcefully, towards outside realms under the
assumption that this was the direction forward. The common destination for these women moving outward was a sense of unity and a sense of ‘home’. As each woman moved in this outward direction, albeit in her own individual way and with her own individual struggles, she experienced a sense of it all ‘coming together’. Many women in the group also experienced a feeling of having come back to a love of music, of returning ‘home’.

The therapeutic potentials of this outward motion are now explained in more detail, in terms of each major category that emerged within the grounded theory analysis pertaining to this chapter. The explanation of each major category is supplemented with quotes from the interviews with the women in prison.

A Bridge between Places, both Physical and Symbolic

“Everything I do I do to stay in touch with something a bit different from what I am in touch with in here and it’s something I probably would never have done on the outside but I’ve had the opportunity to do” (Majella).

“It gives you a window out. You’re not doing all the usual day-to-day jail crap” (Lucinda).

Creating and performing music in this case functioned as a bridge between physical places as well as metaphorical spaces. In the words of Majella, it brought “something a bit different” to the prison, something from the outside world to the inside world of prison. Even though music has always existed inside the prison (women can listen to music in their units if they have access to a stereo or radio and music is often played through the speakers inside the leisure centre) it is usually experienced as an ‘inside’ phenomenon: in solitude, internally, an interaction between the sound and the listener. Music is rarely experienced in the prison as an interaction with other people. When this type of experience does occur, it is usually through performances inside prison by bands or singers from the outside. Majella refers to the creation and performance of music in her case as something different, as bridging an ‘outside’ idea to her world inside prison. For Sarah, it was also a bridge between her cell and the music room:

“I used to be in my room crying 24/7 and I didn’t have the confidence to even walk out of my cell. So, for me to actually come out of my cell and come down to music class all those times is just a feat in itself”. (Sarah)

As a “window out” (Lucinda), creating and performing music together also functioned as a bridge between metaphorical spaces. As sound, music transported lyrics to “a different place” (Majella), one more imbued with emotions and mood. As an action involving creativity and performance, music was a bridge between the “dark”, “nasty” and “institutionalized” spaces experienced within the prison walls, to a “safe haven” where women could ‘let their hair down’ (Lucinda); where they could ‘use their initiative and remember that they’ve got some’ (Lucinda); where they ‘remembered they were human’ (Sarah). In a symbolic sense, creating and performing music together was an escape from prison: “Like I said, it is an outlet, you go out for the day, out of your mind” (Lucinda).
A Bridge between Privacy and the Public

“I’m a pretty private person anyway ... I’m happy to just slip under the radar” (Sarah).

“The more I involve these people in my life the more dramas I’m going to get in’ (Spark).

The level of exposure required by creating and performing music in this case meant that these actions did not always engender a sense of safety for the women and that, instead, the women were often nudged outside their comfort zones. Generally, the women described their usual domain in prison as a private one: keeping quiet and to themselves, fearing people and groups, and not wanting to attract attention to themselves for fear of becoming involved in “dramas”. These women often described the prison culture as extremely judgmental. Consequently, some women experienced the act of creating songs as exposing: “You can feel a little naked writing songs in here” (Matilda). Some women also felt uncomfortable performing their songs to the rest of the group.

Performing the songs to an audience, however, was the pinnacle of exposure because it required the women to reveal themselves ‘fully present’ to an audience of females who shared their space inside prison 24 hours a day as well as to the prison officers and staff who upheld their incarceration. The intimacy of performing to these people, rather than to strangers, was preferred by those women who felt that performance was a gift to others and feared most by those who couldn’t trust the audience’s feedback due to inexperience or lack of confidence. For the former women, being witnessed by an audience of ‘insiders’ enabled them to feel that they’d had a “venting session”, raising the idea of self-expression and catharsis to one of being heard: “You have a chance to say things your way and be as loud and as proud as can be” (Lucinda). Straying outside of their comfort zones through performance also provided the women with the opportunity to perform to the people in charge of them, especially the governor. This was simultaneously a feared and coveted prospect:

“Even to the point of the governor saying that on their day off he would come into the performance if I was in it. I think, I don't know, it just makes me happy and everything’s OK” (Matilda)

“The fact that the regional manager of women's prisons was there, I was like, I saw him at the end. He was clapping away, having a good old time, and I thought, 'Oh my goodness!' (Sarah)

In contrast, some women felt that it was not necessary for them to become that exposed ever again despite acknowledging the positive changes performance brought for the group:

“I think for the wellbeing of the group, it's satisfying but on a personal level, not really ... On a personal level I wouldn't want to ever do it again, be on stage, be performing, because it takes too much from me personally ... At this stage, I'm 43, I don't think it's an issue that I need to change who I am, and I'm shy and I'm self-conscious ... I've got this
many years to do this many things and for my wellbeing, being a performer, like having to perform is not one of the things that is going to make me get by in life, I think” (Majella).

“I think some people like performances and some don’t. I wouldn’t have minded just keeping on going with the classes because that’s what I really love” (Matilda).

In this way, the bridge between privacy and the public sometimes represented discomfort and challenge for the women involved.

While some women enjoyed the thrill of performing and were happy with their performance and more confident about performing in future, others felt that they had merely coped or had not overcome their fears. Nevertheless, most of the women saw it as an important way to provide momentum for the group and to push themselves to higher standards. And this, some of them believed, made it worth all the discomfort:

“It might be a bit stressful leading up to it but I just think this pays off well, it was worth sticking your head out” (Lucinda).

“You reap what you sow” (Sarah).

Feedback from the audience was the most tangible demonstration of bridging the private to the public through music. The women reported that all feedback was positive and at times overwhelming. Audience members were reportedly singing the songs from the performance around the compound and there were some cases of staff members granting more access around the compound and being more lenient with potential fines because they saw that these particular women were “going forwards” (Matilda).

A Bridge between Self-focus and Others-focus

I realized that I was at the acute stage of a breakdown and I thought, “Right. I need to focus on me for a little while” (Sarah).

In some senses, women in prison are often focused on themselves especially when they are new to prison and still struggling with the crisis that landed them in prison in the first place. Later on, they are often grappling with huge issues including impending court cases and custody of their children. Creating and performing music in this case encouraged women to momentarily shift their focus from themselves and these issues towards others within the group. At times, some of the women experienced this shift in focus as rewarding; while other times it threatened women’s sense of autonomy.

Shifting focus to others occurred in a variety of ways. Some women recounted that their connection to others originated in listening to the songs that had been written by other women in the group; particular lyrics or ‘wicked beats’ resonated with them. Some women shifted their focus to others by sharing their music skills, helping others while strengthening their own feeling that they had something to give. Women buoyed each other along the journey while some women directly asked other participants for support. Each supportive connection, however, usually involved no more than two people. Consequently, for a long time there were several isolated dyads rather than an integrated, cohesive group. The group as a whole did not become connected until a leader emerged.
Lucinda was the only group member who had participated in this process before; she was a long-term prisoner whose past experiences with the program made her confident that the performance would be received well. This confidence enabled her focus to emanate towards every member of the group, thus leading the ‘isolated dyads’ towards integration:

Interviewer: What stuff did you have to do behind the scenes to get it all happening?

A bit of reassurance with people where it was the first time and even though sometimes I was stressed as well I would try to say it with a big smile on my face, “It’s the greatest thing on earth! ... I think we just had to be a bit supportive of each other ... just to be, for other people, to let them know that you’re there and that you feel the same (Lucinda).

This emphasis on others over the self sometimes conflicted with a woman’s sense of autonomy. The group became bigger than the individual and for some women this caused anxiety. Majella in particular felt that she participated for the benefit of the group rather than for herself:

“I felt like I was doing it for the group, not for me ... I followed it through to the end and didn’t drop out because I probably would have regretted letting you guys down.”

Gillian was another woman who felt her sense of autonomy was threatened, by the support she initially sought from Sarah:

I needed someone up there to do the song but the more I got up there the more confident I got and I thought, “I can do that on my own.” I didn’t need her there ... I thought, “Well, here you are trying to dominate me. I can sing too.”

Despite these threats to individual autonomy, the collective needs of the group won out because each woman shifted her focus in some way from the self to others whether she wanted to or not. It was a prerequisite for crossing the bridge between solitude and togetherness.

A Bridge between Solitude and Togetherness

Despite the women’s usual tendency towards privacy, it is difficult for them to find time when they can truly be alone in prison. According to Sarah, their only real chance for solitude is during ‘lock-down’, when they are locked into their individual cells for an afternoon twice a week. Despite the difficulties in finding solitude in prison, the four women who wrote songs unanimously preferred this state for creating song lyrics. Both Matilda and Gillian contributed phrases and ideas from passages they had already written in solitude and Sarah even looked forward to ‘lock-down’ for once so that she could write the lyrics to her song. Perhaps this was because these women saw lyric-writing as an opportunity for an expression of their individuality:

When I do stuff like that in there, unless it’s with the music, I don’t really say much ...
Because we’re not all writing about the same things so you might have a line before it that just doesn’t match up with what you want to say so I just leave it and think I’ll just go write one (laughs). But I like writing the music to them (Jane).

This quote suggests that each woman’s desire for solitude when creating lyrics was entirely different when it came to creating and performing music. The women felt easier
about performing as a group rather than performing solo and their joy in making music together was palpable. Matilda, who repeatedly asserted that she was afraid of people and groups, acknowledged that she now preferred to play music in a group context:

“I think you learn more, sitting in the class, and with other people, which is big for me. Because people bounce off each other or someone will know something or get the hang of something. You just bounce off each other. I prefer your classes than if we were to sit down one-to-one.”

Interviewer: “That’s an interesting insight. (Laughing) For the tape, Matilda is rolling her eyes.”

“(Laughing) I still don’t like people or groups though. Contradictions.”

In particular, most of the women spoke of the fun they experienced when collaborating musically, especially in their mission to fit their musical parts to the whole. There was a sense that all of the musical parts were vital because “otherwise there’s a hole” (Lucinda) and every woman wanted reassurance that her part fit properly and did each song justice. Songs were enjoyed because of the sense of unity that came from this melding of parts: “I think everyone pulled together, and that’s why I liked all the songs” (Matilda). Each woman emphasized her joy in being part of this togetherness, describing it as “it all came together” or “we all came together”. They described music itself as the thread that “stitches everything together” (Lucinda). In this way, creating and performing music were key ingredients in enabling the women to move from solitude to togetherness.

A Bridge between Subjective and Objective Thought Processes

The collaborative nature of creating and performing music in this case required women to move from thinking in intuitive, subjective ways to more analytical, critical and objective thought processes; in other words, to move outside the music. Once some of the women had created lyrics they then wanted to analyse and reflect on the underlying meanings of the lyrics, to step outside their own creations and examine them more objectively. The use of these ‘outside’ thought processes sometimes resulted in women becoming overly critical of their own musical work, worrying that their lyrics were too self-indulgent or that they wouldn’t be able to be related to by the audience, or that their instrumental parts weren’t supporting the songs as well as they could be. With enough reassurance from other group members and distance from the creation, however, these criticisms were abated. Matilda, in particular, described how for her the act of collaboration helped her to become less attached and therefore “less picky” with her words:

“It’s sort of like being able to kick back a couple of years later and read something you’ve written. It’s like that. You’re not so closely attached to it. You still are, but you’re sharing it with other people.”

Listening to their voices on recordings also encouraged some women to think in more objective and analytical ways about how they sang. Jane, in particular, enjoyed this process because it made her more aware of the physiological mechanisms she used to sing as well as helping her to reflect on her vocal tone. Spark, on the other hand, remained critical of her own singing voice, feeling that she hadn’t articulated the lyrics clearly enough.
“It’s like coming home in a way because you’re coming back to what you love” (Matilda).

The irony of the continual pull toward the outside is that the ultimate destination reported by many of the women involved was an inner one, a sense of ‘coming home’ to music. Most of the women involved had had past experiences with music, but these had commonly been “many moons ago” (Matilda). Gillian spoke of childhood experiences that had stopped her from writing; Matilda spoke of depression that made her drop out of everything years ago; Lucinda hadn’t had access to a drum-kit for a long time and Sarah hadn’t touched a flute or written anything “for years and years and years”. The exceptions were Jane who was just beginning to write songs when she became involved in the music program, and Spark who had always preferred drama to music. Most of the women, however, were familiar with making music and for some of them it was this familiarity that brought them there in the first place: I decided, because of my mental state at the time, because I have a history of psychiatric issues, ... it was easier for me to do something that I have some prior knowledge on. So it was actually going back to basics” (Sarah).

For others, it was their love of music:

That’s why I came back because I love music and I’ve always loved music (Gillian).

In returning the women to something familiar and loved, creating and performing music in this case rekindled their musicality and their inspiration to do more. Jane had written two more songs since the one that she contributed to the performance. Matilda reported that she was now “singing a lot more and playing a lot more and sitting at dinner and I don’t quite realize that I’ve got a pattern happening with my feet.” Likewise, Gillian stated: “I write everything that I say now and write it all down, even when I’m writing letters to my partner. It just flows and I can’t stop.” Lucinda felt inspired to learn more songs and to start a band in the prison, while Matilda just “wanted to learn more and more and more”.

Moving outwardly through creating and performing music in this case also spawned non-musical outcomes for the women involved. Some women reported increased confidence and courage, a sense of completion, satisfaction with following something through, new skills, more motivation in general, pride and a sense that they were moving forward. Two of the women also reported their satisfaction with being able to effect change not just within themselves or within the group, but also to the wider audience. Lucinda talked of performance as being a gift to others while Sarah described her increased happiness radiating out toward others in her unit. She also recounted the following:

“There are a couple of girls who are locked down for 24 hours a day in my unit because they are a major suicide risk to themselves, and one of those girls I actually got to know, and I begged and pleaded with the unit staff to let her out and get her down there ... We’re not allowed to communicate with her, only the staff are. However, in the past I’ve communicated with her and I think she’s a lovely girl. She’s just mentally very unwell and it was just great to see her down there and clapping along and having a good time, a genuine good time.”
Negative Case Analysis and Silence in the Data: Is Music in this Case ever Inward-Directed?

So far, my interpretation of the data in this chapter has emphasised the outward direction of music in this case: It bridges the inside to the outside, continually nudging the women from privacy towards public, from self-focus to a focus on others, from solitude to togetherness and from subjectivity to objectivity. Why? Is this the direction forward? Is this where the women are leading? The following analysis aims to shed light on these questions by looking in the data for when the opposite is true, a ‘trick of the trade’ identified by Becker (1998) which helps to build upon the trustworthiness of research. Furthermore, Charmaz (2005) encourages the grounded theorist to look for silences in the data: where are the gaps and what has been omitted?

The session notes and interviews with the participating women were re-examined with the following two questions in mind:

1) Was privacy, self-focus, solitude and subjectivity encouraged in this case? If so, how?
2) Do the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’ ever conflict with each other in this case? If so, how? And how is the conflict resolved?

**Encouraging privacy.**

The desire for privacy in this case was respected but rarely encouraged. Initially, when I asked Matilda if she would like to write a song for the performance, Matilda was reluctant because she felt that in the past her writings had been exposed by the media without her permission; consequently, she now wanted to “hide in the shadows” and to keep her “bubble world” separate from the public. I respected this but continued to try and draw Matilda out of her “bubble world” by encouraging her to contribute to the performance while also maintaining her anonymity, reassuring her “that her writings would be shared with others in the context of the theatre company but only to an audience (not the media) and that she wouldn’t have to acknowledge that they were hers if she didn’t want to.” Thus encouraged, Matilda contributed writings for the development of a song about her very desire to hide in the shadows. She was happy for people to know that she wrote the lyrics, but she remained anonymous to a degree by opting not to sing the song. Instead, Spark sang it for her.

The only example in which privacy was actively encouraged was when the artistic director felt that a particular song written by Lucinda was too emotionally raw to be included in the performance. The song was an extremely personal and transparent account of Lucinda’s feelings of grief for her own children. The artistic director suggested that this song was not in keeping with the level of emotional exposure of the others and that the song would therefore expose Lucinda and set her up to fail. For this reason, the song remained outside of public ears.

**Encouraging self-focus.**

Self-focus was rarely encouraged yet individuality within the group was certainly acknowledged and celebrated. The women were sometimes given space and time within the group to discuss their hopes, feelings and issues while individual birthdays were
commemorated by the group. Furthermore, the directors pursued high aesthetic standards with the dignity of each individual woman in mind. Finally, group rehearsal of a woman’s original song sometimes boosted her sense of self while each woman’s autonomy was reinforced as she forged her individual musical part to each song.

There was, however, little time and attention directed toward each individual. Sometimes I glossed over a woman’s expression of fear or personal issues if they seemed to me to “pull energy” from the group or endanger the success of the performance. It wasn’t until after the performance that I felt there was space for me to get to know the women on a personal basis; I was sometimes far too focused on ensuring that the upcoming performance was a success to give more attention to the process. It was also only after the performance that the women began to talk more openly with each other, sharing information about their children, about their experiences in prison and about their court cases. The impending performance also discouraged the women from divulging anything too personal in their song lyrics. Furthermore, the artistic director felt that Jane’s personal fantasy of becoming a rock star sometimes conflicted with the overall aesthetics of the performance; this aspect of Jane’s individuality was therefore not indulged. Questions of ownership of songs were often raised by individual women and subsumed by the group. And finally, the momentum created by the upcoming performance meant that sometimes I had to push women to write songs quickly so that they could be included in the performance. This often led to my sense that I was “pulling teeth”.

The one context in which self-focus was explicitly encouraged was through the process of writing lyrics. Alone or in collaboration with me, writing lyrics provided individual women with the opportunity to focus upon and map their past. Lyric-writing in particular, as opposed to composing the musical accompaniment, was embraced by the women as their chance to express their individuality and focus upon themselves. As Jane reported, writing lyrics in a group was less enticing because the women were “not all writing about the same things so you might have a line before it that just doesn’t match up with what you want to say”. Despite this, the opportunities for women to write lyrics on their own or in collaboration with me were rare and never prioritised within group sessions; they merely happened whenever the opportunity presented itself, either when group members were late or at the end of sessions after the group had departed.

**Encouraging solitude.**

The inspiration to write song lyrics often encouraged the women to seek solitude and, although this is a rare commodity in the prison, most of the lyric-writing occurred during this state. This meant that most of the lyrics were written outside of sessions, at the discretion of the individual woman. Sometimes a woman’s skill level meant that she needed help to write lyrics, and this was when I collaborated with her. Ideas were brainstormed during these collaborations and then lyrics were formed, either by me or the individual woman, in solitude.

**Encouraging subjectivity.**

This category was by far the most ‘silent’ in the data. I could find few examples in the session notes or interviews where subjectivity, involving intuitive thought processes and
deep absorption, were discussed as part of the creative journey. The women always seemed to be looking from an ‘outside’ perspective in at the music or at themselves, reflecting on how they were sounding or how their lyrics would sound to an audience. Perhaps subjective processes occurred for each woman in solitude and in privacy and therefore have not been captured by the research. Or perhaps the ‘performed’ nature of music in this case did not facilitate the emergence of these qualities.

*When the ‘Inside’ and ‘Outside’ Conflict*

Perhaps the most obvious example of conflict between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ worlds is represented by Majella’s experience on the creative journey. Majella felt that she was participating for the group and not for herself; her inner journey was not leading in the same direction as that of the collective journey. Even though she acknowledged that there were some personal gains for her, Majella stated that she would never do it again because it took too much from her personally. This conflict was resolved in two ways: a) Majella gave the collective creative journey priority over her own personal needs, and b) once the journey was over, Majella reinstated her personal needs as paramount by declaring that she would never do it again.

Another example of conflict between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ can be seen in Lucinda’s statement: “I dragged myself to music knowing that it would be better than staying in the compound but I worried that I was too withdrawn and that it would annoy you.” Lucinda’s need at times to be withdrawn and ‘inside’ herself conflicted with the demands of the music program to always be engaging ‘outside’ of the self. Once again, this conflict was resolved in favour of the ‘outside’. Lucinda prioritised the benefits of getting ‘outside’ the compound over her desire to withdraw ‘inside’ herself.

Lucinda was also involved in another point of conflict between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. When the artistic director decided that Lucinda’s original song was not in keeping with the aesthetics of the other songs and that therefore it would not be included in the performance, it was explained that this was for Lucinda’s own sake, that otherwise it would be setting her up to fail. This decision, however, was based on the fact that there was an audience involved; that there was an ‘outside’ force looking in. This may have conflicted with Lucinda’s own desire to have a ‘voice’ by performing her own song. In this way, an individual’s ‘inside’ needs to express herself and be heard could be seen to be in direct conflict with the director’s aesthetic principles arising from concerns about judgments from the ‘outside’. In this example, the conflict was resolved by giving Lucinda a ‘voice’ in a different way – she was given a monologue at the start of the performance and was also the facilitator of the audience interaction section at the end of the performance piece.

Matilda’s journey also represented some examples of conflict between the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. She often reminded me that she hated groups and hated performing; she just wanted to stay inside her “bubble world” because ‘outside’ was scary. Matilda’s love of music was the resolution in this conflict; like the pied piper, it lured her outside of her
comfortable ‘bubble world’ despite her fears of the ‘outside’. She was rewarded with a strong sense of returning home to music.

**Summary of the Therapeutic Potentials of Creating and Performing Music in this Case**

The above process of negative case analysis suggests that the therapeutic potentials for the women in this case who created and performed music together can indeed be expressed as part of bridging the ‘inside’ to the ‘outside’. Each woman had the opportunity to access the positive, health-enhancing or healing potentials of this outward motion through shifting from a sense of privacy to public, from self-focus to a focus on others, from solitude to togetherness and from subjectivity to objectivity. The therapeutic potentials of each particular outward shift are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9. The therapeutic potentials of each outward shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Outward Motion</th>
<th>Therapeutic Potential</th>
<th>Contraindications</th>
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</table>
| ‘Inside’ spaces to outside spaces | • A sense of “escape”, transcending confines  
• An injection of fresh ideas and increased stimulation associated with this | Can conflict with a woman’s need to be withdrawn |
| Privacy to public | • An increased sense that she has something to give to others  
• Positive feedback from others  
• Experience of reciprocity where “you reap what you sow”  
• Catharsis, a sense of being heard  
• The experience of a natural high  
• Improved musical standards  
• More freedom within prison  
• More courage  
• More confidence  
• Sense of completion  
• Increased motivation in general  
• Sense of pride  
• Sense of ‘moving forward’ | Can be too exposing for some women |
| Self-focus to a focus on others | • Connection with group members  
• Connection with audience members  
• Sense of being supported and being supportive  
• Experience of sharing and reciprocity | Can conflict with a woman’s need at the time to focus on her self |
| Solitude to togetherness | • Integrated sense of unity and autonomy  
• Increased musical skills  
• Joy | Can threaten a woman’s sense of autonomy |
| Subjective to objective thought processes | • Less attachment to creative output resulting in more creative freedom and less self-criticism | Can become overly self-critical |
Coda

This chapter has addressed the first research question, which concerns the nature of the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case. Grounded theory analyses helped to explain these therapeutic potentials, providing the central idea of music as a bridge from the inside to the outside. The next chapter examines the personal resources that helped the women to access the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from the inside to the outside and directly addresses the second research question.
CHAPTER 9

What were the Personal Resources that Enabled the Therapeutic Potentials of Creating and Performing Music to be Enacted?

This chapter addresses the second research question, by providing an explanation of the personal resources that helped the women to enact the therapeutic potentials that were outlined in the previous chapter. In this way, the second research question follows directly on from the first, even though the analyses for both questions were conducted completely separately. The first steps of grounded theory analysis that were utilised to address the first research question were applied afresh to the second research question: What were the main personal resources that enabled the women to enact the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music? Within the context of this study, ‘personal resources’ refers to the human capacities such as virtues, strengths and interactions that were instrumental in helping the women to fulfill the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music.

In this chapter the main personal resources, together with their roles in helping the women to enact the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’, are interpreted through an analysis of session notes and interviews with the women in prison. This involves the first stage of grounded theory analysis, which was outlined and referred to as ‘open coding’ in chapter 4. Open coding involves assigning labels to the data and grouping these labels or codes into broader categories. The process is very similar to the first stages of other analytic methods such as content analysis and phenomenology. With the second research question clearly in mind, I coded and categorised the data from my session notes and interviews with the women in prison. Each major category that emerged from this process was related to a single personal factor that seemed to enable the therapeutic potentials, outlined in the previous chapter, to be fulfilled. Five major categories emerged in the analysis; consequently five main personal factors are offered in this chapter as an answer to the second research question.

The first stage of grounded theory analysis is demonstrated clearly in the present chapter through the use of a table outlining the codes, the major categories to which they belong, as well as the raw data that led to their construction. Table 9 outlines my interpretation of the five main personal factors involved in fulfilling the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’. These factors are expressed as the major categories that emerged from open coding. Rather than using the third stage of grounded theory analysis to construct a central category that explains these major categories, I noticed that the five categories formed a rather appropriate acronym related to the metaphor of a bridge from the inside to the outside. The first letters of each of the categories outlined in Table 9 form the acronym CREST and, at the risk of overusing metaphor in this thesis, ‘crest’ symbolises the pinnacle of the bridge described in the previous chapter; that is, ‘CREST’ suggests that a woman’s movement from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’ realms was at its height if the following five personal factors were present in their fullest dimensions: courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust. These five factors will be explained in more detail following the presentation of Table 10.
Table 10. Codes, categories and data relating to the factors involved in fulfilling the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music: CREST.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Raw Data</th>
</tr>
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| Courage                   | Degree of courage to perform despite nerves and discomfort | I learnt how not to vomit on stage (Matilda)  
So next time I’ll be able to perform on my own. That’s what it’s given me. It’s given me courage. And (laughingly) it doesn’t matter how little I am (Gillian)  
We were brave (Majella)  
I’ve done previous plays as well, I felt a bit more confident in doing it this year. I think every year I feel better and better (Lucinda)  
I get really emotional seeing everyone when they pour their heart out. They would never sing in front of anyone ever, but there they are, poured their heart out and written a song and then, I think it’s very ballsy, very gutsy of them (Lucinda)  
So, it was good it all came back and I think it was good that I had nerves (laughs) ‘cause even on the dress rehearsal I did stuff up the flute a bit and I’m thinking, “Oh no.” And then my voice was going all shaky and I was thinking, “Don’t do this to me” so I grounded myself and actually did the performance, so I was quite happy (Sarah)  
I’m sorry that I’m not because if I was more like that, more assertive and confident, my life could be better or I could have had different experiences and been able to do different things (Majella)  
It’s good to not have to get up and do something that you’re not completely comfortable with all the time (Majella)  
Both Matilda and Majella agreed to come on Monday as well, and said that they’d really enjoyed it even though they were scared about coming at the start (Session notes). |
|                          | Degree of courage to perform is linked with courage in life |                                                                                                                   |
|                          | Courage is not always paramount                |                                                                                                                   |
|                          | Degree of courage to participate in the group   |                                                                                                                   |
| Readiness                | Ready for something personal and familiar       | I decided because of my mental state at the time, because I have a history of psychiatric issues, namely depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, it was easier for me to do something light, also something that I have some prior knowledge on. So it was actually going back to basics … I thought, “What is going to contain myself and keep my sanity in here?” First, I went to programs, education and I thought, “Well, maybe I could better myself that way.” But then I realized that I was at the acute stage |
| Ready to learn one’s strengths | of a breakdown and I thought, “Right. I need to focus on me for a little while and actually look after my wellbeing before I could learn anything, before I could do anything” (Sarah) |
| Ready to use initiative | You brought out what we’re all capable of, which I never knew I was capable of doing (Gillian) |
| Degree of readiness to share self with others | You have to use a bit of your own initiative and remember that you’ve got some (Lucinda) |
| | But in the play you can’t be withdrawn, you’ve got to put yourself into it and it feels good to be able to (Lucinda) |
| | I’m just not that sort of person that, “I’m going to write down my feelings.” I’m not like that (Spark) |
| | Because that’s my heart and soul that I’m laying on the line (Sarah) |
| Level of readiness for the degree of exposure required | I’m sorry that I’m not because if I was more like that, more assertive and confident, my life could be better or I could have had different experiences and been able to do different things (Majella) |
| Degree of musical readiness to perform | I think we could have practiced the whole lot a lot more. Like, the singing and the songs, they were really well-practiced, but the rest just wasn’t (Spark) |
| Degree of readiness for challenges | I suppose when I first came in I was very shaky. I was a mess, very sensitive and very scared of the situation I was in, actually coming to jail for the first time … (Sarah) |

| Exchange | Sharing musicality | Just teaching some people some stuff that I did (Jane) |
| | | I thought, “Well, what could I share with everybody else that I have?” And the only thing that I have is my music, and to be able to share that with everybody made me feel quite well (Sarah) |
| | Sharing meaning and beauty | The opening part was very deep. I was talking about something that I think is beautiful and all that sort of stuff and I felt there’s one side that there’s not much room for in this place (Lucinda) |
| | | I thought they were really thoughtful and I thought there was something behind it whereas some music is like “Oh, I’m in love, I’m in love, I’m in love”. I just don’t think that has anything behind it. There’s no depth behind. There’s no nothing behind it (Spark) |
| | | I think it’s a really nice song. I like the words to it too (Jane) |
| | | I liked Gillian’s little song too because it was uplifting and I thought it was well written (Majella) |
| Sharing experiences | Sarah had talked to the necessary people to ask if I could leave my flute with her over Christmas … That airy, heady sound can only be a good vibration for such a heavy environment (Session notes). Jane asked for some back-up vocals on a certain phrase repeated in the chorus, so I worked out a harmony and taught some of the women. Jane said it sent shivers down her spine, and she really looked like she was enjoying herself as we practiced (Session notes). The first song that really grabbed me was “Awake” and I tell you what, that was great. I looked at the words and thought, “Shit, someone else has written this. I’m not alone in what I’m thinking” (Sarah) People have the most amazing stories. They really do, whether it be in here or out there, but I think in here you get more of a chance to sit and listen in here because life as you know it has stopped (Matilda) I was having an impact on the others because I was radiating happiness throughout the unit (Sarah) There are a couple of girls who are locked down for 24 hours a day in my unit because they are a major suicide risk to themselves, and one of those girls I actually got to know, and I begged and pleaded with the unit staff to let her out and get her down there … it was just great to see her down there and clapping along and having a good time, a genuine good time. And she loved it (Sarah) If I can make others happy through my actions as a direct result of what I’ve done, if I can make others smile, if I can make others clap, if I can make others do positive things as a direct result of what I’ve done, or my voice or whatever, whether I’ve played a joke on someone or whether I’m performing in the musical, seeing them so happy and wrapped the way they were, I’m beside myself over that (Sarah) I think you learn more, sitting in the class and with other people … because people bounce off each other or someone will know something or get the hang of something (Matilda) I would rather do it for the jail ‘cause if I do it for the other people I’ll never see them again. They don’t know who I am (Lucinda) I get really emotional seeing everyone when they pour their heart out (Lucinda) |
| Sharing joy | |
| Sharing musical skills | |
| A familiar audience mirrors the performer | |
| Audience is moved by performance | |
| Audience can relate to the stories | I used to be a little wary about it to start off, with the whole jail thing, but over the years after doing it a few times you realize that half of them are crying and they can all relate to it really well (Lucinda) |
| A gift for the audience | I think it’s like offering a present to everyone (Lucinda) |
| Performance is reciprocal | You sort of get what you give with it (Lucinda) |
| Audience gives back to performer through positive feedback | Well, an applause is nice. That’s always good and afterwards girls comment, people you don’t even know, “Hey, you were great yesterday (Lucinda) It was really good just to cop a bit of feedback, and positive feedback. It’s all been positive feedback. The afternoon after the performance, after I went back to my unit and got all the well wishes and all the - “Oh my goodness! What a voice!” – they were just so surprised and I thought, “Geez, what the hell have I done” (Sarah) |
| Sharing self with others | I think the positive feedback I have had all around the place … I don’t know, it just makes me happy and everything’s OK (Matilda) |
| Sharing self with significant others | I went down to canteen, which is a big long line to go to the local canteen, and everyone has just overwhelmed me with compliments and I got real scared and ran back (laughs) (Sarah) |
| Support | Because that’s my heart and soul that I’m laying on the line (Sarah) |
| Musically supporting others | She took me through some of her old writing and showed me phrases that she really liked (Session notes). |
| | I told Jane that I had sent a CD of her recordings to her parents and she said that they had already received it and that her mum had cried (Session notes). |

Support Musically supporting others: I got together with Matilda and Majella to get their drumbeats right. Just a couple of times ‘cause they needed to go over it (Jane). I sat down and actually had singing lessons with a couple of them, and basically spoke to them and asked them what the song meant to them, asked them if there were any words they wanted changed, asked them about the song and to tell me some history behind the song and themselves (Sarah) Without your musical skills we wouldn’t have been able to get where we were (Sarah) Lucinda wanted to work with me on her drum part to Gillian’s song, so during the break we did this. She
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Support Type</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Musically supporting the</td>
<td>was having a little trouble with the off-beats and wasn’t sure whether to play the cymbal or the high-hats, so I advised her to keep it as simple as possible. Spark also wanted to practice her song, as she was worried that she was mumbling the lyrics. We worked a little on articulation, but will need to do more tomorrow morning (Session notes) While the audience was entering, I played some music on the piano (Session notes) I emphasized that the flute is a supportive role and that even if she makes a mistake it will be fine (Session notes) It’s interesting, music definitely has to play second fiddle in a theatre company like this one! (Session notes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mutual support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting each other to stay</td>
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<td>Supporting each other to perform</td>
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<td>Support is vital because of</td>
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<tr>
<td>confrontational nature of process</td>
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<td>Reassurance that musical parts</td>
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<td>good.</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>I could prove to them that I was safe. I could prove to them that I was coming a long way (Sarah) What can I say about the music? Something that people can feel that they’re good at and that they’ve done before (Majella) I have trust issues myself, so I find it hard to just</td>
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<tr>
<td>More trusted by staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust due to the familiarity of</td>
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<td>music</td>
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<td>Trust of the theatre</td>
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company artists built up over years trust anybody. Except I trusted you because you’ve been there since day-dot and I since found out you’ve been doing it for years anyway. So, and then I found out all the other girls have been doing it too (Sarah)
I know that people enjoy that experience and they love the theatre company. From my experience people love these performances and a lot of girls who’ve been here a long time have been in them and you guys are really popular. So, I knew we wouldn’t be joked about (Majella)

Trust the audience’s response
I used to be a little wary about it to start off, with the whole jail thing, but over the years after doing it a few times you realize that half of them are crying and they can all relate to it really well (Lucinda)
It was “Oh God, now I’ve got to face everyone’s crap” (Spark)

Trusting the self
They didn’t believe in themselves and that was the main thing (Sarah)
I think I’m just my own worst critic, my own worst enemy (Lucinda)
I suppose I was harsh on myself in that way, because of how critical I was towards myself in that time. However, it did inspire me to work harder than ever to make sure I didn’t botch it up (Sarah)
I need to be less hasty to pull together the material too soon. It’s like a total non-enjoyment of that early phase where ideas are flowing but you still have no idea what the actual songs or scenes will say. This is the part where you need to trust the process (even though there’s an impending performance and you have nothing to perform yet!) and let things cogitate, ruminate, fester, grow before trying to pin it down. Play! (Session notes)

Trusting the self requires hard work

TRUSTING THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Trust the creative process

CREST: An Explanation

CREST is an acronym referring to my interpretation of the five main personal factors involved in the fulfillment, through the act of creating and performing music together, of the therapeutic potentials associated with traversing the bridge between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’. It symbolises the idea that the women’s journeys across the bridge were at their zenith when the following five factors were present in their fullest dimensions: courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust. Each factor will now be explained in more detail, in terms of the codes and data that led to their construction.
Courage

Each woman’s creative journey in this case required her to be courageous in a variety of different ways. Some of the women who feared groups needed a great deal of courage to even begin the creative journey. Majella and Matilda in particular expressed their fear of participating in groups within prison, however their love of music helped them to summon their courage and become involved. Each woman also found large amounts of courage in order to perform in front of her peers, prison guards and health professionals despite nerves and feelings of discomfort. In this way, courage helped nudge women outside of their comfort zones and fostered their awareness that they could do things of which they never thought they would be capable. Courage was not paramount for every woman involved, however. For example, although Majella wished she was more courageous in general she also felt that it was not a priority for her to “get by in life” (Majella).

Readiness

Each woman needed to be ready for the creative journey upon which she was about to embark. Levels of readiness varied among the women according to what they hoped to achieve from it. For example, Sarah was ready to “better (her)self” but her assessment of her own “mental state” told her that the path she took in this endeavour needed to “go back to basics”. For Sarah, this meant going back to something she knew and loved and that was music. The familiarity of this medium provided an overall sense of safety for Sarah, which was important considering the challenges she and other women faced along the way.

The creative journey required women to be ready in a variety of ways. Along the way, they needed to be ready to face challenges; not necessarily at the first attempt, however. For example, Gillian and Majella found the challenge of the impending performance momentarily too difficult to bear and temporarily pulled out of the process. They recommenced, however, and their second attempt to face the challenge succeeded. Women also needed to be ready, along the journey, to use their initiative and acknowledge their strengths. Most importantly, perhaps, these women needed to be ready to reveal parts of their selves to others, mainly through writing songs. Some women were more ready than others to do so. For example, Spark reported that she would never write a song because she doesn’t like to write down her feelings; meanwhile Sarah reported that she had put her “heart and soul” into her own lyrics.

In this way, the women exhibited different levels of readiness for the level of exposure required in song-writing. The nature of performance required the women to be even more ready for exposure. The high level of exposure required in performance caused every woman involved to feel nervous and uncomfortable at times. However, as the performance drew near, most of the women became at least a little accustomed to the idea. After the performance, however, Majella reported that she never wanted to experience that level of exposure again. In this way, she was less ready for this aspect of
the creative journey. The nature of performance also required the women to be musically ready, which was achieved mainly through many rehearsals of the musical content.

Exchange

The creative journey in this case involved many types of exchanges between group members as well as between performer and audience. Many of the women involved in this case shared their musicality with each other, mainly by using their own musical skills to help others to create, orchestrate or rehearse songs. The lyrics in these songs were the main vehicles through which the women also shared their life experiences and parts of their selves. Consequently, some women felt a sense of connection with others in the group based on the experiences conveyed within the original lyrics to which they could relate. The original songs and the music underlying them were also the main vehicle through which women could share a sense of meaning and beauty with other members of the group and with the audience.

The performance itself was a reciprocal exchange between the women involved in the case and the audience who witnessed their performance. For example, Lucinda promoted performance as a “gift” to the audience while also acknowledging the benefits it gave her. She reported that the audience has the chance to be ‘moved’ by the courage and stories of the performers, especially if audience members can relate to these stories themselves, while the performer receives positive feedback and the experience of being mirrored by the audience.

Exchange not only occurred between group members or between performer and audience but also between the women and the spaces to which they were confined. For example, Sarah reported that the joy she experienced along the journey “radiated out” to her unit and to the compound in general. She was also particularly “rapt” (thrilled) that a fellow prisoner with a severe mental illness had seemed to share her joy during the performance, as seen by her clapping and smiling. These actions, according to Sarah, were unusual for this particular audience member and fuelled Sarah’s joy even more.

Every year except for the one involved in this case, the women who perform are able to invite their family members to see the show. They usually covet this opportunity to share their experience with significant others. In this case, security issues due to renovations at the prison meant that the women involved were not able to experience this type of exchange. However, during the process Jane was able to send her family a recording of the songs she had written. She reported that this had ‘moved’ her mother to tears and provided Jane with a sense of satisfaction.

Support

Support was a major factor involved in each woman’s creative journey from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’. Majella emphasised that support was vital in face of the confrontational nature of the creative process and impending performance. She felt fortunate to have received outside support from a counselor during the process; none of the other women had this
opportunity. Nevertheless, support was a strong element within the group. Sometimes the support was mutual, where women reassured each other and supported each other’s songs; other times it was one-sided, for example when Gillian felt that she needed Sarah’s support to perform the song.

Sometimes support within the group took the form of verbal reassurance; other times it was musical. The women often reassured each other verbally, in efforts to help each other continue their participation or to help each other find the courage to perform. Some women also required verbal reassurance that their musical offerings sounded good. Musical support featured in a variety of ways. For example, I sang softly underneath Spark during the performance because she felt so unconfident singing by herself. Similarly, Sarah sang with Gillian during the performance of Gillian’s song in order to give her a sense of support. Unfortunately by the time of the performance Gillian felt that she did not need Sarah’s support but was unable to communicate this clearly until after the performance. Music also functioned to support the performance in general. For example, I played piano softly as audience members took their seats while Sarah played flute as a supportive role in Jane’s song.

Trust

Trust was also an important factor in each woman’s journey from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’; it manifested in different ways and at different levels for each woman. At the very beginning, the women needed to place their trust in the artists of the theatre company. This was enhanced if the women were familiar with the prior work of the theatre company within the prison. The general trust accorded to the theatre company within the prison has been built over the 20 years since the theatre company’s inception. Other prisoners who were familiar with the work of the theatre company were able to convey this repute to some of the women involved in the case, thereby enhancing their levels of trust in me, the other theatre company artists as well as the creative process in general. As musical director, I also needed to trust the creative process and believe that it would ultimately succeed. Despite having experienced similar processes every year for the past five years, this trust still often eluded me. Each woman’s trust in the process was also enhanced by her familiarity with music; it was something the women generally felt “that they’re good at and that they’ve done before” (Majella) and this enhanced each woman’s sense of safety and trust in the process.

The women also needed to trust themselves during the process. At times, some of the women found this difficult. They often reported being extremely critical of themselves, which either blocked their participation or caused them to work harder so that they “didn’t botch it up” (Sarah). Since six of the seven were new to the experience, it was generally much harder for them to trust themselves. This type of trust was perhaps easiest for Lucinda to engender, since she had experienced the process many times before. This experience also enabled her to trust that the audience’s response to the performance would be positive.
Trust was a vital ingredient along the creative journey; it was also an outcome of the journey. For example, Matilda and Sarah both reported separately after the performance that various staff members now trusted them more because of their progress along the creative journey. Enhanced trust of these women ultimately afforded them more freedom and access around the prison compound. Women also reported trusting their own capabilities more. Gillian reported being surprised by the resources she had drawn on, while Majella’s experiences during the process helped her to notice that she wasn’t feeling as anxious in life as she once did.

Coda

This chapter has addressed the second research question, which concerns the personal resources that helped the women to access the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music in this case. Coding and categorising the data resulted in the construction of an acronym, CREST, to describe five personal resources that helped the women to maximise the therapeutic potentials associated with the bridge from the inside to the outside. These resources were courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust. The next chapter examines the third and final research question which emerged during data analysis. This question concerns the relationship between music and other art-forms in terms of their therapeutic potential.
CHAPTER 10

An Emergent Question – The relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music and other art-forms

Up to this point, the research has entailed examining some of the human aspects of music-making; more specifically, the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music have been explored as well as the personal resources involved in enacting these potentials. But what of the music? Was there anything unique about the therapeutic potentials of music compared with those of other art-forms? This line of questioning emerged strongly for me as I analysed the data in order to construct explanations to the two main research questions. At this point, data generation had already long been completed and I was not able to generate any new data with this particular question in mind. The complexity of such a question requires an entire study or series of studies devoted to the issue. Nevertheless, the data that had already been generated enabled me to make some initial explorations of the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music, drama and visual art. Although dance is also an important part of the theatre company, I was not able to include the art-form in my comparisons because I could find little data that clearly addressed the issue of the role of dance in the theatre company and its relationship to the other art-forms. This is a limitation associated with exploring research questions that emerge after the data has been generated; had I known, I would have ensured I addressed this issue in my interview with the choreographer. Despite this limitation, the explorations are presented here because they provide yet another angle from which to understand the case whilst also reflecting the idea that qualitative research is never really finite.

This chapter presents a full grounded theory analysis of relevant data from the entire set of session notes, interviews with the artists of the theatre company and interviews with the women in prison in order to explore the emergent question: In this case, how do the therapeutic potentials of music relate to those of other art-forms? The techniques of grounded theory analysis involved in answering this question are outlined in chapter 4 and are made transparent here through the material presented in Table 11 that supports the proposal that music is a gentle form of exposure when compared with drama and visual art.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the central category that resulted from a targeted analysis of the full data set relevant to the particular capacity of music – ‘music as a gentle form of exposure’. Table 11 outlines all the relevant categories, codes and raw data that were utilised in the construction of the central category. The properties and dimensions of ‘music as a gentle form of exposure’ are then explained using a theoretical rationale.
Music: A gentle form of exposure

Introducing the Central Category: Exposure

Music and other art-forms are united by the creative forces invoked during our interactions with them (McNiff, 2004; Cameron, 2002). Subsequently, music can be understood as one of the many pathways to creativity; a pathway that is at the same time unique and inseparable from those offered by other art-forms. In the context of the case under examination, the directors of the theatre company do not see music as fundamentally distinct from drama. To these women, music and drama are different crafts; as portals to creativity, however, they are essentially one and the same thing. This is especially highlighted when comparing music and drama with visual art. The visual artist in the theatre company described visual art as enduring and drama and music as ephemeral. She also described visual art as an individualised practice within the theatre company that requires little physical exposure from participants. She compared this to the capacities of drama and music for collective creativity as well as their requirement for a higher degree of physical exposure from participants. Consequently, she described music and drama as ‘out there’ and ‘in your face’ and contrasted this with visual art as a ‘quiet achiever’. This notion of exposure forms the central category for the following explanation of the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music, drama and visual art. It will be explained in detail in relation to the case under examination. First, however, the role of music within the theatre company, according to the artists who participated in this research, is explained followed by a table outlining the raw data, codes and categories that relate to the central category of exposure.

The role of music within the theatre company.
The fundamental role of music within the theatre company is to serve the story and in this way the purpose of music is no different to the purpose of drama, visual art and all other elements of theatre that include lighting, stage, costumes, and props. However, each art-form serves the story in different ways based on the particular strengths with which it is associated. Within the theatre company, music is described as a character, another layer of the story, another world. In this context, the strength of music is in creating different symbolic spaces, or ‘worlds’, that embellish the story and imbue it with emotion while weaving scenes together and setting the general ambience. Audience members can momentarily escape to these musical spaces, an escape which gives them space to gently absorb and digest the story. The intangibility of these musical spaces can lead artists and participants within the theatre company to describe music as ‘magical’.

Within the theatre company, music most commonly takes the form of song. A song can serve the same function as a monologue by revealing deeper emotion and reflection. The particular strengths of song within the theatre company are associated with its capacity to connect characters, express moods and tell simple, raw stories more easily than drama. Songs in theatre are described by artists of the theatre company as little journeys in themselves; they have the potential to stand alone. As part of the bigger story, song can commence the theatrical journey in order to provide the audience with a sense of mystery: “What does this song imply about the story I am about to be told?”
theatre company, song also commonly completes the theatrical journey in order to beckon the audience back once more to those emotive, intangible spaces that interspersed the scenes. The songs from each theatrical piece are often less ephemeral than the scene-work; many of them have an afterlife. For example, many songs are recorded and played years later as a tribute to or memory of past creative journeys.

_Music as a gentle form of exposure._

In the case of the theatre company featured in this research, the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of the three art-forms can be explained using the central category of exposure. More specifically, creating and performing music can be understood as a gentle form of exposure, which both limits and expands its therapeutic potential. Exposure in this case refers to the idea of laying something open to, or subjecting something to the influence of, something else. The relationship of this idea to the case under examination will be explained in more detail following the presentation of Table 11.

The following table outlines the categories, codes and raw data that were utilised in the construction of the central category. The artists of the theatre company are the predominant contributors to the raw data contained in this table. Furthermore, some categories in the table are dominated by the visual artist because these categories pertain to her art-form in particular. For confidentiality, quotes from each artist’s interview are attributed in Table 11 to their creative role within the theatre company rather than their names. Quotes from the women in prison are attributed to their pseudonyms. The unequal spread of data amongst research participants in this table reflects the retrospective nature of the emergent research question; that is, the data would represent the entire sample more equally if the emergent question had in fact governed the study from its inception.

Table 11. Categories, codes and raw data explaining “music as a gentle form of exposure”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Raw Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The relationship between music, drama and visual art</td>
<td>Music and drama are inseparable</td>
<td>So, while it would seem that I would see them like that and I think we divide them because we do, I don’t see them separately (artistic director). With us, it’s always been so inextricably tied. So, while on one level, it’s separate I couldn’t see it without it (artistic director). It’s a very, very symbiotic relationship (writer/artistic director) I don’t know that the drama could exist without the music, so they’re really interdependent (choreographer). I guess for me, they run very much in tandem. They always have, had such an interweaving relationship (writer/artistic director).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual art is enduring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

146
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The value of exposure</th>
<th>Exposure creates positive feedback</th>
<th>Exposure is important</th>
<th>Exposure encourages artist to think about their art-work in different ways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of exposure</td>
<td>Meditative</td>
<td>Artistic director</td>
<td>Meditative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drama is ephemeral and ‘out there’
Visual art is less exposing than drama
Drama is collectively creative

The difference with art is it’s enduring. People keep seeing it. So, that’s what, I mean, when I say we’re a quiet achiever is that it’s always there. The evidence is always there and it works on a different level to the theatre, ‘cause theatre is ephemeral and it’s very much out there (visual artist).
Drama is much more physical, of course, than sitting down and painting (visual artist).
That whole thing with the drama stuff, everyone has to do things together and there’s that whole thing of working together (artistic director).
Yeah, I love music, but the reason the drama I believe in so much is because you’re working in a group. So, you’re working together for one purpose (actor I).
It’s also the working together that I think is important and being part of a group where, if you do pull out, like when one of the women in the prison decided not to do it and everyone was sort of a bit flabbergasted. She sort of had time to think about it and came back in saying she realized she was letting people down (actor II).
And that whole process of working in a group is really important too, for lots of reasons. It’s about developing communication. It’s about learning to pull together as a team and all that sort of stuff (visual artist).
It’s not as in your face as the drama and the theatre and the music (visual artist).
I think the art stuff is a much more individual thing (artistic director).
The work goes from being their own private babies, it goes out into the world and then via that they get lots and lots of positive feedback coming back (visual artist).
I think it’s always important for artists to put their work up because you’re putting it into an environment where you actually look at the work differently as well. You can analyse it in a different way (visual artist).
It’s the closest thing to meditation that they’re going to get (visual artist).
Like, the internal creative space that the art
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>visual art</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience of timelessness through deep absorption</strong></td>
<td>women go into is like a meditative thing, you know? And I reckon, well I know for myself when I go into that zone it’s like time shifts and changes and, you know, you can spend hours doing it and not realize it and it’s a very interior, quiet, meditative process. Singing and acting and working as part of a group activates a different part of themselves (visual artist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timelessness especially important for women in prison</strong></td>
<td>And art is something, like I said before, you can go into your own zone and you can literally go into a different space-time continuum and especially in the context of the prison that is really vital to their wellbeing, I think (visual artist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exposure through exhibiting work</strong></td>
<td>When you’re working on something it’s a very subjective process. It’s a very intimate relationship and then there’s a certain point where you decide that the work is finished and when you put it up on a wall in a gallery or an exhibition space and you frame it and it looks really fantastic you’re able to move into the objective phase and look at it from a distance (visual artist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual art can provide escape to a symbolic space</strong></td>
<td>Quite often our art women come in and you can just tell they’re having a really hard time and they don’t really want to talk, they just want to get into their work and zone out for a day. And that is incredibly important, I think, because often they’re not in a position where they can talk about what’s going on inside themselves (visual artist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of exposure in music and drama</strong></td>
<td>Getting people into a circle, and I guess that’s a whole thing, because a lot of people don’t want to be in a group, you know. That’s what they’re used to doing as excluding themselves. That’s their way of being safe or feeling OK, controlling, by excluding themselves and protecting themselves (writer/artistic director).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music and drama highly exposing due to group-work</strong></td>
<td>With music and drama the women have to put themselves physically in that space, don’t they, like they have to take that step into exposing themselves. With art it’s a little bit different. They’re not physically putting themselves on the line. It’s what’s coming out on the page that’s critical (visual artist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music and drama highly exposing due to physical presence required on stage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama requires higher levels of exposure than music</td>
<td>We were going to put that backdrop over us. That was another plan. Japanese-style drumming out the back of the leisure centre with your back to the audience. That was another plan too (Matilda). It’s good to not have to get up and do something that you’re not completely comfortable with all the time, which is what drama is about, I’ve found (Majella).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can hide behind musical instruments</td>
<td>What can I say about the music? ... It might even be a bit of a mask, I suppose, to notice that musicians sort of hide behind their instruments a bit, don’t they? (Majella)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music can ‘dress up’ naked lyrics</td>
<td>I really felt that the women gave something honest and personal in this part, which made me think about how music in the form of songs can be so containing and safe that it can be easy to hide or hint at personal truth. This is where I think the drama side of things in terms of the theatre company really can get the personal, transformational honest thing happening, because it’s the ritual of putting something out there in its naked truth, words not dressed up by music (Session notes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing is most exposing</td>
<td>People relate to the girls when they’re singing up there a little bit more than if they’re just acting. It’s a little bit more honest (Lucinda) But if I ever sing, that’s not ever in the group though (Matilda) I had to sing in front of a crowd of people who I live with. I didn’t want to sing (Spark).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of music in the theatre company</td>
<td>Music weaves the play, it weaves the scenework, it embellishes it and supports it (writer/artistic director). It sets the atmosphere (choreographer). I cannot envisage a show where you don’t have the music as a character all the way through (artistic director). I think it’s very important because sometimes, with the material that you’re putting out, a lot of the times there’s a lot of messages in there. It can actually give a person time to just sit back, take a bit of a rest, you know, in a different way (actor III). It’s a whole layering in there and people love it (artistic director).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaves scenes together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embellishes the story</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sets the atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a character</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creates space for audience to absorb the story</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is another layer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Imbues the story with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of song</td>
<td>emotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers momentary escape into another world</td>
<td>Offers momentary escape into another world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music is magical</td>
<td>Music is magical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A song is like a monologue</td>
<td>A song is like a monologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A song can connect characters and express moods</td>
<td>A song can connect characters and express moods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The songs from shows have an afterlife</td>
<td>The songs from shows have an afterlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A song can tell raw, simple stories more easily than drama</td>
<td>A song can tell raw, simple stories more easily than drama</td>
</tr>
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</table>
A song can commence or complete the performance something and it’s raw. It can be then developed into a song that just takes it to a totally other level (writer/artistic director). Sometimes the songs are just lovely. They complete that journey. They can take it and just send it off and it’s a magical thing (writer/artistic director).

Music as a Gentle Form of Exposure: A Detailed Explanation

Within the context of the case under examination, the relationship between music, drama and visual art as therapeutic mediums can be understood through the use of the dimensional category ‘exposure’. In its smallest dimension, exposure is at such a low level that phenomena are able to remain hidden and therefore closed to outside influences. In its largest dimension, exposure lays phenomena completely open to outside influences or to public view. Artists from the theatre company view exposure as an important part of the creative experience; it enables participants to receive positive feedback and encourages them to think in different ways about their art-work.

The three art-forms compared in this study, ie. music, drama and visual art, involve different degrees of ‘exposure’ and can therefore be located at different points along the dimensional category.

Music, Drama and Visual Art as Varying Dimensions of Exposure

Within the theatre company, the level of exposure experienced by participants varies according to the art-forms with which they are engaged. Visual art is the least exposing of all the art forms utilised within the theatre company, due to its practice in a non-verbal and solitary context. On the other hand, drama is the most exposing of all the art forms utilised within the theatre company, due to its requirements for interaction, collaboration, verbalisation and physicality. These are also required by music participation within the theatre company but do not result in exposure at such a high level due to particular characteristics that are unique to music-making. Within the case involved in this research, music can be located between drama and visual art as a gentle form of exposure. This is represented in Figure 7.
The women in prison who participate in visual art sessions facilitated by the artists within the theatre company largely work on solitary projects within a group setting. The artists and the women encourage a quiet atmosphere in these sessions and there is little talk or interaction. Consequently, in this context the experience of visual art is described as meditative, a quality which nurtures the potential for women to experience, among many things, a sense of timelessness through deep absorption in their practice of visual art. This potential can be especially therapeutic for women in prison who are bound by the strict timetable of the prison and can lead to a sense that they have momentarily escaped into a symbolic space that provides refuge from the real world. After these deeply absorbed, meditative encounters with a different world through visual art, the women in prison have the opportunity to exhibit their work as part of the annual performances facilitated and organised by the theatre company. In this way, the women experience a degree of exposure through their art-form.

Within this case, however, the level of exposure experienced through visual art is small compared with the degree of exposure required by participation in drama. The women in prison who participate in the drama sessions facilitated by the artists within the theatre company always practice the art-form in a group context that requires continual interaction and collaboration with others. Consequently, sessions are often raucous and chaotic which is in stark contrast to the meditative silence that characterises the visual art sessions. Nevertheless there are still opportunities for women to become deeply absorbed in telling their stories through drama activities although they are always being witnessed by other group members. These women experience a higher level of exposure through this group-work; a level of exposure which is dramatically increased by the requirement of women involved to present physically in a face-to-face performance to an audience. This leads to a deeper level of exposure than for visual art participants who do not need to physically or verbally present themselves in order to exhibit their work to others.

Music also has the capacity to engender high levels of exposure and this is certainly the case with the way it is used within the theatre company. In this context, women in prison participate in music in a group context which continually involves interacting with other women, collaborating with other women, verbalising their life stories through song as well as engaging physically through singing or playing instruments. The women need to
be physically present on stage, whether they are playing music or performing scenes and in this way the women involved experience both music and drama as highly exposing. However, certain qualities of music mean that the women rarely experience the art-form in a way that is as highly exposing as drama. The performers of music can hide behind their musical instruments whereas the actors have nothing physical to hide behind; they must be entirely physically present. Furthermore, the women who tell their stories on stage through scene-work do so through projecting their spoken voice and articulating words so that few are left unheard by the audience. In comparison, the women who tell their stories on stage through song experience less exposure in a sense because their lyrics are “dressed up by music”. In this way, music creates more distance between the raw word and the audience, which can help women to feel less exposed.

Many of the women involved, however, saw one musical action in particular as more exposing than any scene-work; this action was singing. Spark was worried most about her singing, even though she also performed as a dancer and an actor. Even though Matilda felt she had developed the courage to participate musically in groups, she was adamant that she would never sing. Lucinda remarked on the honesty of singing compared with acting; to some extent actors can take shelter within their characters. Lucinda also suggested that singing was possibly the most moving act for audience members to witness, since the honesty unveiled through singing renders the performer extremely vulnerable and therefore requires the greatest level of courage.

*The therapeutic potentials of music as a gentle form of exposure*

Except for singing, the women in prison who were involved in this research experienced music as a gentle form of exposure. This unique capacity of music simultaneously limited and expanded its therapeutic potential. For those women who desired or who were ready for high levels of exposure in their therapeutic journeys, music may have been less therapeutically powerful when compared to drama. Lucinda, for example, felt that her involvement in the performances each year was deepening as she took more and more ‘acting’ roles as opposed to musical ones, saying “I think every year I feel better and better”. In this way, she desired and was ready for increasing levels of exposure. This was in stark contrast to Majella, who neither desired nor felt ready for the high levels of exposure required by performing to an audience, especially through drama. For Majella, performing music perhaps represented the highest level of exposure with which she could cope. In this way, providing a musical avenue in addition to drama expanded the therapeutic potential of performing to a wider range of women in prison who did not desire the level of exposure required by drama but could cope with gentler forms of it through music.

*Coda*

This chapter has addressed the third and final research question, which concerns the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music, drama and visual art in this case. Grounded theory analyses helped to construct an interpretation of the relationship, providing the continuum of exposure as the central idea and locating music in the middle
of this continuum. The next and final chapter in the thesis discusses this interpretation as well as the interpretations provided for the first and second research questions in chapters 8 and 9. A discussion of the main implications from these results concludes the next chapter and represents the end of the main body of this thesis.
CHAPTER 11

Discussion

The results presented in the previous three chapters are discussed in this chapter. The first result is an interpretation that creating and performing music served the seven women in prison as a bridge from the inside to the outside. This represents a different type of approach to the inward-focussed approaches common to conventional music therapy practices. The outward approach represented by this research is discussed first in the chapter, with a particular focus on why personal shifts in outward directions can also be understood as therapeutic.

It is not inevitable that the therapeutic potentials of outward-directed musical experiences will be fulfilled; they need to be enacted. The second result presented in this thesis suggests that there were five main personal resources that were important in helping the women to enact the therapeutic potentials of their outward-directed music experiences: courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust. These resources are discussed next in the chapter, especially in terms of their implications for the use of music as therapy. The third result presented in this thesis depicts music as a gentle form of exposure in this case, when compared with drama and visual art. This interpretation is discussed and suggestions for the unique therapeutic capacities of music are offered. The importance of creativity in uniting the different art forms is also emphasised in relation to this result.

Each of these three results are presented in this chapter as interpretations and are explored in terms of their implications, limitations and cohesion with existing theories. The methodological limitations of the study are also discussed and suggestions for future research are offered. The chapter draws to a close by integrating the discussion into a suggestion of the main contributions that this study makes to the field of music therapy and to broader music practices. First of all, however, the rationale and results underlying this research are revisited.

Revisiting the Rationale and Results

Music is not always therapy. It can be therapeutic, however, depending upon the ways in which it is enacted. The purpose of this study was to explore the types of therapeutic potentials available to the seven women in prison who created and performed music together while also investigating the personal resources that helped the women to enact these therapeutic potentials. The rationale underlying this purpose relates to a range of broader ideas in the literature concerning the use of performance in music therapy, the use of music as therapy, as well as the importance of creativity to musical experience.

Until recently, the use of performance in music therapy has remained mostly undocumented (Ansdell, 2005) and sometimes even discouraged (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004). Psychotherapeutic traditions in music therapy have led to a focus on the privacy of the therapy room (Aigen, 2004) where impulses can be explored and insights made. For some music therapists, the idea of performing to an audience outside of the therapeutic
A dyad or therapy group sparks concerns regarding the anti-therapeutic potential of performance (Maratos, 2004) and the threats it represents to client-centred practice (Powell, 2004). The results presented in chapter 8 suggest, however, that performance can be a powerful and therapeutic part of music experiences as it encourages personal shifts in outward directions. Furthermore, the use of performance in music therapy can still be aligned with ‘client-centred’ practice but it does require this notion to be revisioned. The therapeutic potentials of outward approaches to music experience and their implications for ‘client-centred’ practice are discussed in detail in the next section when “Interpretation No. 1” is examined in detail.

The results presented in chapter 9 suggest that performance can be a powerful and therapeutic part of music experience, especially when courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust are present in their fullest dimensions. It was these five personal resources rather than any processes associated with therapy that helped the women to enact the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music. Music therapists have often emphasised the need for processes associated with therapy such as assessment, goal setting and verbally processing musical experiences (Bruscia, 1998; Wheeler, 1983) in order for profound and transparent therapeutic change to occur through music. In some ways, this can be construed as an underestimation of the use of music as therapy. The case examined in this research is an example of therapeutic musical experiences without the conventional processes of therapy. The approach to music experience in this case is aligned more easily with ‘arts in health’ programs, ‘community cultural development’ projects or simply the use of music as therapy. The intersection of these approaches is discussed in detail later when “Interpretation No. 2” is specifically examined.

It is often implicitly assumed rather than acknowledged within music therapy literature that creativity underscores much of musical experience. Wigram (2006) suggests that this may be because early music therapists overused the idea in order to explain their work. Nevertheless, creativity remains a useful construct for explaining why music can sometimes be substituted with other actions and the same therapeutic outcomes achieved (Wheeler, 1983). It is also a useful construct for understanding the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of the different arts therapies. In particular, the results presented in chapter 10 suggest that while the therapeutic potentials of moving from privacy to public may also be fulfilled through drama or visual art, music may be unique in its capacity for all levels of exposure which thereby enables music to meet the participant where he or she is, in regards to his or her level of desire or readiness for exposure. This idea is discussed in detail later when “Interpretation No. 3” is specifically examined.

**Interpretation No. 1: Creating and Performing Music Served the Women in Prison as a Bridge from the Inside to the Outside**

Certain therapeutic potentials were available to the seven women who created and performed music together in prison through their participation in two main musical activities: creating music and performing music. For these women, the acts of creating and performing music served as a bridge between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’. This explanation is reminiscent of Levitin’s (2008) focus on how “sound joins the inner world
to the outer world" (p. 84) because human sound comes from inside people before it enters the world as music. Similarly, music in this particular case bridged the inner world to the outer world. The women were continually nudged, pulled, perhaps even dragged in an outward direction. In particular, the women were encouraged to move from symbolic and physical ‘inside’ places to ‘outside’ places, from privacy towards public, from self-focus to a focus on others, from solitude to togetherness and from subjectivity to objectivity.

Why is moving outward necessarily moving forward in terms of health? Proponents of community music therapy identify that music therapy practice where the focus is ‘out and around’ instead of ‘inwards and down’ can be extremely powerful in bridging and bonding individuals and communities (Stige et al., 2010). For women in prison, the opportunity for outward-directed personal growth is especially important, since there is such a marked divide between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ in this context. By virtue of where they live, women inside prison are isolated from their families and friends, from the public in general and also from ‘outside’ ideas. This isolation can ultimately increase the risk that women in prison become institutionalised, a risk which is further implicated in high levels of recidivism (Cabrera-Balleza, 2003). The analysis in chapter 8 suggests that creating and performing music helped the seven women to reduce their isolation by connecting their insular worlds to the outside.

The results in chapter 8 also suggest that different types of therapeutic potentials can be associated with different outward shifts in personal growth. This study outlines five different outward shifts. The therapeutic potentials associated with each of these are now discussed in turn:

1) Moving from ‘Inside’ Places to ‘Outside’ Places, both Physical and Metaphorical

“Everything I do I do to stay in touch with something a bit different from what I am in touch with in here and it’s something I probably would never have done on the outside but I’ve had the opportunity to do” (Majella)

Via a bridge between the physical spaces inside and outside the razor wire, the women involved were receptive to stimulation from more diverse sources than those that were available in prison. In particular, they were able to interact with music and artists from the outside in a way that is different to their usual opportunities within prison. Women inside the prison commonly interact with music by listening to CDs or the radio and this is often done in solitude. In this case, however, women were encouraged to interact musically within a group context and by making music rather than listening to it. This stimulation provided the women with more diversity of ideas and experiences related to music and human interaction. Paulus and Nijstad (2003b) argue that diversity is vital to creativity because a vast array of different ideas encourages a longer and therefore deeper creative process. By contrast, low levels of diversity can result in premature consensus and a stifled creative process.
Why is a diversity of ideas and experiences from the outside world important for women in prison? The literature reviewed in this thesis offers two possible explanations. Thaut (1992) as well as Daveson and Edwards (2001) suggest that music therapy can increase a prisoner’s ties to reality. Similarly, in the case represented by this research, participating in music experiences based on input from the outside world enabled Majella and other women to “stay in touch” with parts of reality. From a different perspective, the diversity of ideas and experiences stimulated by music in this case may also have enhanced each woman’s creative capacities since according to Paulus and Nijstad (2003) diversity is integral to creativity. Within the music therapy literature, Aigen (2005) and Lee (2006) emphasise that creativity is vital to health while Aigen (2005) in particular argues that increasing a person’s creative capacities is a valid therapeutic goal. Building upon these assumptions it is possible to suggest that the increased levels of diversity brought in from the outside world through the idea of group music-making bolstered the creative capacities of the seven women while strengthening their connections to some of the realities of the outside world. This is ultimately health-enhancing.

The bridge between inside and outside spaces also provided some of the women involved with a sense that they had momentarily ‘escaped’ from prison. This sense of ‘escape’, or transcending confines, is a commonly-reported therapeutic outcome in music therapy practice. For example, Daveson (2007) highlighted in her study of temporality in music therapy how interactions with music enabled clients and music therapists to momentarily transcend the confines of time through experiences of timelessness. Maratos (2004) described how musical performance enabled her clients to momentarily transcend their diagnoses of mental illness and Hogan (1998) described the experience for terminally ill patients who momentarily transcended their illness through interactions with music. Furthermore, Bunt (1994) suggests that transcending reality may be one of the main features indigenous to music therapy experience. The results of this study confirm this suggestion by highlighting how the women were able to momentarily escape the harshness of their realities inside prison through making and performing music. Ironically, music in this case enabled the women to momentarily escape their most immediate realities within prison while at the same time strengthening their connections to some of the realities of the outside world.

Moving from inside places to outside places was indeed therapeutic in many ways for the women involved in this research. However, sometimes this shift conflicted with a woman’s overall state of being. Lucinda in particular described frequently feeling withdrawn but she did not give in to this feeling because she felt it was inappropriate for such outward-focussed work. In this way, outward-focussed approaches to music experience may not always meet a participant where they are, nor follow where they lead. This contrasts with Ansdell’s assertion (2003) that community music therapy follows “where the need of clients, contexts and music leads” (p. 31) and suggests instead that the ‘out and around’ approach involved in this particular case followed the lead of ‘performance’.

Individual women were swept up by, rather than being in control of, the outward momentum created by the impending performance. The women did not lead this
momentum; instead, they were directed by it. This is congruent with Powell’s experience (2004) of facilitating performances as a community musician, whereby performance is “the driving force during the process” (p. 181). Powell suggests that herein lies a major difference between community music and community music therapy, especially since in community music therapy “group performance happens because of the music therapy, but not as the therapeutic goal. Rather, the performance is a by-product or added bonus” (p 181).

It is possible to suggest, therefore, that the outward-focussed approach to musical experience in the case presented in this research cannot be called ‘client-centred’ in the usual sense of the term. Traditionally, ‘client-centred’ therapy refers to an approach developed by Carl Rogers in the 1940s and 50s where the client directs the therapeutic process (Rogers, 1961). ‘Client-centred’ in the case, however, reflects a whole new meaning whereby even though the health of the women involved remained at the heart of the underlying rationale for the musical experience, the experience itself was ‘performance-centred’ and the women, music and human contexts orbited around this core. Approaches like these that do not practically place the client in the centre of the work may help clients to experience the sense that they are part of something bigger than themselves (O’Grady, 2005b), which ultimately serves the client anyway (Aigen, 2005; Stige et. al., 2010).

In view of this, the use of performance in music therapy requires a revisioning of the idea of ‘client-centred’ practice. According to Stige (2002b), Seidel’s social-educational model of music therapy represents an integration of the client-centred approach with systems perspectives because “the music therapist works with persons in context, that is, the focus is on helping persons to grow and develop in their everyday life situations” (Stige, 2002b, para 28). However, the use of performance in music therapy demands a more specific and practical revisioning of the client-centred approach, since music therapists who have already begun working with clients on performance could lose their bearings if the ‘everyday life situations’ of their clients begin to point in a different therapeutic direction to the route represented by performance. Regardless of whether performance is included in music therapy practice as a by-product of the therapeutic process or as an explicit goal from the start, it is not the client but performance that will ultimately direct the process. This is because the outward momentum created by performance dictates how clients can respond to the fluid and ever-changing personal shifts within themselves. Once performance is set as a goal, ‘the show must go on’. This requires music therapists who use performance in their practice to adopt a different understanding of client-centredness where, although the client cannot fully direct the process, it is the client who can ultimately benefit from relinquishing control to forces outside of him or herself. This approach may be particularly useful when clients cannot find direction within themselves, when they feel stuck or stagnant, or when the direction they are heading is clearly unhealthy or self-destructive. In these contexts, following the client’s lead in a traditionally client-centred approach may be less indicated.
2) Moving from privacy to public

Via a bridge between privacy and public, the women involved were able to experience heightened levels of exposure which resulted in the largest number of reported therapeutic outcomes despite also being experienced as the most uncomfortable feature of the entire experience. Through the exposure required by group-work and performance to an audience, the women reported experiences of reciprocity where they gave of themselves and consequently received positive feedback from others, improved musical skills, a sense of completion, more courage, a sense of catharsis, the experience of a natural high, a sense of being heard, increased motivation in general, a sense of pride, more confidence, more freedom within the prison system and a sense that they were moving forward. Matilda and Sarah, in particular, commented on how far they felt they had come and how others saw this as ‘moving forwards’. This reported sense of moving forward is perhaps the most direct indicator that outward-focussed experiences can indeed be forward-moving in terms of health.

The therapeutic potentials of moving from privacy to public that were outlined in chapter 8 are congruent with much of the music therapy literature relating to performance. For example, Maratos (2004) describes how patients in a mental health unit performed an original musical which clearly provided an “exciting and unique experience for some patients” (p. 138), some of who became active partners in reciprocally-supportive relationships with performing staff members. Powell (2004) emphasises the ability of musical performance to create connections between clients, staff and audience members. This capacity of performance to connect people through sharing is also reinforced by Zharinova-Sanderson (2004) and Davidson (2004). Similarly, the potentials of moving from privacy to public outlined in the present study lend support to Aigen’s (2004) assertion that “the possibilities (of Community Music Therapy) exist in the realm of helping clients achieve musical, artistic, and personal growth not possible when the work is confined to the privacy of a therapy room” (p. 211).

However, performance in this particular case was potentially too exposing for Majella. She reported that she never wanted to experience that level of exposure again; high levels of exposure weren’t necessary for how she wanted to live her life and in particular she did not feel it necessary to constantly foray out of her comfort zones. This is congruent with Davidson’s assertion (2004) that although the sense of self is unfixed not everyone has a performing personality and it is important that music therapy participants are not forced to do something that does not fit easily with them. Some music therapy participants may not desire or be ready to move outside their comfort zones.

The idea of moving beyond ‘comfort zones’ has only recently been articulated in the music therapy literature by McFerran (in press). Describing a case involving ten music therapy sessions with a group of adolescents who have misused drugs, McFerran highlights a particular session where the participants took greater risks in their personal expression through, for example, singing solo. McFerran also suggests that the music therapy group in general challenged some group members to move beyond their comfort zones. In the present research Majella did not wish to move beyond her comfort zone;
instead she coveted experiences with music that were comfortable. This highlights the dual capacity of music for comfort and soothing as well as exposure and risk-taking. Perhaps moving beyond comfort zones through risk-taking in music is something that only happens naturally when the music participant has experienced enough musical comfort or soothing in the first place.

This has important implications for music therapy practice. Majella’s experience demonstrates that spending time in comfort zones can be just as important as moving outside of them. The task for the music therapist is to collaboratively decide with the music participant whether comfort zones are providing the participant at that particular time with experiences of stagnation or experiences of necessary rest and recuperation. If stagnation is the main feature of the participant’s experience at that particular time, the music therapist might encourage the participant to move outside of his or her comfort zone by increasing the levels of publicity, for example, through musical group-work or musical performance to a larger audience. If, on the other hand, the participant needs space and time to reflect or ingest new experiences, or if he or she needs to rest, then remaining in a comfort zone may be most therapeutically ideal. In this situation, the music therapist may draw upon the comforting and soothing capacities of music, for example, by facilitating vocal improvisations that are structured to emulate the mother-baby dyad (Austin, 2001) or focusing more upon techniques of receptive music therapy (Grocke & Wigram, 2007).

Whether the music participant is best served at the time by being encouraged inside or outside comfort zones is an extremely subjective judgment but important nonetheless. Through heightened processes of reflexivity and collaboration between the music therapist and the music participant, this judgment can be made consciously and openly. If, for example, the music therapist and music participant collaboratively and consciously decide to move outside the comfort zone via performing musically to an audience, then the music participant may have an increased capacity to cope with any discomfort when he or she is finally performing on stage because he or she understands the therapeutic rationale underscoring the incorporation of performance into his or her music therapy experience. Sometimes, however, performance is incorporated for various practical reasons into music therapy practice without these processes of negotiation with the participant. In these situations, the music therapist needs to understand the therapeutic value of spending time in comfort zones as well as the therapeutic value of moving outside of them, and use his or her own discretion when guiding participants in either direction.

3) Moving from self-focus to a focus on others

Via a bridge between self-focus and a focus on others, the seven women were able to build connections with each other and with the audience while also experiencing reciprocity and the opportunity to feel supported and be supportive. Moving from self-focus to a focus on others is a sign of heightened altruism, a human trait that is especially acknowledged within positive psychology literature as a major factor in the levels of happiness experienced by the individual who possesses the trait as well as the levels of
happiness experienced by the beneficiaries of the altruistic act (Argyle, 1999; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; Peterson, 2006). According to Nurmi and Salmela-Aro (2006), "excessive self-focus is problematic, perhaps because it leads to ruminative thinking. Although we all need sometimes to think about ourselves and evaluate our potential for changing ourselves, continuous self-focus tends to lead to a low sense of well-being" (p. 193). Furthermore, Frankl (2004) argues that “the more one forgets himself – by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love – the more human he is and the more he actualises himself” (p. 115). Jane, Sarah and Lucinda in particular reported enjoying the opportunity to support others in the group. It is possible to suggest therefore, that in this case the women involved in the group had the opportunity to practice altruism thereby developing further in their own self-actualisation.

While altruism is indicative of happiness and therefore mental health, some people may at different times in their lives need to focus upon themselves (Nurmi & Salmela-Aro, 2006). Sarah, for example, reported that the crisis she experienced upon entering prison for the first time necessitated that she focus on her self for a while. Despite this need, Sarah was also able to focus on helping others in the group, especially Gillian. This suggests that Sarah’s musical experience enabled her to share her focus between herself and others, simultaneously receiving the health-enhancing benefits of altruism and ‘me’-time. Perhaps these two needs are not mutually exclusive or perhaps they are inseparable. It is widely acknowledged by various authors that in effect there is no such thing as a selfless act, since altruism bestows such gifts upon the person who enacts it (Lyubormirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; Peterson, 2006; Vinogradov & Yalom, 1989). In this case, the opportunities for Sarah and other women to practice altruism were also ways for them to reward, nurture and focus upon themselves.

According to Vinogradov and Yalom (1989), altruism is one of the main factors involved in successful group psychotherapy. These authors suggest that in the initial stages of group psychotherapy, altruism manifests when participants offer each other suggestions, ask appropriate questions and show concern and attention. In later stages, altruism can be seen in the sharing of emotion and deeper exchanges. In this particular case study, the seven women in prison were able to exchange with each other their fears about performing while also sharing parts of their life stories and musicality through song. These exchanges are deeper than the initial manifestations of altruism outlined by Vinogradov and Yalom (1989) and may therefore reflect a more developed stage of group cohesion.

According to Vinogradov and Yalom (1989), group cohesion facilitates self-disclosure as well as the exploration of conflicts and tension within the group. Notes on the final session in this particular case study suggest that the women began to disclose to the group information that wasn’t directly relevant to the performance only after the performance was over. This may indicate that the central role of performance in this case prevented deeper levels of group cohesion being achieved because there was little time or space for self-disclosure that was unrelated to the impending performance. Furthermore, in their post-performance research interviews some of the women demonstrated residual tension regarding the significant events that occurred during the ten-week process. For example,
Spark still felt angry about Gillian’s departure from the group and subsequent return. However, she did not address this issue within the group but chose instead the safety of the research interview to express her tension. This may suggest that the group of seven women still needed more time and space in order to achieve deep levels of cohesion.

This has important implications for when music therapists incorporate performance into their practice. Whilst the use of performance may result in ample opportunities for music participants to practice and receive altruism, the dominating nature of performance upon the music therapy process may also direct the journey towards group cohesiveness in ways that are different to those defined by Vinogradov and Yalom (1989). Instead, group cohesiveness when performance is involved may be identified through the achievement of musical groove (Pavlicevic, 2003), musical communitas (Aigen, 2005; Ruud, 1998; Stige et al., 2010) or, in the case of this research, through moving from solitude to togetherness where all parts including the individual selves momentarily come together.

4) Moving from solitude to togetherness

Via a bridge between solitude and togetherness, the women involved were able to experience a sense of unity with each other whilst also maintaining their separateness as individuals. This often gave them joy; Sarah, for instance, was “rapt” in her own achievements as well as the achievement of the group pulling together as a unified team. In particular, many of the women enjoyed working on their individual musical parts and fitting these to the musical whole. The potential to experience unity and individual autonomy at the same time through music in this way is often referred to by community music therapists as ‘musical communitas’ (Aigen, 2005a; Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004c; Stige, 2002a). These community music therapists hail musical communitas as one of the most important and unique therapeutic potentials that can be attributed to making music in groups.

‘Musical communitas’ in group music-making is a fluid construction that is sometimes elusive. On the journey towards this ideal, some of the women involved in this research sensed that their autonomy was threatened. For example, Gillian initially sought the support of Sarah in singing her song but as the performance drew nearer and Gillian’s confidence grew she felt stifled by Sarah’s musical support. Furthermore, Jane’s musical autonomy was ruffled when the artistic director suggested that the distorted electric guitar part played and composed by Jane detracted from, rather than served, Matilda’s song and pushed for the Jane’s part to be changed. These examples suggest that ‘musical communitas’ in this case was not a static achievement, instead it ebbed and flowed as the journey progressed, and that the journey toward ‘musical communitas’ can be fraught with infringements on individual autonomy.

This supports Pavlicevic’s (2003) sensible reminder that the experience of being part of a greater whole can be both “enriching and destructive” (p. 104) and has important implications for music therapy practice. In particular, music therapists should not pursue or idealise the achievement of musical communitas or the experience of being part of a greater whole within their music therapy groups. Rather, these experiences need to be
understood as fleeting aspects of the creative process that occur sometimes when people are deeply absorbed in the act of making music together. Furthermore, these experiences have a dual nature; they simultaneously involve individual autonomy and unity with others. Making music with others perhaps more commonly involves an oscillation or sometimes even conflict between the two types of experience rather than a simultaneous and harmonious co-existence.

Experiences of unity in music and other creative actions can be explained in the context of existential theories that emphasise the human experience of separateness from things and other people in the world: “No matter how close each of us becomes to another, there remains a final, unbridgeable gap; each of us enters existence alone and must depart from it alone (Yalom, 1980, p. 9). This experience of fundamental separateness, shared across humanity, results in an underlying tension between our awareness of our isolation and our desire to be part of a larger whole (Yalom, 1980). In the case represented by this research, a sense of unity in the coming together of all musical parts, theatrical elements and individual selves was shared and celebrated by each of the seven women. Perhaps this transient sense of unity provided the seven women with temporary relief from the underlying tension we all share regarding our separateness and our desire to be part of a larger whole.

5) Moving from subjective to objective thought processes

Via a bridge between subjective and objective thought processes, the seven women were able to experiment with different shifts of awareness. The context of group-work and performance encouraged the women to think more objectively about their creative endeavours out of concern for what others in the group or audience would think of them. In particular, Matilda reported being less attached to her creative output which resulted in more creative freedom and less self-criticism. However, other women such as Sarah, Spark and Lucinda reported experiencing high levels of self-criticism along the musical journey, especially when creating original lyrics or musical parts to the songs of other women, because they worried what others would think of them. Paulus and Nijstad (2003) suggest that the critical, objective thoughts that form part of ‘convergent’ processes in creativity should occur only after people have freely generated ideas and associations within ‘divergent’ processes. Perhaps it was difficult for the women to delineate between these two processes without explicitly understanding the importance of the distinction. In this case, it may have helped if the musical director had explained to the women why it was important to clearly separate the two processes.

Nevertheless, the shift between subjective and objective thought processes enabled the women to experience both the primary and secondary processes involved in creativity, outlined by Maslow (1959). The women commonly wanted to experience the primary processes involved in lyric-writing in solitude whereas they preferred the group context for creating music to accompany the lyrics. The solitude required for lyric-writing is congruent with Cameron’s assertion (2002) that “we may perform in public, we may publish or show in public, but we must invoke and rehearse and practice and incubate and first execute within a circle of safety and privacy” (p.117). In the case represented by this
research, lyric-writing was the first step in song-writing and perhaps at this early stage in creativity the women involved sought solitude because they experienced it as more safe and private than within the group. On the other hand, the women generally preferred the group context for the primary processes involved in creating music to accompany the lyrics. Perhaps this was because they experienced the creation of music as less personally exposing than lyric-writing and also more enjoyable when interacting with others in the group. This substantiates the importance of the notion of ‘musicing’.

In this case, the secondary processes involving “hard work, long training, unrelenting criticism (and) perfectionistic standards” (Maslow, 1959, p. 91) largely occurred within the group context. After the songs had been written and arranged they were relentlessly rehearsed during the second and third phases of the creative process where creative foundations were consolidated and integrated. The opportunity for the women involved to experience both the primary and the secondary processes of creativity helped them to develop their creative capacities, which is also an indicator of enhanced health (Aigen, 2005). This is congruent with the Creative Process Theory that informs the creative arts therapies in the Netherlands. According to Smeijsters and Vink (2003), the Creative Process Theory proposes that the client is “cured when he is able to find a balance between the primary and secondary process” (para 41). Based on this assumption, the use of performance and group-work in music therapy may be vital in helping to provide the participant with more opportunities to experience the secondary processes associated with creativity, thereby providing a balanced approach to the creative processes within music therapy.

The Concomitant Need for Inward-Focussed Approaches to Music Experience

The positive, health-enhancing changes that the women reportedly experienced through creating and performing music were characteristically shifts in outward directions. However,

“there is often a time to be private, and a time to be public in music therapy; a time for the nurturing of intimate communication; and a time for the performance of the fruits of achieved communication, skill and confidence” (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004b, p. 23).

During processes associated with therapy, people sometimes need opportunities to experience inward shifts through insular experiences associated with privacy, solitude, self-focus and subjective thought processes. These concepts have always been emphasised within conventional approaches to music therapy where the focus is typically ‘inward and down’ (Stige et al., 2010). Community Music Therapy represents an attempt to rebalance this ‘inward and down’ approach by emphasising the other extreme characterised by ‘out and around’ approaches to music therapy. However, both approaches are vital to human health.

This is also true for processes associated with creativity. The primary stages of creativity, where intuitions are explored and “the flash, the inspiration, the peak experience” (Maslow, 1959, p. 91) are incubated, can be likened to ‘inwards and down’ directions in therapy. Likewise, the secondary stages where personal forays are developed, critiqued
and ultimately shared with others can be likened to the ‘out and around’ approach identified within Community Music Therapy discourse and represented in this research. Maslow (1959) argued that both stages of creativity are important but the ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ labels he attributes to them indicate that ‘out and around’ processes occur after ‘inwards and down’ experiences. Perhaps this is also true of therapy; ‘out and around’ approaches associated with Community Music Therapy may ideally follow a participant’s involvement with the ‘inward and down’ experiences available in conventional music therapy or with the primary stages of musical creativity. Some community music therapists have demonstrated how this can occur by bridging clients of conventional music therapy to their wider community when they are ready. For example, Wood, Verney and Atkinson (2004) describe how their music therapy sessions involving adults with neurological disabilities in a medical setting began to extend into the local arts scene and the wider lives of participants over a period of 15 months. This involved a natural progression for their clients from one-to-one music therapy sessions in the medical setting, to group music therapy sessions in the medical setting, and finally to participation in workshops, concerts and other learning opportunities within local community settings that included a community arts centre, concert venues, pubs and colleges. This type of progression is also the basis of Bunt’s (2004) development of MusicSpace, which he designed to provide “a network of spaces for music for all people of all ages and needs … encouraging all kinds of musical performance with links to wider cultural and social contexts” (p. 269).

According to O’Grady (2005a), the natural progression from ‘inward and down’ music experiences to ‘out and around’ processes in music therapy ideally follow the participant’s changing location on the health-care continuum. This continuum is represented in Figure 8 and is based on the idea that a music participant’s capacity for active musical experiences and therapeutic empowerment increase as he or she moves from acute illness or crisis through to a prolonged experience of well-being. In the context of this case study, the participant’s movement through these stages of health-care towards well-being also increases her capacity to participate in ‘out and around’ approaches to music experience.

Figure 8. The health-care continuum

| Acute illness or crisis | Rehabilitation | Community | Well-being |

The ideal progression from ‘inward and down’ to ‘out and around’ in music therapy is not always feasible or practical since it may often involve longer amounts of time in ‘therapy’ and therefore require sustainable and long-term funding, infrastructure designed for the long-term as well as long-term involvement from the music therapy participant. In most contexts, this is probably an unrealistic proposal. Finding a solution becomes more
problematic if music therapists try to ‘own’ the facilitation of music experience along the entire ‘inwards and down’ – ‘out and around’ spectrum of musical participation. Instead, music therapists need to forge stronger connections between different arts health professionals whose work is best suited to the different phases of music experience. This is one of the biggest challenges currently facing music therapists and other arts health professionals.

Some music therapists and professional artists are beginning to make practical and useful connections. A published example of such a connection is provided by O’Brien (2006) who describes an ‘opera therapy’ project where an opera was created, based on the stories and participation of cancer patients. This project was a collaboration between four cancer patients, an established opera company, and O’Brien as the music therapist. O’Brien (2006) describes the connection with the opera company as both fruitful and challenging. On one hand, the partnership resulted in a creative process that was described by the cancer patients who were involved as transformative and healing as well as an opera that was well-received by the audience. On the other hand, O’Brien (2006) described differences between the music therapist and the director of the opera company in terms of their understandings of the creative process. Primarily, the director did not initially share O’Brien’s concern that the patients’ stories were authentically translated or that the patients exerted final ownership over the musical output. In this case, O’Brien described her role as an advocate for the patients.

Similarly, Dileo suggests that music therapists involved in ‘Arts in Health’ projects can serve as a bridge between the client and the artist (McFerran, 2007). However, this is not always necessary; in many cases music therapists may not need to be part of their clients’ music experiences (Threlfall, 2007). Musicians and artists are also capable of facilitating positive and health-enhancing music experiences, especially for people who can be located in the ‘community’ and ‘well-being’ stages of the health continuum (O’Grady and McFerran-Skewes, 2007). The artists of the theatre company involved in this research provide one such example. Through drama, music and performance in particular, these artists facilitate ‘out and around’ experiences that are health-enhancing and often profoundly therapeutic. What seems most important here is whether the arts participant is more ready and willing for ‘out and around’ or ‘inward and down’ approaches to arts experience. This is difficult for the arts practitioner to ascertain, particularly because readiness is such an interpretive, subjective construct. At this early stage of knowledge regarding people’s readiness in therapy perhaps it is best to follow the lead of the participant, as Ansdell and Pavlicevic (2004) suggest. This is in itself, however, a vague concept.

Sometimes a participant may seem to lead the arts process in both directions at once. For example, Lucinda talked about how withdrawn she felt during the 10-week process and how she dragged herself to music sessions because she knew they’d be good for her. In a different situation where performance was not a fundamental part of the process, Lucinda could have followed her need to withdraw by participating in music experiences that were solitary, private and self-focussed. However, perhaps Lucinda’s health was best served by luring her away from her instinct to withdraw. This raises the question of
whether ‘inward and down’ and ‘out and around’ approaches to therapy or to creative experiences are necessarily mutually exclusive. In the case represented by this research, they are. Matilda and Majella, for example, often expressed the desire for more ‘inward and down’ approaches to music experience through their desire to focus more on music in the moment rather than an impending performance. The predominantly ‘out and around’ approach represented by the 10-week process, however, meant that their lead in this direction could not be followed. Perhaps there will always be tension between some group music therapy participants and the over-riding approach to group music therapy, whether it be outward- or inward-focussed. Some group members in ‘inward-focussed’ music therapy will want to perform their music to an audience, for example, while some participants in outward-focussed approaches will desire more insular experiences. The music therapist needs to be clear about which approach will dominate when conflicts do arise and she needs to be clear about why the direction she points her clients toward is a therapeutically-valid route. This can only be achieved by embracing and deeply understanding the therapeutic potentials of inward and outward approaches to music therapy.

Interpretation No. 2: Courage, Readiness, Exchange, Support and Trust were the Five Main Personal Resources involved in Helping the Women to Fulfill the Therapeutic Potentials of Moving Outward

When understood in terms of ‘musicing’, music is not just an object but also an action involving myriad human interactions and contexts (Small, 1998). The second question underlying this research concerned the human interactions and other personal resources associated with music that seemed to be important in fulfilling the therapeutic potentials of moving from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’. The two most important human capacities required by the seven women who created and performed music together were courage and readiness. The three most important human interactions were different types of exchange, support and trust. High levels of each of these five factors helped the women to reach the ‘crest’ of the bridge from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’, by enhancing the depth at which the therapeutic potentials could be fulfilled.

There is overlap between these five personal resources; they are not completely separate constructs. Trust, for example, is an action requiring courage while support is a form of exchange. Nevertheless, each personal resource is discussed separately because it emerged during analysis with sufficient strength from supporting data to warrant an independent label. These five personal resources are now discussed in order of their appearance in the acronym ‘CREST’.

Courage

The interviews with the women in prison are rich in stories of bravery and confronting personal fears of performing or being part of a group. The term ‘courage’ encapsulates their acts of bravery while also conveying the vulnerability associated with being brave. Courage is at once an action and a personal resource. In an entire book devoted to ‘The Courage to Create’, Rolo May (1975a) defines courage as “the capacity to move ahead in
spite of despair” (p. 12). He underlines the huge importance of courage for human beings in developing other virtues:

“Courage is not a virtue or value among other personal values like love or fidelity. It is the foundation that underlies and gives reality to all other virtues and personal values … Without courage other values wither away into mere facsimiles of virtue” (p. 13)

May (1975) argues that during truly creative acts courage is particularly difficult to summon because the creator, through his or her creative encounter with the world, is constantly confronted with the harshness of reality, for example the inevitability of death.

Existential dilemmas such as these did not characterise the experiences of the seven women in this case who created and performed music together; their encounters with other group members and a large audience seemed to confront the women more with issues relating to their identities and other people’s judgments about them: ‘What will people think of me? I hope I don’t stuff up her song!’ Matilda, Lucinda, Spark and Majella all described the judgmental environment of the prison and how this added to their fears about performing. In this context, the women needed to summon greater levels of courage than in their everyday lives in order to perform in front of people whose support and lack of judgment was not assured. Furthermore, they needed to find the courage to reveal parts of themselves to other group members and to a large audience of peers, prison guards and health professionals.

The need for courage in music therapy is perhaps more assumed rather than explicitly documented in the literature. Courage may be a particularly important personal resource for participants in community music therapy projects, since some music therapists argue that a natural relationship exists between performance and this type of approach to music therapy (Ruud, 2004; McFerran, in press). However, any approach to music therapy requires courage from the participant because in a sense the music therapy participant is always performing to an audience, even if the audience is solely the music therapist: “Performatve practice is seen to incorporate the intimate revealing of self within the safe bounds of the therapeutic relationship, as well as more public performances that may have more systemic intentions. It does not require an audience outside of therapy” (McFerran, in press). In view of this, courage is an important personal resource for participants in any approach to music therapy.

Readiness

Each of the seven women who created and performed music together experienced different points of readiness for the experience. Sarah, for example, was ready to ‘better herself’ while Jane was ready to work on her voice as part of her dream to become a professional musician. Each woman needed to be ready to face a variety of challenges to her identity and autonomy, she needed to be ready to acknowledge and utilise her own strengths and she needed to be ready to reveal parts of herself to others. Those women who were extremely ready in all these areas reported the deepest fulfillment of the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’.
Readiness refers to the stage at which people arrive when they are prepared to make some type of change in their lives. According to Prochaska’s (1999) cognitive-behavioural model of the stages of change, a human being is prepared to act once they have moved through periods of pre-contemplation (where there is no intention to change) and contemplation (where there may be an intention to change in the distant future). In the particular case represented by this research, Sarah was the most verbal about her intention to change, describing her desire to “better (her)self” through her involvement in the music program. Sarah was also the most communicative about “how far (she’d) come” through the ten-week process.

Along people’s journeys toward readiness, intrinsic motivation is more influential than extrinsic motivation (Prochaska, 1999); it is also more influential in group creativity (Paulus & Nijstad, 2003b). In the particular case represented by this research, it was important that the need to change was not demanded by an overt agenda of therapy; instead, the women’s varying levels of motivation to change remained intrinsic forces whose variability across the group of women was able to be met by the flexibility inherent in creating and performing music. More specifically, those women who felt extremely ready to change or better themselves in some way were able to do so through creating and performing music whilst other women who were less ready to change could still fully participate and reap the therapeutic benefits, albeit at less profound levels.

In this case, intrinsic motivation for music was also important. Usually, women who perform as part of the annual shows organised by the theatre company are partly motivated by the extrinsic reward of performing to their friends and families. However, the reward was not a possibility in this case due to security reasons. Therefore, the seven women who created and performed music together relied much more upon intrinsic motivation for music. This motivation was experienced at different levels by each woman. For example, Spark much preferred drama to music while Matilda, Lucinda, Sarah and Jane spoke of their love of music in particular. Gillian and Majella seemed to be intrinsically motivated by a variety of creative acts including writing, gardening and music.

The importance of the readiness of clients in therapy is only recently being emphasised in relevant literature. In their review of the variety of psychotherapies and what seems to work across all of them, Hubble, Duncan and Miller (1999) encourage therapists to become change-focussed rather than seeing their patients as possessing static diagnoses and problems. With this in mind, Norcross (1999) argues that the multitude of psychotherapies are “differentially effective with clients at different stages of change” (p. xviii) while Prochaska (1999) emphasises that what helps retain people in therapy is "providing treatments that match patients' stage of change" (p. 237). If music therapy practice continues to expand into outward-focussed approaches, music therapists will need to be clearer about the stages of change that are appropriate and even required for participation in outward-focussed approaches to music experience.

According to the health-care continuum proposed by O’Grady (2005a), there are broad stages of health where approaches to music experience should be differentiated. In the
acute illness/crisis stage of health, for example, music participants may need to deepen their understandings of the internal processes involved in their illness/crisis through inward-directed musical experiences. In contrast, if music participants can be located in later stages of health, such as ‘community’ or ‘well-being’ they may be less preoccupied with making sense of internal processes, more interactive with the outside world and thus more responsive to outward-focussed musical experiences. From this perspective, community music therapy projects may be more appropriate for participants who can be located in the ‘community’ or ‘well-being’ stages of health. These ideas, however, need to be developed and challenged by more research into different stages of change in music therapy processes.

Exchange

The seven women who created and performed music together were involved in a variety of exchanges with other group members as well as with the audience for the performance. Jane, for example, was able to share aspects of her musicality with Matilda and Majella by helping these women to develop different djembe beats to her song. Furthermore, Sarah immediately connected to the life experiences shared by Gillian in her original song. Lucinda took pride in exchanging meaning and beauty with the audience by contemplating the starts in way that wasn’t usually a part of prison life. She also suggested that the encounter between the seven women and their audience enabled an exchange where audience members could be ‘moved’ by what they witnessed while also mirroring the performers and providing them with positive feedback.

An exchange denotes a reciprocal act, where all parties involved gain something. Reciprocity is a major concept in feminist thought and particularly in feminist therapy where the therapist typically discloses more about herself in the service of the client while acting as a collaborator more than an expert (McLellan, 1995). In the case represented by this research, reciprocity occurred between group members and between the seven women and the audience rather than between a therapist and an individual woman.

A complex web of exchange or reciprocity has the capacity to facilitate change in a community of people, rather than one individual. In this case, Sarah remarked how the effects of the performance and the journey leading up to it “radiated out” to other units within the prison and to a particular audience member who was normally kept in isolation. This ‘radiation’, in turn, rewarded Sarah. She was “beside (her)self” with joy to see how her actions could influence others in a positive way. This level of reciprocity or exchange suggests that in some ways parts of the prison community were at least momentarily changed by the seven women’s involvement in making and performing music. In this way, their musical actions were not only therapeutic for themselves; they also facilitated some degree of change in the broader prison community.

If developed further, the degree of exchange between the seven women and the prison community could be likened to a more radical form of community music therapy where music therapy takes place for a community rather than in a community (Stige, 2002a).
Stige (2002a) suggests that this form of music therapy “departs from conventional modern notions of therapy in that goals and interventions relate directly to the community in question” (p. 328) rather than the participant. Based on this idea, the case in this research could become a radical form of community music therapy if therapeutic change in the prison community itself was the underlying intention of the music-work. However, perhaps the divide between therapy for a community and therapy for an individual is not mutually exclusive; both agendas can be satisfied regardless of whether the underlying therapeutic intention is directed toward an individual or a community. The case represented by this research provides an example of this, and highlights in particular the capacity of performance to simultaneously bestow therapeutic changes upon individual performers and their broader communities.

Support

The seven women who created and performed music together were receivers and givers of different types of support. Majella received outside support from a counselor while the six remaining women relied solely on verbal and musical support from within the group. For example, Jane supported Majella and Matilda musically by helping them to develop djembe parts to her song. Furthermore, Lucinda verbally reassured Gillian that she understood her fears about performing. All women acknowledged the importance of this support along the creative journey as it enabled them to feel buoyed by others when necessary as well as enabling them to sense their own strength in supporting others. According to Henry (2006), support is one of the most important factors in achieving lasting personal change. Furthermore, in group psychotherapy mutual support is important to participants’ experiences of altruism as it enables them to experience the joy of giving themselves and “reduces morbid self-preoccupation” (Aveline, 2006, p. 248).

The importance of support in fulfilling the therapeutic potentials available to the seven women involved, together with the activity-based nature of creating and performing music, could align this particular case to Wheeler’s notion of ‘supportive’ music psychotherapy (1983). According to Wheeler (1983):

“Supportive therapy has as its goal to restore individuals to an emotional equilibrium so that they can function as closely as possible to their normal levels. Efforts are made to ameliorate symptoms; to strengthen existing defences; and to develop better mechanisms of control which may include the suppression of feelings … Supportive therapy may be utilised appropriately with those who have a basically sound ego structure and need only a brief period of therapy in order to restore them to normal functioning. On the other end of the spectrum, it can help people who have been so severely damaged that the best for which one can hope is symptom alleviation which will enable them to live more comfortably with their handicaps” (p. 9).

Wheeler’s explanation of supportive music psychotherapy applies most readily to clinical situations involving therapist-directed goals for each client; in this sense, ‘supportive’ refers more to the therapist’s approach to music therapy. In the present case featuring group-work, ‘supportive’ refers more to the interactions between all group members. In this context, support was much more powerful than merely helping women to ameliorate
or alleviate symptoms as is the case in supportive psychotherapy. Instead, support was crucial in enabling the seven women to fulfill the therapeutic potentials of moving from ‘inside’ to ‘outside’. In this case, the importance of support within the group aligns the ten-week creative process more with the principles of group psychotherapy, where mutual support is integral to therapeutic success (Vinogradov & Yalom, 1989), rather than with the ideas underlying ‘supportive therapy’.

Wheeler (1983) classified the use of music as therapy as a form of supportive psychotherapy because in this approach music participants do not verbally process the impulses and instincts that are revealed in their music experiences and the musical activities in this approach are valued instead for their capacity to ameliorate or alleviate symptoms. Similarly, the case in this research can be presented as the use of music as therapy where instincts and impulses are not verbally processed, however the musical activities of creating and performing music in this case helped women to enact an array of therapeutic potentials associated with moving from the ‘inside’ to the ‘outside’ rather than to ameliorate or alleviate symptoms. In this way, the case as it is represented in this research helps to raise the value accorded to “activity-based treatment protocols” (Ficken & Gardstrom, 2002, p. 54) and the use of music as therapy.

**Trust**

Trust can be defined as an action that stems from courage. The act of trusting someone or something embodies risk-taking, commitment, surrender and self-reliance; factors which Henry (2006) suggests are important for people in achieving lasting personal change. The seven women who created and performed music together required high levels of trust in the artists of the theatre company, in the creative process and in themselves. Many of the women spoke of the importance of trust in their experience of creating and performing music together in this case. Sarah, for example, remarked how in general she found it difficult to trust people but that she trusted the artists of the theatre company because other women in prison told her about their longstanding work in the prison. This sentiment was echoed by Majella. The importance of trust in this case is congruent with the theoretical framework that explains the work of the theatre company. Within this framework, the artists describe trust as the fundamental starting point which is nurtured by the creation of a safe space where the women can play and falter without judgment.

Developing trust is also important to music therapists and it is particularly emphasised in the music therapy literature relating to adults who have been traumatised or abused as children. In this context, music therapists commonly describe building trust through the provision of safe, familiar and structured musical experiences. Austin (2001) details her use of two alternating chords during vocal improvisations with adults who were traumatised as children in order to provide a sense of musical predictability and hence safety. Purdon (2006) explains that part of the first stage in her approach to working musically with abused teen girls is to address issues of safety rather than issues of abuse in order to build trust. Furthermore, Amir (2004b) provides a case example where a young woman who had been abused as a child plays familiar, structured songs on the piano for the first few months of her music therapy process before she can trust the riskier
action of improvisation. In the context of music therapy with adults who have been traumatised or abused as children, trust is synonymous with safety and is developed through the use of predictable and familiar musical techniques.

In contrast, trust was developed primarily in non-musical ways in the case presented in this research. Trust was built during the creative process through the long-standing reputation of the theatre company within the prison, through the creation of a safe space characterised by openness and lack of judgment, and through some of the women’s personal battles with trust. Gillian, for example, could not initially trust people’s reactions to her song and consequently pulled herself and her song out of the process. However, upon re-engaging with the process, she gradually began to trust people’s positive responses which ultimately enabled her to perform the song to a large audience. It is interesting to consider how the use of musical techniques to develop a sense of safety and trust may also have influenced the ten-week process if they had been utilised throughout. According to the artists of the theatre company, developing deep levels of trust takes a long time; perhaps the use of musical techniques to develop a sense of safety and trust in the group would have required more time than the ten-week process could allow. There was only a short time during which the foundations for a performance needed to be created. In view of this, it could be argued that the impending performance dictated the levels of trust that could be developed by limiting the time available for musical experiences of safety and trust.

Trust is a human interaction, an exchange. Its reciprocal nature in this particular case was exemplified by Sarah and Matilda reporting that they were trusted more by prison staff as a result of their involvement in the ten-week creative process. This suggests that trust was not only a personal resource required during the ten-week process, it was also a therapeutic outcome and thereby a clear example where “you reap what you sow” (Sarah).

Achieving therapeutic change without therapy.

The interpretation constructed for the second research question suggests that the seven women who created and performed music together in prison were able to access certain therapeutic potentials through their own resources and interactions rather than through the conventional processes associated with music therapy that include assessment of therapeutic need, therapeutic goal-setting and the therapeutic alliance. In this case, the achievement of therapeutic change was not the ultimate goal for the seven women involved. Therapeutic change occurred in the pursuit of something else, that is, in the pursuit of story-telling through music, drama and dance. This is reminiscent of the age-old question of whether we can pursue happiness or whether it only really befalls us when we pursue something else (Saunders, 2009). For example, in his classic text Frankl (2004) argues that “success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one’s dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one’s surrender to a person other than oneself. Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it” (p. 12). On the other hand, some psychologists such as Lyubomirsky et. al. (2005)
suggest that there are practical strategies we can use to reach and therefore pursue higher levels of happiness.

The fact that the seven women were able to access certain therapeutic potentials without participation in therapy is congruent with Bruscia’s suggestion (1998) that not everything that is therapeutic can be called therapy. In this sense, the study is not an examination of music therapy. Instead, it represents an inquiry into a broader field that does not yet clearly exist but may one day be called ‘health musicology’ (Stige, 2002a) or ‘music in health’. In this broader field, music therapy and other health practices involving music could continue to examine and promote the health-enhancing potentials of music experience, whether they are fulfilled within the context of therapy or not.

Until this broader field is defined, however, community music therapy discourse will continue to expand the scope of music therapy. In doing so, it is important to delineate in what contexts community music therapy approaches may be best suited. The interpretation provided for the second research question suggests that some outward-focussed approaches to music experience may be less indicated when participants are unable at the time to embody high levels of courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust. In this situation, supportive music therapy may be more suitable than music therapy that is re-educative or re-constructive or outward-focussed as in community music therapy.

Interpretation No. 3: When compared with drama and visual art in this case, the therapeutic potentials of music could be related to its uniqueness as a gentle form of exposure

Wheeler (1983) has suggested that music as therapy could be replaced with any other activity and the same results achieved. The interpretation regarding the emergent question in this investigation relates to this suggestion because it represents an exploration of the relationship between music, drama and visual art in this particular case. According to the interpretation constructed in this research, the three art-forms in this case do not necessarily provide different therapeutic potentials. Instead, drama, music and visual art in this case provide different degrees of ‘exposure’ for the women in prison which then afford different depths at which the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from privacy to public can be fulfilled. The higher levels of exposure required by drama or singing in this case may result in, for example, a more profound experience of being heard and a deeper sense of having something to give to others than perhaps is possible with visual art in this case.

In this sense, music in this case could be substituted with drama or visual art and the ultimate therapeutic outcomes may be of the same type, even though different experiences and different skills are developed according to the particular art-form with which we interact. For example, ‘communitas’ is often referred to by community music therapists as a phenomenon unique to music, where individuals may simultaneously experience individual autonomy and unity with others while making music (Aigen, 2005a; Ansdell, 2004; Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2004). However, the theoretical framework
presented in Chapter 6 that explains the work of the theatre company suggests that drama is equally able to nurture this level of ‘communitas’, through individual characters who tell their own stories while serving the overarching story that unites them all. Furthermore, music has often been hailed as unique in its ability to interact with human emotion (Stecker, 1984); however, this capacity is also central to drama, visual art and indeed many other art-forms (Stecker, 1984).

The results of this research suggest that, in this case, the difference between music, drama and visual art lies in the depth at which the same therapeutic potentials can be fulfilled by each art-form. In other words, they all have different strengths. Drama, for example, is an art-form which, according to Jon Hawkes (O’Grady, 2008), always requires an audience as well as some form of interaction with others. Hawkes argues that this is because drama always involves story-telling and there isn’t much purpose in telling a story if there is no-one there to listen (O’Grady, 2008). McFerran (2010) argues that there is also always an audience in music therapy, since “every session is a performance” while Deliege and Richelle (2006) argue that a musician playing to himself or herself involves simultaneous roles of performer and audience. It is perhaps more clear to suggest then that, in terms of this issue, the difference between music and drama is that music does not require an audience of other people even though it did so in this case. In line with this argument, drama always involves a degree of exposure whereas this is not necessarily so for music. Furthermore, in the case represented by this research, drama represented higher levels of exposure than music-making for the seven women, except when singing was involved. When compared with music, drama and singing in this case may facilitate a more powerful exchange between the audience and performer because of the high levels of courage and honesty required and conveyed in these highly exposing actions.

The strength of visual art in this case is quite the opposite, since it does not revolve around the interaction of others. Low levels of exposure are required by participation in visual art in this context and therefore participants experience more of the therapeutic potentials associated with inward-focussed approaches to creative experience, such as the experience of meditative calmness that is achieved through deep absorption in the art-work. These experiences are also possible through music, however they were not strongly represented in the case represented by this research. Perhaps this is because of the way that music is utilised and understood within the theatre company. The way that music is utilised and understood within the theatre company places the art-form at the more extreme end of exposure, although music is rarely as exposing as drama in this case because it can softly veil the physicality and expression of personal experiences that are required in performances in this particular case. Singing is the only way in which music can be experienced as more exposing than drama in this context. This supports Uhlig’s (2006) suggestion that people are generally much more afraid of singing than they used to be. Uhlig (2006) comments:

“If singing seems magical it is because we have lost touch with our natural voice and its potential to heal and profoundly affect us. Maybe we do not understand its effect anymore and because of this we call it magical or spiritual. Maybe we are frightened of using our most intimate instrument and learning about its
responsibilities. Maybe we do not know how to sing, or we are scared that we cannot sing” (p. xi).

In general, music does not always require interaction with others nor does it necessitate an extrinsic audience, even though in the case represented by this research music involves both group-work and performance to an audience. In a similar way to visual art as it is utilised within the theatre company, playing music can involve deep absorption, meditative experiences, a sense of timelessness (Daveson, 2007) and all the therapeutic potentials associated with inward-focussed music experiences that have been outlined by music therapists whose work could be labeled ‘conventional’. Perhaps this is the real strength of music when compared to visual art and drama: music can provide experiences along the entire continuum of exposure, from very small levels where personal elements can remain hidden and closed to outside influences; to very high levels where these personal elements are laid completely open to public view or to other outside influences. Figure 9 represents this potentially unique capacity of music.

Figure 9. The relationship of music to visual art and drama, in terms of the level of exposure required by participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Exposure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
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Were Participants Attracted by this Unique Capacity of Music?
Except for Spark, the women involved in this research acknowledged that their involvement in the ten-week process was due to their love of and familiarity with music. However, each woman’s experiences and understanding of music were different. Matilda and Majella initially preferred the private, solitary potential of music-making. Similarly, Sarah initially preferred making music in a group while questioning the need to perform to a broader audience. In comparison, Jane and Lucinda were both excited by the prospect of performing to a large audience. Jane, in particular, seemed motivated by the opportunity to share her music with an audience since performing was part of her aspiration to become a professional musician. In these ways, the seven women were attracted to a variety of different levels of exposure afforded by music.

As musical director, it was certainly my experience that this particular creative process had generally attracted a more introspective group than usual. Every other year, drama leads the creative process and the women involved tend to be extroverts who are motivated by the idea of having their personal stories witnessed through large performances to their peers, family, friends and the general public. It is pure conjecture but still interesting to consider whether the fact that music led the process in this case attracted in general a more introverted group of women where many of them were...
primarily motivated by the potential for music to lead them in directions that are ‘inward and down’.

*Strengthening the Therapeutic Potentials of Exposure by Combining Art-forms*

If it is true that drama involved the most exposure for participants, except when singing was involved, it could be argued that the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from privacy to public occur most profoundly through drama, especially for women who contribute high levels of courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust to the creative process. Music in this context provided a gentler form of exposure for people who may have been experiencing these five personal factors to a lesser degree. In this sense, music enabled the seven women involved to experience the therapeutic potentials associated with moving from privacy to public when perhaps some of these women would have ordinarily shied away from performance and drama.

In view of this, the therapeutic potentials of drama and music were strengthened by their combined use. This is congruent with McNiff’s suggestion (2004) that the power of individual art-forms as well as the overall creative energy can be strengthened when art-forms are used together rather than in isolation. According to McNiff (2004), theatre is the greatest expression of this because it has the capacity to combine the creative energy of all art-forms. From this viewpoint, all art-forms share an underlying process of creativity and can therefore be seen as a unified entity.

*Uniting the arts therapies through creativity.*

Perhaps there is good reason why early music therapists may have “over-used” (Wigram, 2006) the concept of creativity to explain the therapeutic value of music therapy. Creativity is the foundation of all art-forms and many other activities that involve transforming one thing to another (Cameron, 2002). An arts therapist usually understands the healing potential of the arts because he or she has had direct and personal experience of the creative process through practising his or her particular art-form (McNiff, 2004). According to Bruscia (1998) "a musician's understanding of music comes through direct and personal involvement in the processes of creating, re-creating, and listening to music. It is the musician who understands what is most essential to music and the music experience" (p.8). Despite this, music therapists rarely articulate their own experiences with music within the music therapy literature. A small example of this can be gleaned from the appendix of Australian music therapist Daveson’s doctoral dissertation (2007). She describes her own experiences with music in relation to her chosen profession: “The music allowed different thoughts, feelings, experiences, wishes, desires, and fears to find expression and begin the process of externalisation, development, and recognition ... or maybe simply it involved just a sensing of what it was that I have to express from inside of me" (p. 251). This ‘admission’ of personal experiences with music is rare in music therapy literature and in the broader arts therapy literature as well (McNiff, 2004); in general, arts therapists tend to subjugate their identities as artists with their identities as therapists (Mc Niff, 2004). This is beginning to be redressed within Community Music Therapy discourse where much more emphasis is placed on music itself and subsequently the therapist’s role as musician (Ansdell, 2004).
As musicians, music therapists can afford to be excited about their creative medium with which they can nurture the creativity of other people. Music is powerful. Yet so is any art-form or activity that engages the creative capacities of an individual or community. When working together, artists or arts therapists combine the strengths of their particular art-form with those of other art-forms in order to maximise and deepen the therapeutic potentials available to their arts participants.

Towards a ‘creativity-centred music therapy’

A ‘creativity-centred music therapy’ acknowledges that music is part of something bigger and therefore helps to put music in its place. Centering music therapy and other arts therapies upon creativity also builds the potential for each arts practice to be strengthened by other art-forms or indeed by any activity where creativity is central. Music is no longer an isolated or separate phenomenon and neither is there the need for different therapeutic associations named according to their creative medium, for example ‘the sand therapy association’, ‘the cooking therapy association’, ‘the paint therapy association’. Creativity-centred arts therapies also enable us to identify and compare the therapeutic strengths of each art-form or activity whereby, rather than generating a competitive environment where creative activities are pitted against each other, a deeper understanding of the relationship between them is built. Consequently the arts therapies can work together for the health of individuals or communities.

As enlivening as this idea is, it is also problematic. Until now the different arts therapies have generally developed as separate and distinct disciplines, except for some examples in the United States and the Netherlands, due to the belief that merging them would develop practices with questionable depth in understanding each art form and thus questionable therapeutic value (Karkou & Sanderson, 2006). This idea is supported recently by Gold, Wigram & Voracek (2007) whose statistical analyses indicated that clients showed greater health improvement when music therapy was limited to discipline-specific music therapy techniques and did not include media from other arts therapies disciplines. While there are different rationales to explain this particular finding, the problem in merging the arts therapies extends to difficulties in how arts therapists could be trained if the arts therapies merged. However, a creativity-centred music therapy is not built on the premise that all arts therapies should become one, in training or in practice; instead, it suggests that all arts therapies can be theoretically and philosophically linked through creativity, thereby strengthening ties and promoting more possibilities for different arts therapists to work together.

Developing indigenous theory based on the creative process.

Since the creative process is foundational to all art-forms (McNiff, 2004), theories based on the creative process can be considered indigenous to all of the arts therapies. The artists in the theatre company presented in this study are not trained therapists and instead draw upon their intuitive knowledge of the creative process and its healing potential to guide their work. This may be similar for many artists working in health contexts. For these artists, theories based on the creative process are central to their work but may
remain more intuitive than explicitly articulated. If the Arts in Health movement is to continue to gain momentum, support and legitimacy, it may perhaps be best served by explicitly researching the creative process in relation to health in order to articulate to other health professionals why and how their Arts in Health practices work. For example, ‘creative blocks’ may become the more appropriate ‘pathology’ for these artists to work with, rather than illness or social disadvantage.

Music therapists may also be able to use this idea as a legitimate way to explain their own work. Aigen (2005), for example, maintains that developing a person’s creative capacities is a valid therapeutic objective. In order for this idea to gain support in wider health circles, however, music therapy researchers could focus on developing indigenous theories concerning the relationship between health and the creative process in music, rather than borrowing physiological, sociological or psychological theories to explain their work. This is discussed further in the section concerning suggestions for further research. First, however, the methodological limitations of the study are highlighted.

Methodological Limitations

The limitations of this particular study relate to the general limitations of case study research, grounded theory, phenomenology and content analysis as well as to more specific limitations in the design of this particular study. These limitations are now discussed in turn, beginning with the general limitations associated with case study research.

Qualitative Case Study Research

Flyvbjerg (2006) emphasises the importance of case study research in developing concrete, practical and context-dependent knowledge. In relation to this idea, Aldridge (1996) suggests that:

“While each set of meanings is personal, and therefore unique, there is … awareness that we live in shared cultures and that we can share experiences and meanings with others” (p. 126).

Similarly, the context-dependent knowledge generated by this qualitative case study is not empirically generalisable yet the meanings derived from it can still contribute to the meanings developed by other researchers.

Interpretivist-constructivist Grounded Theory Analysis

This case study is not framed by the entire grounded theory research method. Due to the reality of the case under examination, involving small numbers of potential research participants, theoretical sampling was not a feature of the research and consequently there was no attempt to achieve theoretical saturation or generalisability. For the most part, however, this was due to the deeply interpretivist-constructivist epistemological stance underlying the research which emphasised the potential of grounded theory analysis to explicate processes over its capacity to make generalisable statements (Charmaz, 2005).
Grounded theory can be aligned with a multitude of subtle variations in epistemology, which leads to arguments concerning the types of limitations that can be attributed to grounded theory research. For example, Robertson (2009) suggests that grounded theory is “limited by its aspirations to consider primarily the emergent quality of the knowledge it seeks to produce. This can force the researcher into attempting to assume an unrealistic and inauthentic atheoretical position in relation to the data” (p. 403). This suggestion would be true of post-positivist grounded theorists who try to bracket out their biases and prior theoretical knowledge before examining the data in order to facilitate as inductive a process as possible. In contrast, Thomas and James (2006) reflect a more interpretive epistemology in their suggestion that there is lack of congruence between the formulaic method of analysis and the creativity and openness required for qualitative research. Charmaz (2005), however, clearly delineates between the method itself and the epistemological differences tolerated by grounded theory research, arguing that “the researcher’s unfolding interests shape the content of this activity, not the method” (p. 511). Herein lies the power of grounded theory to help construct creative and useful interpretations of phenomena that are grounded in a systematic method of analysis.

Within this particular research, there is a clear integration between faithful adherence to the stages of grounded theory analysis and interpretive creativity in the content of the theoretical explanations for each research question. Each stage of analysis has been outlined and transparently linked with sufficient data whilst the resultant theoretical content is presented as creative interpretations of this data. However, the use of focused research questions to guide the analysis resulted in the exclusion of certain categories that were less directly related to the research question, for example, the category “egolessness in the artists of the theatre company”. In one way, focused treatment of the data leads to a focused study; however, in another way, it limits the ways in which all data can contribute equally to the research.

*Phenomenological Analysis*

The phenomenological research method is based on a solid philosophical foundation; nevertheless, Polkinghorne (1989) describes two major limitations of the attempt to explore people’s experiences in depth. He suggests that because consciousness is fluid and ever-changing the conclusions drawn from phenomenological research can only be specific to the moment in time when the experience was shared. Moustakas (1990) extends this idea by not only acknowledging that the final summaries and distilled essences resulting from phenomenological research can only represent the time in which the experience was being examined but that they can also only ultimately represent the interpretation of the individual conducting the inquiry. Polkinghorne (1989) also highlights how phenomenological research does not lend itself to an exploration of the unconscious processes that lead to the person’s narrative of the experience.

Therefore, the individual summaries for each woman’s experience in this particular case are limited to the times when each woman expressed her experiences of the ten-week process during her interview with me as researcher. Furthermore, the summaries are
synopses of each woman’s experience rather than explanations of any underlying processes and they ultimately represent my interpretation, not those of the women. However, these limitations are directly aligned within interpretivist assumptions that an individual’s interpretations of moments in time can still be useful to other individuals in the construction of their own interpretations of similar phenomena.

**Qualitative Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a purely descriptive method; as with phenomenology, content analysis describes what is present in the data but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern (Krippendorf, 2004). The function of content analysis in this research was to help describe the patterns of attendance, creative events and significant events during the ten-week case. The reasons for these patterns, however, could only be suggested rather than confirmed by the content analysis. For example, attendance records indicated that the group constituents were established by session 12 while events recorded in the session notes indicated that session 12 was also an important session creatively and emotionally. Whether group formation was directly influenced by the creative and significant events of session 12, however, can only remain conjecture due to the limited capacity of content analysis to explore the underlying reasons for any identified patterns.

**The Research Design**

As is common in qualitative research, the research questions in this study continued to evolve well after data generation had been completed. In particular, the focus of this study on ‘therapeutic potentials’ emerged slowly throughout the entire research process. This resulted in a number of limitations to the research design. The evidence of therapeutic change for each woman in prison involved in the research may have been strengthened if interviews had also been conducted at the beginning of the creative process, before the performance and months after the performance. In particular, this may have enabled the therapeutic changes to be mapped more explicitly and their sustainability investigated. Furthermore, it may have been helpful in constructing an answer to the second research question if the research participants had been directly asked about the personal resources they thought were most important during their ten-week experience rather than to seek it in the data that had already been generated.

Some researchers suggest that the interview method can encourage research participants to report positive outcomes in an effort to please the researcher (Creswell, 1998; Fossey et. al., 2002). In this case, however, the pre-existing relationship between the interviewer and the participants seemed to facilitate disclosure and as researcher I did not sense that the participants were trying to please me. I prefaced each interview with a reminder that participants should be as honest as possible and that this was not an exercise in helping me to look good. However, the interviews with the women in prison were conducted two days after the performance when some of them were still obviously elated by their experiences performing and this would undoubtedly have influenced the positive tone of
their interviews. A more balanced perspective may have been achieved through conducting interviews at various points along the ten-week process.

Suggestions for Future Research

The emerging and evolving nature of this research continues well past the writing of the thesis. As many questions were sparked by the results as answers, especially in regard to the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music and other art-forms. Documented examples of outward-focussed music experiences, such as the case provided by this research, will continue to contribute to the development of Community Music Therapy where there is so much scope for considering music therapy practice afresh. The relationship between music therapy and Arts in Health practices will continue to be an important and current issue whilst the need for indigenous theory to balance the behavioural, sociological and medical perspectives in music therapy remains paramount. Most importantly, however, the dearth of research involving women in prison needs prompt attention.

Research in Community Music Therapy

Stige (2002b) suggests that the context-dependent knowledge accumulated from case studies is perhaps the most useful to contribute at this point in the development of Community Music Therapy theory. ‘Out and around’ approaches to music experience such as the one described in this particular case study still need investigation before general statements about the underlying principles of Community Music Therapy theory can be empirically made. Once there is comprehensive and sufficient examples of ‘out and around’ approaches to music experience in the music therapy literature, the spirit of inquiry will be able to shift focus toward generalising and validating the hypotheses generated by case studies involving outward-directed music activities such as performance.

In particular, future research into when ‘out and around’ and ‘inward and down’ approaches to music experience are most appropriate is recommended. The construct of ‘readiness’ could be explored in relation to this question. Furthermore, investigations into the therapeutic potentials of performance for systems broader than the individual will help music therapists to clarify their goals when incorporating performance into their practices.

Arts in Health

It is becoming more and more imperative to investigate the intersection between Arts in Health and music therapy practices, since there is an increasing number of anecdotes where employers are replacing music therapists with musicians or seeking clarification of the difference between the two professions. This case study represents the intersection between Arts in Health and music therapy, as it involves the work of a trained music therapist and a variety of artists who share the desire to help women in prison enhance their health while developing creatively. Future research is recommended into how
musicians and music therapists may differ in their practices and how they can work together for the health of their music participants. Furthermore, comprehensive investigations into the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music and other art-forms would also contribute to our understandings of how artists and arts therapists can work together for the therapeutic benefit of their participants.

**Indigenous Music Therapy Theory**

According to McFerran (2001), research into the indigenous aspects of music therapy practice is not only enjoyable, it is also crucial for the development of the profession. However, Ansdell (2003) argues that we need to find out what is ‘original’ to music before we can develop theories that originate from music therapy practice. The question of what is unique to music is extremely complex and answers may continue to be elusive, however it remains a worthy area to explore in music therapy research. This particular study presented initial forays into the unique therapeutic capacities of music by comparing the art-form to those of drama and visual art. The comparison, however, was limited to available data and consequently much more research is needed.

Early in discussions concerning indigenous music therapy, Bunt (1994) suggested that it would be important to focus on intuition, transcending reality and creativity in the music therapy experience in order to develop indigenous theory in music therapy. The results of this research suggest that the notions of transcending reality, expressed by Lucinda as finding “a window out … of the usual jail crap”, and creativity may be particularly useful guidelines in this endeavour.

**Women in Prison**

The dearth of research involving women in prison continues to influence the opportunities that are presented to them in their rehabilitation. There is a pressing need for research relevant to women in prison, not only in music therapy but in all areas related to forensic health and beyond. If we as a society are to fully embrace and facilitate the notion of rehabilitation for women in prison we as researchers must first help to address the silence typically accorded these women by facilitating collaborative and non-exploitative research in the area. Participatory action research would be an ideal framework for future research involving women in prison, however it may sometimes not be practical. Unfortunately, this approach to research was not feasible for the present study due to time constraints and a rapidly-changing population.

Since music therapy research involving women in prison is so sparse, perhaps the first step in developing knowledge is to provide as many case examples of women’s experiences with music while in prison. It would also be helpful if these cases were framed by a variety of theoretical orientations. Studies further in the future could build on the context-dependent knowledge generated by case studies with research designs that incorporate a capacity to generalise and test developing theories.
The Main Contributions made by this Research

This research has contributed three important understandings about the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music: 1) The use of musical action as therapy is a valuable approach to music therapy and other Arts in Health practices, 2) The use of performance is a particularly valuable way to encourage therapeutic change in outward directions, and 3) Music may be unique to drama and visual art in its potential to be a gentle form of exposure. While these understandings may be applied to many different people, this research examines the perspectives in terms of seven women in prison and therefore also contributes to the sparse literature concerning women in prison and also to feminist research in music therapy.

1) The use of musical action as therapy is a valuable approach to music therapy and other Arts in Health practices.

The results of this research suggest that musical action can be powerful as therapy. The two broad forms of musical action in this case were creating and performing music as a group, actions which stimulated myriad therapeutic potentials for the seven women in prison. Based on these two musical actions, the results of this research empirically support theories relating to the importance of ‘musicing’, that is, to the understanding that music is not just as an object but also an action which is inextricably tied to human contexts. It is not only music therapists who encourage people to be musically active; community musicians, artists in health settings and some community cultural development workers also focus on this issue. This research, then, also contributes to substantiating the work of these professionals, by presenting some of the health benefits associated with musical action.

The case in this research was centred upon musical activity, rather than verbally processing the musical action for psychotherapeutic purposes and in this way, the research also contributes to the literature concerning the use of music as therapy, by outlining certain therapeutic potentials that transcend those commonly associated with the approach, namely behavioural adaptation (Bruscia, 1998; Wheeler, 1983), supportive psychotherapy (Wheeler, 1983) or musical engagement (Bruscia, 1998). Ficken & Gardstrom (2002) lament the preponderance of activity-based approaches to music therapy in forensic settings; perhaps these laments would be misplaced if music therapists began to understand and document these activities in a way that conveys their deeper therapeutic value. This research contributes one such example.

2) The use of performance is a particularly valuable way to encourage therapeutic change in outward directions.

The results of this research suggest that musical performance is particularly powerful in propelling participants in therapeutic directions that are outward, by moving them from ‘inside’ places to ‘outside’ places (both symbolic and physical), from privacy to public, from solitude to togetherness, from self-focus to a focus on others and from subjective thought processes to objective thought processes. However, the enactment of these therapeutic potentials of performing is unique to each individual and depends on her capacities at the time for courage, readiness, exchange, support and trust. It is therefore
important that the music therapist does not assume the ultimate outcome when incorporating performance into her or his practice (McFerran, 2010).

The outward therapeutic directions that result when performance is used in health contexts requires music therapists and other arts workers to revision their ideas concerning ‘client-centred’ practice. The way that performance gathers momentum and requires the performers to orbit around its core means that clients are often no longer able to fully direct their therapeutic process and instead need to surrender control to something bigger than themselves. Ultimately, however, surrendering control in this way can be therapeutic and therefore still primarily serve the client.

3) Music may be unique to drama and visual art in its potential to be a gentle form of exposure.

The results of this research suggest that, when compared with drama and visual art in some cases, music may provide a middle road in terms of exposure. When compared with drama, music can cloak the naked word while music participants can hide behind their instruments. On the other hand, when compared with visual art, music can provide more opportunities for exposure through performances that require physical presence on stage. In this way, music can in some cases be described as a gentle form of exposure. The exception to this, however, is when singing is involved. Singing, in this case, was experienced as even more exposing than drama.

These results highlight both a potentially unique property of music and a common link with other art-forms. In this way, this research contributes understandings regarding the relationship between the therapeutic potentials of music, visual art and drama. In particular, the research emphasises the importance of the creative process in linking the arts therapies while providing common language and the potential to develop indigenous theories across the arts therapies.

Contributions to understanding women in prison.

This research contributes to the existing knowledge regarding the health concerns and potentials for women in prison. It highlights how the divide between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ can pervade the psychology of these women, and how music and other creative mediums can help to bridge that divide in both real and symbolic ways. In the case involved in this research, no therapeutic agenda was imposed upon the women nor any expectations that they would change. Consequently, the research also contributes to our understandings of the ways in which creative activity can meet women in prison where they are while encouraging certain changes if and when these women are ready. In this way, the research contributes an example of truly rehabilitative endeavour.

Contributions to feminist research in music therapy.

This research involves the participation of women only: seven women from prison, seven women from the theatre company, and a female researcher/musical director. Consequently, this research contributes certain understandings about women, for women, by women. The research has not involved an overt critique of patriarchy or power imbalance, nor has it focused on gender, race or class as systems of oppression.
Nevertheless, the research has been guided by feminist ideas in research, in therapy and in the intuitively feminist ideologies expressed by the artists of the theatre company. The research has been built on the notion of ‘woman’ as individually interpreted and larger than the discursive constructions used to describe it, and therefore it has presented a snapshot of the lives of seven different women and the ideas of seven others as transparently as possible so that the reader can elicit his or her own meanings regarding what it means to be a woman in prison, creating and performing music with others.

*The Therapeutic Potential of Creating and Performing Music with Women in Prison: Final Coda*

The purpose of this research was to explore the therapeutic potentials of creating and performing music with women in prison. This exploration has demonstrated that music-making can be a powerful and therapeutic activity for these women. Other people have suggested it can be a powerful and therapeutic activity for any human being (Elliot, 1995; Small, 1998), a suggestion which counter-acts the idea championed by Freud and echoed recently by Pinker that music is merely “auditory cheesecake” (Pinker, 1997, p. 534). The results of the present research suggest that, whether music-making occurs due to the involvement of a music therapist or a musician or whether it occurs without the presence of these professionals, making music will continue to play an important role in alleviating human suffering and enhancing human health.

"The music is rousing and the lyrics hopeful. The djembe-beat keeps us steady even though we’re racing for the finish. The dancers are dancing; the audience claps in time to the beat. The singers reach their final heights and with a resounding “Ohhhh” the music grinds to a halt.

The performance is over for another year.

I wonder if it will all have been worth it.

 Lucinda: “It was worth sticking your head out”

 Sarah: “I remembered I was human”

 Matilda: “It’s like coming home”

 Jane: “It gets me through the day because I play every day and it sometimes makes me think that I’m not in here”

 Majella: “I didn’t overcome my fears but I followed it through to the end”

 Spark: “I think it may have helped me through”

 Gillian: “I loved the way we all came together towards the end. We all gave it what we gave it, our best shot”.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is fitting that these acknowledgements are placed towards the end of the thesis, since I have been procrastinating from writing them for a long time. It is not that I have trouble thanking people; it’s just that I haven’t been ready to acknowledge that the end of this thesis means an ending of sorts for one of the most influential and important relationships in my life. I have already tried thanking my supervisor Dr Katrina McFerran in person and in a card but I was never able to find the words to truly convey my gratitude. I realised it was because I wasn’t quite ready to relinquish all the things I have cherished about our relationship: the speedy replies to any question I posed about music therapy, research, romantic relationships or the meaning of life; the generous guidance from someone who I trusted to have my best interests at heart; the ability to perceive the essence of my ramblings or my misdemeanours in the most positive but authentic of lights and to reflect these back to me in ways that made immediate sense; the shared ability to let loose on the dance floor; the forwarding of online horoscopes when they were most needed (we’re both Taureans); and the communication of a grounded, insightful, passionate and human way of understanding and working in music therapy. Why would anyone want to give this up, even if it did mean they never had to write such an elongated thesis ever again?! Recently I advised my young nephew that sometimes you have to let go of things in order to make room for something new. Dr Kat, I hope this ending of sorts signals a new relationship for you and me, one where there is far more dancing and horoscope sharing and untapped friendship … and far less thesis-writing!

I would also like to thank the fourteen women who gave so generously to this research. I learnt so much from you all, well before the formal research began. To the artists of the theatre company, you do such important but unsupported work. Thank the Goddess (as you would say!) for the fire in your bellies that sustains you in your vocation and sparks the same flame in me and many other people. To the women who were in prison when they participated in this research, thank you so much for your courage and generosity. Hopefully, your participation will benefit other women who follow. It was a privilege to work with you.

Thanks also to Denise Grocke, Helen Shoemark and Barb Daveson who took the time to debate research issues with me and to develop my thinking. Thanks to Meags for rising to the challenges during wine-soaked debates about whales, love and music therapy; sparring partners are the best sort. Thanks to Netti for indulging these debates while calmly eating her gnocchi. Thanks also to both of these women for friendship of the most nurturing and enduring kind. Another nurturing and enduring friend important to this research is Gerard Veltre, an inspiring and prolific artist and arts-worker. Thanks for the stimulating and impassioned chats, and the broadening of my ideas. And thanks for getting me into this work in the first place!

The support from my family has been vital. Thanks Mum for your curious, resilient and loving nature; you’re an intellectual and creative inspiration. Thanks Jane, for hearing that acronym over and over (PHD) without visibly tiring from it and for your clear
guidance when things became unclear. Thanks to Felix and Pooks for your obvious admiration at the number of pages I had written for my ‘story’; I hope you don’t beat my efforts too soon. Thanks also to Dad and Pam for always showing your interest in the healing potentials of the arts and for Honouring and engaging your own creative processes. And Annie and Poot, I love you both!

Finally, thanks to Julesy, aka. Dr Riviera, for your sustained, loving and stabilising presence throughout the three years of this research. You were always there as a reflector of ideas and container for tears. With you, I can do anything.
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APPENDIX 1 – Participant Information Statement for Women in Prison

Dr Katrina McFerran  
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Faculty of Music  
Ph: 8344-7382

Lucy O’Grady  
(PhD student)  
Ph: 0403-946-366

Project: Voice, song and performance with women in prison

Introduction
This statement is addressed to the women who are currently participating in music workshops at the prison.

The purpose of this research project is to explore whether women’s participation in music can improve their wellbeing while in prison. By sharing with others the example of the music program provided by Theatre Company, it is hoped that this research will contribute to the ongoing development of creative programs in prison settings. This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Melbourne.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to be involved, and you are already participating in music workshops, you will be asked to do two extra things. Firstly, we will record you singing at the beginning of the project and then after the performance has occurred. You and the researchers will listen to these recordings to see how or if your singing voice changes during the musical process. Secondly, we will ask you to participate in an informal interview with Lucy after the performance has occurred. The interview will probably last for approximately 30 minutes. Issues that are likely to be covered in the interview are:

- How you experienced the process of writing music/songs
- How you experienced performing
- How you think your voice has changed, if at all
- If you relate differently to your voice as a result of the process

The interview will be recorded in order to ensure that we make an accurate record of what you say. You are welcome to a copy of this transcript if you would like to check that the information is correct and / or request deletion.
How will your confidentiality be protected?

Your confidentiality and anonymity are unable to be protected due to the nature of this research. The small number of women who are likely to participate in the study means that you may be easily identified, even though we will refer to you with a pseudonym. As a result, you are advised not to disclose any confidential information, especially any illegal activities that have not been dealt with in court. This is especially important because there may be occasions where an obligation to report the disclosure of an unadjudicated offence overrides an undertaking to keep information confidential. You are also able to withdraw any unprocessed information at any time.

Are you obliged to participate in this study?

You are not. Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any processed information you have supplied, you are free to do so. Whether your decision is to participate, withdraw participation or forgo any involvement with the project, please be assured that neither your existing relationship with the student researcher or your participation in the program will be affected by your decision.

Where can you get further information?

If you need any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Katrina McFerran on the number above. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Official Prison Visitor or the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee, Department of Justice, 21/121 Exhibition St, Melbourne VIC 3000, Tel: 03 8684 1514, Fax: 03 8684 1525, Email: ethics@justice.vic.gov.au

How do you agree to participate?

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form. This information sheet provides all the information required and please feel free to ask either of the researchers any questions you may have about this information.
Consent form to participate in research

Voice, song and performance with women in prison

Researchers: Dr Katrina McFerran; Lucy O’Grady

Name of participant: ____________________________________________

- I consent to participate in the project named above. The particulars of this project, including interview questions, have been explained to me and included in the attached information sheet.

- I authorize the researchers to audio-record my singing voice and to ask me the interview questions referred to in the attached information sheet.

- I acknowledge that:
  - I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed information previously supplied;

  - The project is for the purpose of research.

  - I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded by the removal of my identity from the information as well as the implementation of computer passwords to any related files. I understand that confidentiality of the information is subject to any legal requirements.

  - While every attempt will be made to ensure confidentiality, it is possible that someone may be able to identify me due to the relatively small numbers of people in my community.

  - I have been warned not to disclose any illegal activities that have not been dealt with in court.

- I give consent that my singing voice and the interview will be audio-recorded to maximize accuracy.

- I give consent for this original form to be retained by the principal researcher and a copy to be left with me.

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: _______________
Witness’ name:_________________________________________

Witness’ signature:______________________________ Date: _____________

Witness’ address: _________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 3 – Participant Information Statement for the Artists of the Theatre Company

Dr Katrina McFerran  
(supervisor)  
Faculty of Music  
Ph: 8344-7382

Lucy O’Grady  
(PhD student)  
Ph: 0403-946-366

Project: Voice, song and performance with women in prison

Introduction
This statement is addressed to the artists who work with the theatre company.

The purpose of this research project is to explore whether women’s participation in music can enhance their wellbeing while in prison. By sharing with others the example of music within the processes of theatre company, it is hoped that the choices offered to women in prisons will be strengthened. This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Melbourne.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to be involved you will be asked to participate in an in-depth interview of between 30 and 90 minutes duration. Issues that are likely to be covered in the interview are:

- The principles that guide you in your work eg. Your views on creativity and wellbeing, your purpose
- How you think these principles contribute to the success of the theatre company
- How you think these principles contribute to wellbeing
- How your art-form fits within the processes of the theatre company
- How you see music fitting within the processes of the theatre company
- What aspects of the creative process ensure its success and what are the benefits of such a process
- What aspects of working towards a performance/exhibition ensure its success and what are the benefits

The interview will be recorded in order to ensure that we make an accurate record of what you say. You are welcome to a copy of this transcript if you would like to verify that the information is correct and/or request deletion.
How will your confidentiality be protected?

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be separated from any data you supply and will be kept in a password-protected computer file. The recorded interview and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Music for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity; however, you should note that as you are from a small professional community, it is possible that someone may be able to identify you.

Are you obliged to participate in this study?

You are not. Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. Whether your decision is to participate, withdraw participation or forgo any involvement with the project, please be assured that your existing relationship with the student researcher will not be affected.

Where can you get further information?

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either of the researchers on the numbers given above. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.

How do you agree to participate?

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form. This information sheet provides all the information required and you are advised to ask either of the researchers any questions you may have about this information.
APPENDIX 4 – Consent Form for the Artists of the Theatre Company

Consent form to participate in research

Voice, song and performance with women in prison

Researchers: Dr Katrina McFerran; Lucy O’Grady

Name of participant:________________________________________________________

- I consent to participate in the project named above. The particulars of this project, including interview questions, have been explained to me and included in the attached information sheet.

- I authorize the researchers to ask me the interview questions referred to in the attached information sheet.

- I acknowledge that:
  - I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed information previously supplied;
  - The project is for the purpose of research.
  - I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded by the removal of my identity from the information as well as the implementation of computer passwords to any related files. I understand that confidentiality of the information is subject to any legal requirements.
  - While every attempt will be made to ensure confidentiality, it is possible that someone may be able to identify me due to the relatively small numbers of people in my community.
  - I have been warned not to disclose any illegal activities that have not been dealt with in court.

- I give consent that the interview will be audio-recorded to maximize accuracy.
- I give consent for this original form to be retained by the principal researcher and a copy to be left with me.

Participant’s signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
### Appendix 5A - Table of codes and categories relating to the theoretical framework

Table 1: Categories, Codes and Data Relating to Central Category: “A Creative Journey”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A journey where?</strong></td>
<td>A journey through space, body, voice, story and feeling</td>
<td>It's about people meeting in a space, using their bodies, using their voice, using their stories and feeling, in a way, that they are able to just take step by step, before you know it, they look back and they've gone on a journey (artistic director\writer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An internal journey ‘home’, to the true self</td>
<td>It’s more an internal journey of discovery, really (visual artist). I think part of me felt like I was coming home (actorI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whose journey?</strong></td>
<td>An individual’s journey</td>
<td>It’s about doing something that brings you back to yourself a little bit more and what your true self is and from that, things come from that (actorI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A collective journey</td>
<td>The work is their own journey (visual artist). Each person has their own individual journey (choreographer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forwards</td>
<td>They’re all taking an individual journey (artistic director\writer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>So, for example, ***, she got out just before the show but her big journey for this year was to come back and be involved. Now it was huge for her to make that whole journey. (artistic director\writer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The direction headed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>My way is to work with people. If I were left to work something with myself it wouldn’t happen (CEO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The destination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>You’re observing to see how the process can go for us all to move forward (CEO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depth of journey</strong></td>
<td>Depends on the duration</td>
<td>If you’re starting off with a new group totally, it’s usually over nine months that you’re working quite intensively (CEO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depends upon whether or not participants are new to the experience</td>
<td>You do something and then usually someone from that goes on and then the next one is a bigger, more intense exploration (CEO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of journey</strong></td>
<td>Depends upon organisational</td>
<td>The process changes when you work with people time and time again because they know some of that structure (artistic director\writer).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This really frustrated me because we have been working up to an ‘imaginary’ performance for so long;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mom entum of journey
Gathers when participants make creative offerings
Speeds up closer to the performance

if it was postponed much longer I reckon the women just wouldn't believe that something would happen (session note data).

Once something comes out, I always find the first thing, the first scene, the first song, once you do that you've cracked something. People understand what it is and what is possible (artistic director\writer).

It was one of the kid’s poems got set to music that the whole thing just took off. So it’s the music that actually exploded everything there so that the other things could ride on that (CEO).

Especially towards the end with the performance, it was great just to keep it going and just maintain that to an extent where we were just rehearsing 24/7 (Sarah)

Table 2: Categories, Codes and Data Relating to Major Category: An individual’s creative journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readiness for journey</td>
<td>Influences how far an individual will travel</td>
<td>The women who are drawn to the creative process in the prison, they already have something in them that says to them, “I want to be developed. I’m in here and I need to be developed.” (visual artist). Sometimes some women get to that point and they don’t come back. They’re just not ready to make that transition into the next phase and that’s fine (visual artist).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Influences how far an individual will travel</td>
<td>A lot of it, once again, goes back to establishing trust and safety in a group. I always go back to that because I don’t think you’re going to get much if you don’t have that (actorIII).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal terrain traversed</td>
<td>Every individual’s journey and destination is different Travelling outside comfort zones is the key to moving forward</td>
<td>That was a really big learning for me in terms of different journeys (CEO). Ones that do tend to go beyond their comfort zone do tend to be creating a life away from the former lives that they’ve led (artistic director\writer). Also to work, obviously crossing many lines, the comfort zone is one of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge and discomfort may lead individuals to appear to be moving backwards</td>
<td>Depends upon how safe and normalized the experience is for an individual</td>
<td>Depends upon how ready the them (artistic director\writer). It’s a really consistent pattern where a new woman will reach that point and if she’s able to just work through it and have faith then she’ll make a massive breakthrough (visual artist). It has happened a couple of times where a woman comes into a class and reaches that critical moment I was telling you about and then they just can’t ... Sometimes it feels like it’s dangerous because actually what it’s doing is confronting the woman with her own mind. All the negative messages in her own mind are coming up big and strong and there have been times where you can feel it. It’s like this aura around the woman. You can feel it. All her self-doubt, all her loathing, all her negative inner stuff is going full bore and that’s when they can get really angry. And so, interestingly what happens is that all that inner talk comes up, faces them, they come face to face with it, and what happens with that moment like I said before, is really critical, but there are times when women have confronted that aspect of themselves and can’t cope with it. They have to leave (visual artist). I always say it’s amazing how many times this has happened. I always say, “Look, this is really normal. You’ve gotten to a kind of a moment in the process where you need to put that critical voice inside your head that’s rampant, put it into a cupboard in your mind and lock the door and trust the process. Give yourself a bit of breathing time. Relax and then come back and keep going.” And I always say this is normal. Every artist goes through this process (visual artist). She has said to me on a number of occasions that it was the art class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
individual is to change that changed her life, changed her attitude, gave her that key, that thing to hold onto, at a point in her life when she was obviously ready to change (visual artist).

Table 3: Categories and Data Relating to Major Category: A Collective Journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a Safe Space</td>
<td>Is integral to the journey</td>
<td>A lot of it, once again, goes back to establishing trust and safety in a group. I always go back to that because I don’t think you’re going to get much if you don’t have that. I think as artists we all are very good at, I mean in Somebody’s Daughter, we are very good at doing that because we know that that has to be established. It does have to be established to get where we want to be with them (actorIII). You create the space for people to feel safe and that they are, even if they say “I can’t do something” they’re still willing to try and I</td>
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</table>

Experience on the journey Learning about oneself

I guess it’s building people up in a way that they say “Yes, I can do something, I can do that. I can do this” (artistic director\writer). For that person to see that they are unique and they have worth and they can contribute in a creative way is an absolute gift (actorIII). You see a certain journey of people who didn’t previously have aspirations or didn’t really see a future, you know, slowly start to want things for themselves (visual artist). It’s natural that they may be feeling what they might be able to get back from the world but the transition from that kind of thinking to perhaps what they can give (choreographer). I think initially when I started doing the work I think a lot was about me and my own journey and that’s shifted, that shifted, and it’s become about other people (actorI). Looking outside themselves, I suppose (actorII).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creates equal opportunities for individuals to access their creative potential</td>
<td>Can take months or years. By not setting people up to fail. No observation by outsiders. Requires no judgement of self or others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                              | think, by meeting in that framework of the arts as the driver you have the potential and the possibility to do amazing things (artistic director/ writer). If you’re creating a space where people feel safe, you’re setting up the platform for that equal space to actually happen (CEO). And that’s not something that happens over night. It’s not something that happens over a couple of weeks. It’s something that happens over months or a couple of years (actorIII). The other thing is, in terms of the performance, not being tokenistic with people and letting them think that something is going to be valid or that people will, when it’s not, or letting people off the hook with ... not letting them off the hook with patronizing “Ok it’ll work”, when it wont. Not patronizing them or allowing them, you know. A lot of people want to take on stuff that they can’t, that emotionally they can’t, so finding ways that that can be handled as well (CEO). They hopefully trust that they will be all right up there and this is where we come in too. If they’re not, then we have to use our skills to get them out (actorIII). We also work with where people are at and encourage them to go slightly further but we don’t ask them to come in and then suddenly we don’t know the script but we’re going to do a piece of Shakespeare. And you’re going to do such and such. Now they might be able to do it brilliantly, I’m not saying that, but we don’t set up that. We don’t set people up to do something that they’re not at that stage to do (artistic director/ writer). There’d be no coming in and observing and standing around. If you’re going to be there, I’ve known in the past other workers have come in and they’ve brought a participant but that worker has to participate as well (actorIII). It’s also the atmosphere which the theatre company creates, ‘cause I think it’s a very open atmosphere and also enables for people to go up and down and so, it’s also a non-
|                                              | |

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<p>| <strong>Is enhanced if artist is open and uninhibited</strong> | judgemental environment so I think that all the participants feel really safe, so there’s a lot of trust (choreographer). Probably not to judge someone else’s voice. And not judge themselves, ‘cause that’s a hard thing, because I think people want things to be perfect and all nice (actorI). What you’d wish for someone is that they find some contentment and fulfillment within their lives and if it means that they’re actually going to be a moderate heroin user for the rest of their lives and they’re happy with that, so be it. OK, whatever it is, without judgement, it’s hard not to judge by our standards where people are at, but whatever it is they’re finding, you don’t know when it’s going to be that time (artistic directorwriter). That sense of being able to tap into what they’re doing in a non-judgemental environment (visual artist). The creative space is an equal space. Whatever happens in that happens, but there’s the potential, there’s the, it is, there’s a particular non-judgement in that space that is in every other space (CEO). |
| <strong>Is especially important in prison</strong> | I think with our processes at times for people who haven’t been through that process it can be intimidating. And so, therefore, I don’t mind putting myself on the line and looking a bit silly or trying something that even I haven’t done in a group before to show other people that you just have to take that first step and that hopefully people in the group feel safe enough that they can do that. I think a lot of that comes back to trust and feeling safe (actorIII). |
| <strong>Enables people to move from thinking to playing</strong> | Well, I reckon, particularly in such a stressful environment as a prison, that to be able to go somewhere safe and to kind of go into themselves, I mean, it’s good for all of us, basically, but particularly in really stressful environments (visual artist). Once they’re in their body it’s actually a bit of trick because they’re actually now going, “OK, I’m not thinking about what I’m necessarily doing, so all I’m doing is playing. I’m playing |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devising the story</th>
<th>Process of exchange between writer and participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writer reflects material back to group</td>
<td>What you tend to find with a new group is it’s what’s sitting there, what is actually there for that, what story needs to come out (artistic director\writer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual negotiates content with writer</td>
<td>Like ***, as an example, she freaked. Seeing it in the written form she freaked out cos yes, it was what she said plus a bit of dramatic license but it was actually the key things she said but she didn’t know then that that was actually making it real for her. Now, am I going to say that? And then you have a process of negotiation because it’s not about us placing somebody up there when they’re too vulnerable, they’re in a place where they’re going to be revealing too much (artistic director\writer).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiating enables participant to feel safe</td>
<td>She came back and she said, “Yep, I’m going to do that” and she tweaked a couple of words or whatever. It was a very empowering moment for her (artistic director\writer).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writer must balance truth with vulnerability</td>
<td>It’s making sure that, is it really the story they want to tell. Now there are elements in there that embellish that story and make it better but as long as the core story is coming from some part of their being and there’s a belief in that and there’s enough of a belief from us (artistic director\writer).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empowering process Based on truth of participant’s life stories</td>
<td>I think because it’s true. It’s getting people’s truth (artistic director\writer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer captures people’s ‘true’ voice</td>
<td>What ensures its success is keeping the truth of the stories. So, yeah, it’s the fact that all of it comes from their personal worlds and that each individual feels comfortable with what’s being talked about or what’s being said (choreographer). Particularly with her scripting, she gets a certain type and style of how people speak and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Character provides helpful distance</td>
<td>the way in which they present stuff and I find that brilliant (actorII). What is their particular voice and then what could they then maybe fit into as a character on that level?(artistic director\writer). It’s based on the truth, but it’s extrapolated out so that they can hang something on a character so that they’re not feeling that they’re playing something that’s absolutely totally them, raw in the person (artistic director\writer). The story is the thing, the show becomes the thing but you have to work very hard to make sure that individual’s personalities, egos and whatever don’t become bigger than that. That is the thing to make the group work towards that story and what it is (artistic director\writer). So, that’s activating their creative selves but not in an egocentric way. They’re actually part of a group and they’re able to work collaboratively and it’s not about them. It’s about the bigger picture (visual artist). That whole thing with the drama stuff, everyone has to do things together and there’s that whole thing of working together, there’s a particular relinquishment and also a particular abandonment in many ways of a feeling (CEO). When I was in jail the first time, the reason I went through that is because you’re working with a group. So, you’re, and if you become involved in that then you can’t let that down. So, it becomes bigger than your panic (laughs). So, it doesn’t feel like there’s much of a choice (actorI). If you do pull out, like when one of the women in the prison decided not to do it and everyone was sort of a bit flabbergasted. She sort of had time to think about it and came back in saying she realized she was letting people down (actorII). It doesn’t help people to be victim. It doesn’t help people to be always hitting against the system and I think that in the process often there’s that way of finding that you can have a</td>
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<tr>
<td>The group serves the story</td>
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<tr>
<td>The individual serves the group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try not to reinforce a ‘victim’ voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artists drive the aesthetic standards</td>
<td>very powerful voice without having to be the person that’s seen as the madwoman, hysterically ranting and raving, you know? So it’s important that, whatever the story is, that it’s not seen as the victim. You know, what I’m trying to say, so much within the prison is the “I hate this, I hate that, I hate establishments”. It’s important that there’s a balance so that if you’re saying “Yeah, we do want a different way”, one, that people have the sympathy that you want create a different way for these individuals but two - that you’re positing something (CEO). It’s like that energy for people to be as good as possible. And also the other thing is, the best that you can. It’s not a token thing, I don’t think for anybody working in the theatre company that any of the work is token. It’s not about “Isn’t it good for them?” It’s about something that not only gives them dignity but reflects that huge spirit (CEO). I think, my motto has always been close enough is never good enough. I think you always go for the best, the best that you could ever possibly do. It’s not good to say we’ll just wing that. There are elements where you have to cut corners but not with the essential things. It must be the best and I think that’s a driver. That’s a really strong driver (artistic director\writer). I used to say, “Oh we all did it. We all did it.” And in fact, we didn’t all do it. The artist is why it happens and that’s another really important thing in this work (CEO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ownership is acknowledged</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performing the story</td>
<td>The culmination/melding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushes people to a new level</td>
<td>Provides a climax to</td>
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<tr>
<td>If we get to performance there’s a completion of process (actor\II). I think the whole rumble and tumble of when you get the thing coming together, and it is a push and a shove, the final product is the melding for me (CEO). I believe by the fact of placing a deadline for an outcome you pushed people to a level even with their songs, with they way their music was coming along, that they wouldn’t have got to otherwise (artistic director\writer). Having a show is the climax of the year. It’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the journey and shapes momentum</td>
<td>the, I think if we didn’t have that we’d puddle along (visual artist). There’s an outcome, there’s a big outcome, there’s a build-up (actorIII). Because there’s something, when it comes to performance, and when you’ve got the whole group together working on one thing, there’s something that’s created that sort of invigorates people. Yeah. It’s so focused. So, it’s hard when you’re not doing stuff like that because you feel like you’re just getting through (actorI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enables participants to give to others</td>
<td>They realize that not only telling their stories, they’re also giving back something to the community by allowing, whether it be one individual in the audience, to identify with the stories (choreographer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforces through the power of being witnessed</td>
<td>They need to be witnessed. Hence, the whole ritual thing, witness that experience. That forces people into taking action, to doing, to moving (artistic director\writer).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforces ideas and behaviours</td>
<td>There is an energy in performance and you can be reinforcing that for someone. And you can actually be laying a pattern for them to tread. And what I have seen a couple of times now that when people have actually traced a vision or a dream strongly in performance, they go out and live it (artistic director\writer). She got a lot of positive feedback on it (actorII).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affords the opportunity to receive positive feedback</td>
<td>When you’ve got, at the conference that we did recently, and you’ve got people who are on the parole board, people who are working in corrections coming up and saying, “I feel so dumb, I didn’t understand.” How long have they been working in there? We get that every time (CEO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces ignorance</td>
<td>There’s always that adrenalin stuff too, that you, you know. So, you can enjoy that, even though you want to be sick sometimes (actorI). Before a performance, as the audience are coming in, I’m going “What the f**k am I doing this for?” and I get so nervous and I’m about to vomit and I’m swearing off-set. Because it’s a roller-coaster. Live performance is a roller-coaster and once that starts you’re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases positive experiences with adrenalin</td>
<td>Is anxiety-inducing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forces women to be vulnerable

Challenges performers to stay in the moment

May be particularly difficult performing to prison guards

Affords feelings of courage and pride

Table 4: Codes and Data Relating to Beliefs about Creativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The benefits of creativity</td>
<td>Humans are meant to be creative</td>
<td>I think that that’s what humans are supposed to do, is express themselves and be creative and artistic (actorI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oppression or abuse or pain threatens creativity</td>
<td>If you come from a place where you’re oppressed or abused or you’ve been deprived and all that sort of stuff and you become cold like that and you’re not getting in touch with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

on it and that’s it and you can’t get off and you think, “Right, I’m here for an hour twenty” whatever it is and here we go. But that sort of terror only really lasts just before you go on (actorII).

I think with performance you can’t hide. You’re totally vulnerable. You’re totally vulnerable up there (actorII).

Live performance is like a tightrope and so it’s just like, it really is like *** says, it’s moment by moment. If you stuff up in that moment don’t hold onto that moment and don’t beat yourself up for the next three scenes ‘cause that moment’s gone. So, it’s real moment by moment stuff where you’re actually right in that moment and that’s all you can worry about (actorII).

In the prison, the reason I had difficulty in doing the performance stuff is because you’re putting so much and so many guards up to protect yourself and all of a sudden you’re up there performing in front of people who you don’t necessarily want to show anything to. So, that’s a difficult thing. I didn’t want any officers to see that I was human in any way and had any, you know. So, I think that’s hard (actorI).

Participants who may have been in one performance they come back to do it again because they get the experience and understanding of what it is to get out there in front of people and what an amazing skill that is, yeah, and that not everybody can do it so it’s to feel that courage and to feel proud of themselves (choreographer).

Table 4: Codes and Data Relating to Beliefs about Creativity
| Creativity can become a need | any of that part of yourself (actorI). I put my creativity into my garden. I’ve got to do something with it otherwise I’d be sad, I would. If I wasn’t doing something I’d go insane (visual artist). The soul needs to be fed through the creative (actorII). Freeing yourself up a little bit more so your guards drop (actorI). You become more of who you are, and what you’re naturally meant to be, rather than someone who is wounded, you know? (actorI). So, this is an alternate way of processing a whole lot of stuff that’s going on in their lives (visual artist). I think because you’re sharing stories so that part of understanding other people, understanding yourself a little bit more (actorI). When I joined the group I was in prison ... It’s almost like I felt alive, doing it (actorI). A belief in the potential and wonder of the human being, of every human being (CEO). She hadn’t done much art since high school but she actually said to me, “If I had discovered I had this talent I wouldn’t have done what I did. I would have pursued the creative part of myself.” (visual artist). The energy’s transformed. Therefore it’s not going to be expressed in a negative or destructive way. It’s actually a creative process. I think it’s highly important because it takes them out and puts them in a different space for x amount of time (actorII). Creativity is a great equalizer and I think it can cross boundaries of class, of money, of power (CEO). |
| Creativity can make you less guarded | |
| Creativity strengthens healthy parts of the self | |
| Creativity can be an alternative way to process stress | |
| Creativity can help you understand yourself and others | |
| Creativity is humanising, nourishing and enlivening | |
| Creativity transforms negative energy | |
| The opposite of destructive | |
| It affords new spaces | |
| Creativity is an equaliser | |
| The arts in particular | Participation in the arts can make tangible and practical changes Participation in the arts is humanising for people | They also have the capacity to really tangibly and practically make real change in people’s lives (CEO). From what I’ve seen, and what I’ve experienced myself, that doing the work of the drama and the art and music, that there’s a real personal understanding of how you can become more human, how doing these things |
| **Humanising capacities of the arts are especially important for women in prison** | allow you to be more human, especially coming from a situation where you’ve been dehumanized (actorI).  
It’s the arts that can bring about where you can actually meet as human beings to human beings (actorI). |
| --- | --- |
| **Creativity is not therapy** | I’ve observed, it’s a very healing process (visual artist).  
Whether one uses the word ‘therapy’ is debatable but I just know that it has very positive effects. It’s really good psychologically and emotionally and creatively and personally and physically (visual artist).  
We’re meeting as equals and artists as equals, so it’s not like “I’m helping you to do stuff”, you’re meeting on equal ground (actorII).  
The women in the prison are no different to you and I and I feel that I’m equal with them but what makes that very shaky is that I can leave the prison and I’ve got choices (actorIII).  
You have more skills, I have more skills. We all have heart and we all have soul (CEO).  
Art is art, music is music, drama is drama, because I think if you bring any other processes into that, you muddy the waters (CEO).  
It’s no longer us playing together, singing together; there’s actually another agenda (CEO).  
People get caught up in probably the way you’re meant to be with people, like, if you’re working professionally and cut themselves off on a certain level and I don’t think there’s a, there’s a point where you’re not relating to someone as an equal, or a human being (actorI).  
And that’s not being taken for a ride, either. That’s seeing people and, you know … Yeah, I think a lot of people in that sort of work just cut themselves off on a certain level (actorI).  
I think that’s why I’m so insistent, and I didn’t know why I was so insistent for so long, about the whole therapy thing. Cos if you are putting that in there you’re saying that there has to be some sort of observation. So working as an artist you’re observing, but you’re not...
observing to plot the individual’s health (CEO).

Table 5: Codes and Data relating to The Prison Environment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Data</th>
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<tr>
<td>The prison environment</td>
<td>Tricky</td>
<td><em>I think it’s a very tricky area for people to be going into</em> (CEO).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dehumanising</td>
<td><em>In the prison, you’ve got individuals where everything’s been taken away from them, you know, even their liberty, their right to choose when they go back to their room, everything (CEO).</em></td>
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<td>Low, dense,</td>
<td><em>The women in prison vibration is very low, it’s very dense, it’s very negative, it’s very dark, and there’s a lot of pain (artistic director\writer).</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>negative,</td>
<td><em>The prison has it’s own dynamic and it eats people and it eats people’s souls and I think the whole pain level, psychic pain level, it can devour people (M).</em></td>
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<td>dark and</td>
<td><em>You’re putting so much and so many guards up to protect yourself (actorI).</em></td>
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<td>pained energy</td>
<td><em>Such a disparate environment and over the year where there’s a whole lot of other things going on (artistic director\writer).</em></td>
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<td>disparate</td>
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<td>Women in prison</td>
<td>Diagnoses</td>
<td><em>Hopefully she doesn’t fall into whatever hole she fell into in order to get into prison (visual artist)</em></td>
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<td>unknown by</td>
<td><em>Clearly there’s some, there’s something that went wrong for her to end up in prison (visual artist).</em></td>
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<td>People that have lives changing every day and attention spans of a bumble bee (artistic director\writer).</td>
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<td>Often the women are so grateful to be able to do this, to go through this process that they’re quite humble about it, if you know what I mean. They don’t start off with the “I’m a great artist and I’m going to achieve these amazing things”. They come at it from a very different perspective (visual artist)</td>
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<td>This notion that people, because they’re in prison are not as much as, whatever it is, in terms of the power to create, the power to think, the whatever, is nonsense (CEO).</td>
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<td>People have, in the main within the prison system, have been sexually abused, sometimes horrifically,</td>
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<td>relationship with voice and body due to abuse</td>
<td>sometimes, most emotionally and physically abused (artistic director\writer). And then you’ve got the whole physical stuff that’s happening with the massage or with a game, where it’s such a, you know, for so many people they can’t bear all that, it’s been a violation and you can’t trust. They’re inextricably tied (CEO). The prison has always been full of people coming and going, court cases, losing custody of their child, all these things that are bigger than them, bigger than our group (artistic director\writer). They’re not all that confident about themselves and they usually say “I can’t draw. I’ve never been able to draw. I don’t have any abilities.” (visual artist) The women usually come in with no previous experience or a really negative experience of themselves (visual artist) The only thing that works for me in theatre is an actor’s honesty, and you get that in buckets within the prison (CEO). The women within the prison had a particular capacity to just go with stuff that I would never ever have (CEO). When you’re working with professional actors most of your work often is to take away their guises, to take away their protection. Working in there you’ve got that, you don’t have any barriers to that, you’re just skilling them up in a particular way (CEO). She came to the class every week and it was clear that it was a real refuge for her, which is what happens (visual artist). Sometimes they, maybe a lot of the time the women think “It’s a piece of cake. Easy-peasy.” But it’s not, because they’re going to come up against a lot of shit in themselves (visual artist).</td>
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<td>Facing bigger issues than SDT program</td>
<td>Have often had no previous experience with arts</td>
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<td>Have few pretences</td>
<td>Can be open to trying things</td>
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<td>Need to build skills rather than strip away guises</td>
<td>Can experience SDT as a refuge from prison</td>
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<td>Can see involvement as easy way out of work</td>
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Appendix 5B – Transcript of Interview with the CEO of the theatre company

How about we start off with the main principles that you think guide the work?

I think the main principle that guides the work for me, and that’s come through over a number of years, it’s certainly not where I started, but the main principles that guide this work is that, for me, I believe that creativity, working in the arts, is actually possibly the only point of equal meeting ground for people that come from really disadvantaged, institutionalized backgrounds. So, specifically working in the prison, you’ve got individuals where everything’s been taken away from them, you know, even their liberty, their right to choose when they go back to their room, everything, and also there’s a number of labels put upon them. And what one of the profoundest learnings I think of my existence has been that learning where we are all, that could be me, that could be anyone, and it’s the arts that can bring about where you can actually meet as human beings to human beings. In that situation there, I don’t know of any other points where, for people coming into the prison, where there’s no power imbalance of some kind. So because of the process, and I would hope it’s because of the creative process, it does create a situation where everybody is on the same playing field. It does have the dynamic that you’d have in a theatre company or you know, you’d know much more about the music situation, but you all have your particular role and it’s a very equal role within that. And the reason that I insist, one of the things, another learning has been for me is this whole thing of art is art, music is music, drama is drama, because I think if you bring any other processes into that, you muddy the waters. It’s no longer us playing together, singing together; there’s actually another agenda. The other thing for me with that is, cos I can remember in the first sessions when I went into the prison when I was at the college of performing arts and we thought our shit didn’t stink, really, but going into the prison and you suddenly realize that the women in there are probably more talented, more spirited. You know, and they were much more middle class too, and they got put up on the drug things but, you know, this notion that people, because they’re in prison are not as much as, whatever it is, in terms of the power to create, the power to think, the whatever, is nonsense and that’s what I’ve always found. Another strong learning for me was that the women within the prison had a particular capacity to just go with stuff that I would never ever have, and that’s probably why they, you know, they have nothing to hang on to. I remember saying to someone, “I could never trust that there’d be someone to catch me if I fell,” basically, and someone said “Who told you, why did you think there’d be anyone there in the first place?” And that was a really big learning for me in terms of different journeys. So the biggest thing for me in this work, apart from the joy, I actually love storytelling. I love people’s stories, the only thing that works for me in theatre is an actor’s honesty, and you get that in buckets within the prison. When you’re working with professional actors most of your work often is to take away their guises, to take away their protection. Working in there you’ve got that, you don’t have any barriers to that, you’re just skilling them up in a particular way. Um, I love the spirit, I love, and their stories interest me. That’s the other thing, the stories interest me. So, there’s all of that. The other main driving thing for me is that, I think because this company’s been going for so long, because it came before the time where there was talk of rehabilitation, because it came before the time where bureaucracy wanted to own everything, um I think
the theatre company is probably one of the only organizations whose primary responsibility is to the community of women. We work very well in collaboration with management but our community is the women, that’s who we’re working with, so I think there’s something, I don’t know whether it’s defiant stubbornness that really wants to keep that going, because I know as an organization if we were going in now it would be a very different ball game. Our responsibility would be to answer to management so there’d be a number of terms that would be put on the work which would disagree, would conflict with the major ethos of this company. So in having said that the company is certainly very aware, and we’ve learnt a lot in terms of respect and how you work and just the, how much you have to give, and all of that, respect, integrity, all of that within the prison system and also what to look out for when people are coming into this work because it can be such a mind, I think it’s a trap, if you’re not – the prison has it’s own dynamic and it eats people and it eats people’s souls and I think the whole pain level, psychic pain level, it can devour people. So I think it’s a very tricky area for people to be going into. So I think, anyway, the major thing for me is that creativity is a great equalizer and I think it can cross boundaries of class, of money, of power, you know, and when you’ve got, at the conference that we did recently, and you’ve got people who are on the parole board, people who are working in corrections coming up and saying, “I feel so dumb, I didn’t understand.” How long have they been working in there? We get that every time. So, that’s another driving thing for me. When I first started it was just the love of it, then realizing how you have this incredible privilege of contacting people and you have the capacity to open a door that you can’t through a written paper, you can’t through a verbal speech, you can’t through however much intellectual education, but if you can get something to work on that creative platform you’ve done what might never happen in a lifetime. And that’s across the board again, to people who’ve never been to theatre, to people who hold the highest positions. And you might not get the change, you won’t get the change immediately, and it probably wouldn’t be for an organization like us, but ten years down the track or in your work practice or … like, the shadow minister who came to see the show in 2000. He made a commitment that his party would not block any money for post-release services. That was after seeing the play. So that kind of thing, so you have the personal, you have the, whatever you want to call it, political, all of that stuff. So that’s really driving for me. The other big thing that has grown for me is wanting to have a company where people have, cos I think that the artist working in this area is a particular artist. It’s an artist that’s not attached to their work in a particular ego way. Of course, everybody has ego. I agree with that totally, but it’s not about you. It’s always about someone else. In the end, the work is about you using your skills and your artistry to bring other people forward. Not every person can do that. And that doesn’t mean that anyone’s stronger or weaker, it’s just who we are and the big thing for me, a more of a driving thing for me is to have a company where those individuals who have a capacity to work like that can come in and find somewhere where they can walk their path, because most projects are what I call hit and run, the short-term thing. And that brings me to another thing which I think I’m much more passionate about, um, that to be able to lead or to be able to be creating legacies of work where people can see the impact over time. So with the work we do with young people, it’s much easier to see when you can layer an education where the arts are leading, again, when you can layer an education, what the arts can do that nothing else can do. And that’s a primary belief that I
have, that the arts have a capacity to transform and to do all these wonderful things and all of the airy fairy things we talk about, and they also have the capacity to really tangibly and practically make real change in people’s lives, if you can work in with other agencies and in other partnerships, as long as you’re not sacrificing your principles, and for my money, as long as the arts are leading. So, there’s those three, I’d say there the three things, there’s the overriding thing of where it’s an equal meeting ground, the whole thing of a passage for artists and then the other thing where the arts can do things that nothing else can do. So, I think in the prison work, that happens in very small ways because the company is small, so the women who have come through and have used it and they use other things, but the women who have principally used the theatre company and have been passionate, well not passionate, they’ve been single-minded about that, have managed to make huge transformation in their life. And ideally in time I’d like to see that we were able to do more with that, working with justice but um, that would take a lot of time. So …

I have lots of questions.

Yeah, go, go.

OK, the first thing’s about creativity. So, you’ve said that it’s the equal meeting ground and that sort of stuff. On a practical level, how do you see creativity when you work with women in prison? So, for instance, this year, I actually found that they were all really wanting to be creative by themselves but in a group situation it was basically me being creative, you know, I was getting their stories and showing them how it can be done but it was like really dragging the creativity out of people. How important do you think it is that they actually experience being creative?

Oh, I think it’s a process. I actually think it’s the process and you’ll get it in small .. and I think and I don’t know, Lucy, but I think that the drama process too might be, I don’t know if it’s a bit different and this might be, again, you can dialogue on this one. Because that whole thing with the drama stuff, everyone has to do things together and there’s that whole thing of working together, there’s a particular relinquishment and also a particular abandonment in many ways of a feeling. Because no-one is going to be allowed to be the person that takes the forefront and I think that over the process, and you know what I find it’s like, cos if you’re working with a group of students at the the college of performing arts you’d still find the same thing. You’d still find the same thing where you have to be the impetus for it to come forth and then build upon it. I think and I don’t want to confuse that, cos that was another big learning for me. I used to say, “Oh we all did it. We all did it.” And in fact, we didn’t all do it. The artist is why it happens and that’s another really important thing in this work. And still I would maintain that in the space that has been set up for whatever’s going to happen it is equal. It is a particular, even though you might be driving it, even though your energies, cos that’s another big thing, your energy has to hold it, and these are all intangibles, and that’s why it’s so tiring and not every, you know, it’s a unique thing that people have, but I still think that if you’re holding the energy, if you’re creating a space where people feel safe, you’re setting up the platform for that equal space to actually happen. And people will come in different stages. When I
talk about an equal meeting ground I’m not talking about meaning everybody’s just equally there. I’m talking about the space is created for, they might not be making the offerings but they’re still in that space, they still are, it’s still an equal space. You have more skills, I have more skills. We all have heart and we all have soul. So what’s been created is a space where that can come into play and there’s no judgement on that. So, I’d have to, I mean it’s a, I know what you’re getting at, and I know that still happens, that still happens at the the college of performing arts. There’s more offerings, and more offerings, and more offerings, but you still have to bring it all together. So, I’m not saying that, I would never say that someone’s creativity is equal to this or that because you can’t go into there. All I’m saying is that the creative space is an equal space. Whatever happens in that happens, but there’s the potential, there’s the, it is, there’s a particular non-judgement in that space that is in every other space. There’s a particular labeling in every other space, isn’t there? And I think that’s why I’m so insistent, and I didn’t know why I was so insistent for so long, about the whole therapy thing. ‘Cause if you are putting that in there you’re saying that there has to be some sort of observation. So working as an artist you’re observing, but you’re not observing to plot the individual’s health. You’re observing to see how the process can go for us all to move forward, for us all to create together for all of us. So, I mean, it’s separating all of that, but I think, yeah.

That’s great. The other thing you mentioned about the artist and the ego. I’m very interested in that. You know the Artist’s Way?

Yeah, I’ve started it but I never finish anything.

It’s very good but there’s one thing that gets me and it’s where she’s talking about, if you’re teaching music or drama or if you’re being a music therapist or something, you’re actually not honouring your art as much as you should be because you’re giving it away.

You see, I’d find that very difficult. Cos I’m a person, and I’m a six, I go back to more cosmic things as well, my way is to work with people. If I were left to work something with myself it wouldn’t happen, and there’s a number of artists if you like that would be, well, I would term them artists. That definition of an artist would be someone who only worked for themselves. And that, that’s an interesting thing if you put the term ‘community artist’ in there, and I fought that term for years cos I was so sick of it, there was such an association with their stuff as shit and then there was a term and we were part of that term, where we were like, hang on, this is where stuff is happening, and look, I just think that it’s where your art-form lies. I couldn’t agree with that at all and then you’re trying to section off creativity into different pies.

Yep. Do you feel that it is necessary for all your artists to nurture their own creativity by themselves?

I would like that. Ideally, if people could it would be good.

And why is that?
Why is that? Because I think there’s a part of your own soul. And that can be different things. I mean, say for me, everything I’ve been asked to do outside the company has in the end involved the company. I think ideally it would, this is the thing we find all the time, that people don’t have much left over. And it would, and even at points though, cos the other thing I think with this work too, Lucy, is that people have, it brings more of them, so people usually have, it’s like, I don’t want it to sound like a mission, it’s like you have to have something else, even if you can’t name it. I didn’t know that I had social justice principles, I was trained, I was brought up a Catholic, so you know, if you look at all the catholic principles. That satisfies me, it satisfies me in a way, and I’d say that everybody in the company, whether you want to call it spiritual principles, social justice or political, has that fire in the belly, and has that fire in the belly about everybody being equal and everybody’s rights for, you know, and a belief in the potential and wonder of the human being, of every human being. So, and I think that that, being able to, it becomes like the wheel. I was thinking about the show, I was thinking about the Gatwick show, and I was thinking there are so many elements that came into play in the final product that satisfy that fire in your belly so that it becomes a circular thing. So, while I think it’s very, cos the other thing way with replenishment for me is this, is the ocean, is whatever. I think that while in an ideal world and it would look good because it’s kind of like the equation that fits, that the artists in fact go and do a workshop in theatre or go and work with Cirque du Soleil or whatever, again, I believe as individuals we find our own way and we blunder but there are different ways of refuelling. So, in an ideal company, and if we were ideally resourced, I’d love to say “OK, for a month someone’s going over here or to be somewhere else,” without constraints. We can’t do that. That’s left up to the individual. Most artists are poor. Most artists in the company are so caught up in the work that they do that, when we say, think about a submission for professional development, they don’t have time to do that, or you know, so all of those things. So, look, it’s a very long way of saying, yeah, it could be very ideal and what I’ve noticed with the people in this field, particularly people who find, cos the other thing that I think, and this is just a new articulated thought for me, I think you can find a home in a particular thing, so you can think, OK hang on, I’m happy working, although I get tired and I know I’ll get burnt out and frustrated, I’m happy working with women in prison and I’m happy working with these kids and I know if I look at it that’s what I want to do. And yes, I do need a holiday, or I would like to do something in dance, or I would like to do um and sometimes they do. So I’m just going around in a circle. I think ideally it’s good and I think again we have to respect the individual. I wouldn’t want to be putting down a rule.

Yep. OK. The other thing is with, you’ve sort of banded all parts together as one big creative approach, what do you think … cos this is particularly related to music, what do you think music’s role is, I mean, it’s obviously theatre-related/

/It’s theatre-related but you see, with us, it’s always been so inextricably tied. So, while on one level, it’s separate I couldn’t see it without it. And the other thing for me, and you’ve been really fantastic in this cos you’ve got that really unique way of being able to workshop and I think there’s been much more capacity for a flowover. I think before it was much more like songs happening or, you know, guided imagery and all of that. But I
think there’s been more of a capacity, and also I remember when we went into a juvenile justice centre and it was just a nightmare and it was one of the kid’s poems got set to music that the whole thing just took off. So it’s the music that actually exploded everything there so that the other things could ride on that. So, while it would seem that I would see them like that and I think we divide them because we do, I don’t see them separately.

Yep. They’re both very communal within the theatre company compared to the visual art.

Yeah, well, the art I do find different, but we’ve never had, we’ve always had .. I think the art stuff is a much more individual thing and I say it quite openly and I love them, but the visual artist sees the world so differently and I find it very interesting. I’ve learnt that. I used to want to understand that or to feel that they should be more like us, I think, cos I couldn’t understand and now I understand that it’s a very different way of being, I think. And I do think it’s a much more individual approach to things, although they might disagree. So, I don’t know. I think with us too, Lucy, do you know what I think? One of the things with the company is that we always have to have the outcome and we have to have that because my personal belief and what I’ve observed is that it’s important for when you’ve just got workshops leading everywhere people don’t get as much out of it. I think the whole rumble and tumble of when you get the thing coming together, and it is a push and a shove, the final product is the melding for me and I cannot envisage a show where we didn’t have music and song. I cannot envisage a show where you don’t have the music as a character all the way through, you know, so/

/OK, so music is a character.

Well more than that, if you look at what you were doing in the outside performance this year with the music that you’d have for *** everytime she came in. It’s a whole layering in there and people love it. I mean if you’re thinking about what activates them, what brings people together, where people can lose themselves, music is much easier to release, for people to release, I think. And often, the drama of it leans upon it. So, I can’t imagine it without it.

OK. So, on a simple level, what’s the purpose of song in this sort of theatre. Like, the artistic director\writer has said to me before that it moves the story along.

It does move the story along, yeah. And also, the other thing is, there’s two things for me. People love song. They love singing. They love having their own song. And also often people will, with a song, often it’s the first time they ever get a sense that they have something to offer. You know, there’s that magic in “Oh heavens, I was part of that!” And I think within the construct of theatre it does, it has to move the story along and I think there are some that don’t work and some that do. Often in a show you’ve got your monologues and your songs and they’re doing the same thing. People hear, the audience can often go on a journey with a song, and make a huge journey too. I think for the women and the kids though it’s been, there’s all of the magic of song but there’s something about the connection, of feeling honoured, of feeling special, of something
that is theirs too, which I think is really important. And moving on, you know, the songs can move on in a way that the drama can’t often. We can resurrect a scene but everybody can gather around the piano to sing a song. And I think of some of the old songs from past projects and the person or the group just immediately comes to mind. Often it’s a real tribute to that time, or you know, wave.

It’s like a scent.

It is. So, I think it’s really important.

OK. On a different tack, if you were going to say work with a health agency for the first time and you were starting the project together and you hadn’t met before, what would be the things you would communicate to the workers who were going to be involved? So, the processes or …

I think that one of the things we’ve learnt that if we were a big project, say *** for example, I wouldn’t be going into a big project unless I knew that you were working with someone who’s got the same, what’s the word – vision? - not even that - belief in the potential, belief in the possibilities for people, belief in all that social justice. *** project has worked because of *** who has such a commitment to social justice issues and is a real practical, and that comes through. You wouldn’t even know it, you’d never see it, but this person has such a belief in the right for everyone to have equal opportunity presented to them. So, with the workers, it’s not so, and the more workers you have the more you’re going to have difficulty. In fact, if we were going to do another big project like *** it would be really important to have an interview process for people who were going to work with us, like the *** project was an example of that. I think that was just disastrous because we might have had meetings with people where it would appear you were on the same page but the people you end up working with have such a different understanding and you don’t even know what’s coming down from the top. Oh look, I think, and also you can put stuff down on paper, Lucy, but they only ever come out as weapons. So, unless you’ve got that clarity and you know that you’ve all got a common purpose and there’s really essential things in there about respect for the individual and respect for the processes, cos often there’s no respect for the artist. Respect for the different ways of working, like our way of working is not the health-worker’s way of working but both are vital and both the processes for both of those are vital and need to be respected. And there has to be, and again, I think for something like our theatre company this is where because of our history we’ve had times to learn. I look back at how stupid I was ten years ago with some of this stuff and what I know now. I don’t want to do a project unless there’s a worker in there because I know that there’s so many things that will arise from the group that we’re working with that will need to be taken further and we don’t have the skills. So, I think a lot of it is intangible too, you can have as many things as you like, but if you don’t have the right personality, if it’s a small project then you can get away with it, but if it’s a big one I wouldn’t touch it. And in fact that has come up; there was something where someone wanted to go into bat for us with, this was about four or five years ago, we should have been getting a contract for a big, but I knew that that would have been politically fraught and I said we’re not going there.
Not going to go there. Even though for our company that was not economically the best decision.

So, you’ve obviously always had a strong vision.

No, the vision has evolved, Lucy. I haven’t had any strong visions. The vision has always come from the work and that’s another thing that I get wary of when people want to plot things too much. I think that, I know for myself, what came first was the art, the passion for the art, what came first was getting the skills together. What I always had was the capacity to work with people. I was always good at that even in primary school, you know? Then, what has been layered in for me, has been the learnings, in terms of the power of it and bureaucracy and how to do the submissions and all of that. I don’t know if I could have learnt, my personality is such that I don’t know if I could have learnt it in any other way. That’s my personality. And from observing a couple of other people who have set up their own organizations they’re the same and I find that very interesting too. Cos you need to have a certain amount of bullheadedness, stubbornness, difficulty, all of those things which make you difficult enable you to find your own way. Also, the other thing for me has been there’s always been a fantastic group of people that I’m working with so it’s, I might have been a person that’s banging on the doors, but there’s always been a really good group of committed people, so yep.

OK, what about performances and art exhibitions? What aspects of working towards performances, let’s say in the prison, ensure its success?

I think it’s the process. I think it’s the continual coming to the line. One of the biggest things is that you’re going to do it. I think that one of the biggest things, and this is something that I observe in everybody’s work, is that they continually, it’s like that energy for people to be as good as possible. And also the other thing is, the best that you can. It’s not a token thing. I don’t think for anybody working in this theatre company that any of the work is token. It’s not about “Isn’t it good for them?” It’s about something that not only gives them dignity but reflects that huge spirit. It’s hugely important to have the outcome because I think for so many people they’ve never actually finished anything, they’ve never done anything and therefore it’s very important that there’s not going to be any residual, after the applause, they’re going to get “Wasn’t that shit”. So, all of that, and the other thing is, in terms of the performance, not being tokenistic with people and letting them think that something is going to be valid or that people will, when it’s not, or letting people off the hook with ... not letting them off the hook with patronizing “Ok it’ll work”, when it wont. Not patronizing them or allowing them, you know. A lot of people want to take on stuff that they can’t, that emotionally they can’t, so finding ways that can be handled as well. The other thing for me too, Lucy, and this is more of a subtext for me I know, it doesn’t help people to be victim. It doesn’t help people to be always hitting against the system and I think that in the process often there’s that way of finding that you can have a very powerful voice without having to be the person that’s seen as the madwoman, hysterically ranting and raving, you know? So it’s important that, whatever the story is, that it’s not seen as the victim. You know, what I’m trying to say, so much within the prison is the “I hate this, I hate that, I hate establishments”. It’s
important that there’s a balance so that if you’re saying “Yeah, we do want a different way”, one – people have the sympathy that you want create a different way for these individuals but two - that you’re positing something. Another thing that I have learnt that it’s very important in the process, in the final thing, that you don’t leave any individual that’s going through a huge amount of shit in that shit. Because whatever’s happening, there is an energy in performance and you can be reinforcing that for someone. And you can actually be laying a pattern for them to tread. And what I have seen a couple of times now that when people have actually traced a vision or a dream strongly in performance, they go out and live it. And, so that’s been another huge learning along the way. So, and I think that we’ve become very clear for people not to be placed in any kind of an emotional space in performance that’s going to reinforce a negative emotional space.

How do you ensure that?

In terms of the character’s journey.

OK, so it moves.

It moves, so say with the first performance of ***, and *** playing *** who overdoses at the end of the play and I believed that she was out of drugs and all of that at the time. Now, I know she wasn’t. But I would never never have had that. I would have had a professional and when I say professional I would have had someone in the company, and there was only one other person, I would have brought someone in to play that role. So, and it’s very interesting *** overdoses fifteen years later. So and there’s a whole lot of factors, but I would never, that’s just one of the things and it can be seen as a superstitious thing.

OK. What do you say to the people who say “Oh, why don’t we just do a lovely, easy light show”?

But this is what, we start doing this, Lucy, and whenever we start it, like I remember one at the old prison and “fine, fine” and it started off but the story in the end was the mother had the daughter locked up in the bedroom, the mother who was on some kind of mad drug, and the boyfriend who would climb in through, oh because she’d been burnt and couldn’t be seen by the world, and the boyfriend came to steal in through the window. It had every element of their imprisonment without being dealt with specifically, and most of them couldn’t take the part for that because they didn’t have the emotional range. So when you’re starting with people, and this comes up all the time, and it doesn’t matter even with the kids, they’ll always come back to their stories because that’s what’s sitting there. And often, I think, and it’s something I’ve dwelt on and when I hear people say it I think, “Oh, do me a favour” but if you’re doing a devised work, it’s like whatever’s bursting to come out will come out, and unless you’re going to, again, I always say, unless you’re going to get a group of actors to play it for them, take their story, you know, take their words, but say you’re not good enough to do it, and then do it in a fanciful way that’s going to be missed and taking a meandering way, I can’t. I think that most of the shows do have lightness. I’m trying to think. Once they start the process, it’s the group
itself that dictates it anyway. I know after we did one particular show it was horrifying going in there and people just wanting to spill their stories everywhere. It was scary. And us trying to put the brakes on what was coming out cos the stuff was too, the stuff we were hearing I’d never heard anything so appalling in my life cos it was like the floodgates had been opened. The same thing happened when we did one of the first shows in the late 80s after we hadn’t been in there for a while and someone had done that scene about, and a song about a woman who had gone up to see the psychologist. The psychologist reminded her of her father, he had abused her. She couldn’t see him because he looked like him. She then wrote a song, “You’re a dirty old Daddio”. I don’t know, it was a jazz song. She had a beautiful voice and they had, the women had written the scene, it hadn’t been worked on before, it hadn’t been spoken about. The only time it was spoken about was when I said, “It would probably be good if there were someone who hadn’t been through this to play it” and I think there were six out of the eight women who had been sexually abused, so it was a real kind of bell-ringing time for me. We were actually pulled in by the therapists who said we’re tampering and we said, hang on, we’re not really. After the show all the psychologists were inundated with women wanting to talk about their abuse. It was such a light went on, and I think it was a real learning curve for them. Yeah, I don’t even know how we got onto that.

In the performance in the prison that just happened, my experience of it was over any other year I’ve been involved, women were less wanting to tell their stories and I wonder if that’s something to do, I think it’s to do with the theatre, that there’s an aspect of that that’s really good in drawing that out or making people feel safe or open enough to do that. But for some reason the music was much more abstract that it ever has been, as well, where the stories were hinted at but you were never exactly sure/

You know what I think too, Lucy, I think this year was a really odd year in the prison. I think the degree of physical upheaval there and also in all fairness the drama program and the arts program in there was not as strong as it normally is. We would normally have an eight-week time where you’ve got two or three sessions a week and then you’d have your intense month, so I think that there were a number of factors. I think that the instability of the prison would make it a very difficult one to judge whether that was because of song, and I don’t think that that would be the case. I actually feel that that physical instability of the prison impacts everyone. I think that they’ve got the new unit open. There’s so many things where the face of the prison is changing. It was like when the prison went from *** and then they had the B annex or G division and then the newer prison. Whenever the prison goes through any physical shift there’s a real shift in the emotional culture if you like, in the prison. When the prison went to ***, there was nothing that happened there for two or three years cos, apart from the fact that the women were so off their faces you couldn’t do anything and they destroyed all the records, they kept everyone so, it was terrible. But I think that because there’s another big shift there that it would be very difficult to see, to judge it. You had a number of people from the mental health unit too, didn’t you?

Yeah, and *** who came in at the end was the only one who’d done it before.
Yeah, and that’s a different thing too. See, that’s a very different thing. And there have been times when it’s happened, and it’s almost like you need a, what happens when that’s happened in my history has been that you do something and then usually someone from that goes on and then the next one is a bigger, more intense exploration. Or, if you’re starting off with a new group totally, it’s usually over nine months that you’re working quite intensively, so I think there’s a number of factors.

Yep, and that’s the other thing, the group dynamic didn’t solidify until about two months before-hand because/

/And that always happens. You’ll have one or two but then it kind of forms its own energy. And I think also that, you know, if you look at it, the energy was happening outside this year. That’s where the energy was. Mmm.

What are your views on voice? In practical ways, such as singing, and in more metaphorical ways.

Oh God, one of the things I think is that voice-work is so important, especially for people who have been in abuse situations.

Really?

Oh God yeah, cos one of the things, I should get you this paper too, remind me, cos I only realized when I was putting this paper together that I was looking at why the work worked and one of the main things was voice. When you look at people who have come through violent situations they freeze, you know, you’ve got people’s whole, and also that whole thing of having no voice, to scream or not to, you know. So, there’s the whole thing of what you’re releasing in terms of the breath-work, in terms of the voice-work, you’re actually releasing so much stuff and for people to actually physically see, to even physically do exercises so that you can be heard, you can be understood is a huge thing. So I think the whole voice-work, even with every workshop we start off with the breathing and the voice, it’s much more than the voice. It’s all about, I mean everything is about the breath, but it’s, I think that is one of the key reasons why the whole process works. And then you’ve got the whole physical stuff that’s happening with the massage or with a game, where it’s such a, you know, for so many people they can’t bear all that, it’s been a violation and you can’t trust. They’re inextricably tied. And then that whole thing of when people are singing together or just to be heard, to actually give yourself the space and the respect, whether you’ll be speaking or singing, that you will be heard, that you’re not hiding is so much, I think.

It’s amazing cos *** didn’t want to sing or have her voice heard and at the end she said maybe she’d like to do some singing.

Yeah, but that’s the process as well. And that’s one of the reasons why I think it’s so important that you’ve got a program all year, well that’s the only reason. We do this thing
and you can’t just leave them, you can’t take them on a journey like this and just leave
them. I look at ***. Did you ever see *** when she first came to ****?

No, I didn’t. Probably two years after she first came.

You couldn’t hear her. Now. When she used to do that scene and you’d think “Ah”. ***,
when she first started, and the one that took a long time, ***. I mean, it’s so important, so
important. And it reflects so much about their own journey. I mean look at it, voice is one
of the first things to go in times of stress or something.

Yeah. What do you think about, I mean there are some pretty interesting voice-work
methods out there, very therapeutic-oriented. What I like about here is it’s not wanky,
you just see, there’s no real, for me, there’s no real principles that I’m working from but
it still seems to have the same/

/But you see, you’ve done your training. You know what you’re doing. And the voice is,
I don’t think you have to get wanky about it, but I know in drama school, I’d know when
I went up to class and I was going through a very difficult time and I’d know that every
time I’d lie on the floor and do my breath and voicework I was going to cry. You know,
your voice is connected. Often when going to singing, I’d think Oh God, I’d know. If
you’re releasing, you’re releasing. And that’s why I think, again, that you need to make
sure that you’ve got people who can take it. With all the work you’ve done you’ve got a
grasp on all of that. You know it. It’s like a strong role. You get people that start fiddling
around with that and then they think it’s fantastic that someone’s crying. Of course
eye’re going to cry, you know, that thing of when you start to drop in. So I think there’s
a protection too for us that voice is part of the skills. It’s part of the process. We don’t
have to put any other name on it. And this comes back to the equal stuff. An actor has to
do it. A singer has to do it. That’s their instrument. We know that it will release
whatever’s sitting there. I mean, and I’m speaking of theatre here, some of the most at-
risk people in the world are actors and they’ll, you know, it’s that working in that way
then enables you to be safe in the space. So if you’re doing that, so I think the whole
thing of the voice-work and the way I see it is it’s a skills, it’s a skills for acting or
singing. It’s a skills-based thing and in doing the skills-based thing, yes, there’s all these
wonderful offshoots that are going to come off for the human being in terms of releasing
them or unlocking them or whatever. And primarily for our purposes too it means that
they are going to be in a safe space if they are going to be carrying the story forward,
whether it’s in song or text or whatever. Because if they’re not doing that work, and they
go out there in the space and suddenly they’re gone, which would happen, because that
thing of unlocking, you know, working with breath and it would happen, so I think it’s
key, it’s key. If you think about the breath, it’s key. Yep.
Appendix 5C – Transcript of Interview with the Artistic Director/Writer

What would you say are the most important aspects of the work that you would communicate to other people who don’t know it?

This has been a field I’ve been in for fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years or something like that, but there’s more clarity as you go. Do you realize that people, regardless of where they’re at, whatever their social environment is and however they’re oppressed ie in the prison system, when you find a space, you create a safe space, you create the space for people to feel safe and that they are, even if they say “I can’t do something” they’re still willing to try and I think, by meeting in that framework of the arts as the driver you have the potential and the possibility to do amazing things. So for me it’s always been, I guess where I come from is what is the story? And I think that you can’t come in with any preconception of what that story is. You might have a bit of a … I guess somebody said “Look, we’re going to do something on, you know, there’s got to be a drug element here,” or whatever, but by the same token, you still can’t go in hoping you’re going to get great drug stories and that’s what it’s going to be because if you go in with an open mind you find the most amazing things. And what you tend to find with a new group is it’s what’s sitting there, what is actually there for that, what story needs to come out. Then it has to come into the overall story, the bigger picture. So for me it’s about people meeting in a space, using their bodies, using their voice, using their stories and feeling, in a way, that they are able to just take step by step, before you know it, they look back and they’ve gone on a journey. And amazing things have happened. So, I guess it’s building people up in a way that they say “Yes, I can do something, I can do that. I can do this” and what humbles me time and time again, with the work that we do, is what actually comes forward in those interactions, you know. It surprises me continually. Every time that we do something, I never go in there and go, “Oh yeah, this is ho hum”. There will always be people’s truth, their ability to be vulnerable and still do it anyway, I think is a very privileged thing to do. And it’s not to be forgotten, I guess. It’s something that always happens. Time and time again. Yeah.

OK. So how is the safe space created?

Well, look, the space itself is really important. I mean, within a prison environment we come into a room that is the best of whatever we can do with. So, you know, we try and clear the space. Cos a lot of the time you go into these, especially when you work with community groups, they have the idea that there’s a daggy old couch and you put a bean bag in the room and maybe a bit of a drum-kit and that’s pretty cool. And in fact it’s just the worst possible environment to work with. You have to clear the space as much as possible, from chairs and whatever, so people aren’t sitting on their bums the whole time and it becomes a sort of a head thing, you know. People have to be standing in a circle to start off with. So I think, you know, you create the space, you create as best as you can do, take out those outside influences. Getting people into a circle, and I guess that’s a whole thing, because a lot of people don’t want to be in a group, you know. That’s what they’re used to doing as excluding themselves. That’s their way of being safe or feeling OK, controlling, by excluding themselves and protecting themselves. So, the circle, we
start with a massage. We break down those physical elements whereby people, a lot of people that come to us, you know, there’s a lot of issues on a physical level. You know, people have, in the main within the prison system, have been sexually abused, sometimes horrifically, sometimes, most emotionally and physically abused, you know. So the way that they use their body is a sort of a level of care that you take in terms of working. By the same token, if you continue to sit back and go, “Oh there, poor things”, you’re keeping somebody stuck within those parameters. So, we break through it by getting everybody in a circle and grab a partner, presumably somebody you haven’t worked with before, and do a massage. So you automatically, now a lot of people don’t necessarily want to go with that, well some don’t, you find that becomes a dominant paradigm and in fact people, once they do feel safe, actually reach out for that sort of level of connection. We start, are you asking process stuff here, that’s what you want? OK. So that would be the way we do this, and I’d say this is new groups, old groups. I mean, the process changes when you work with people time and time again because they know some of that structure, but for example, what we want to do is warm up the body and so we’ll do some physical exercises and, you know, you’d start with the bottom up and go to the head and do certain stretches, you know, spinal rolls, those sorts of things that get people connected in with the body and then, probably, we go to, when we’ve spent a little bit of time doing that, people need to break out from some sort of structure and we’ll go and play a game or some thing like that, and that gets people laughing, and then we might come back to something more quiet, like the breathing work which we do where you’re placing your hands on the ribs, trying to find the breath, keeping the breath, cos the breath is obviously the vital, the life-force and we all, the breath seems to go when we get into traumatic situations and even if we don’t, in this world we tend to hold onto our breath. We don’t breathe properly, deeply enough. And so it’s bringing that awareness back and reinforcing that awareness time and time again. Breathing with the diaphragm, expanding the ribcage, breathing not just the front, but the whole body so breathing in the back. And I guess we use an image where it’s the butterfly wings so it’s just a very gentle expansion and contraction of the ribs. And sometimes we might get somebody to stand behind that person to guide or enforce that, so that they can feel that pressure and they know where the breath is going to. And what you would do, Luce, is the thing of actually taking that breath out so that they get to control the breath so that it’s a time of the breath, and you can extend that. Breath-work is very, very important. Then, I guess it goes into more vocal work, voice warm-ups, singing warm-ups. We tend to always do something like a very ancient chant, Om ma ni pad may hum, it seems to be something that everybody resonates with regardless of whether they have a particular sort of, I guess it’s pre- and religion anyway, so it actually goes back before certain things and it becomes something that we do. It’s like a mantra that we use to lift and to raise the vibration. I guess the groups we work with, the vibration predominantly it changes with the young people as to the women in prison, but the women in prison vibration is very low, it’s very dense, it’s very negative, it’s very dark, and there’s a lot of pain. And so what we do, and we are more and more conscious of it as time’s gone by, we’re aware of coming in and raising that vibration level. And that means you’re bringing in the light. The light that’s already sitting there within people sometimes has just been dampened down through their very extreme circumstances of having been in a prison, very repressed environment. So, laughter, body-work, breath-work, song is so, so important to that whole overall of what
we do. I guess, say if we were devising a new work, my thing would be “OK, what story
do we want to tell?” and half the time there would be no answer (laughs). We don’t know
what story we want to tell. OK, so what we do really is we find a number of ways of
coming at the same question without maybe hitting it on the head. You start directly and
then you find other little ways. So what we go into is what we call the balancing work. So
people balance between, so they grab a partner and they’ll do things like, so you do three
different balances, so they’re starting to connect physically. But once they’re in their
body it’s actually a bit of trick because they’re actually now going, “OK, I’m not thinking
about what I’m necessarily doing, so all I’m doing is playing. I’m playing in my body.
And not only that, I’m not playing alone. I don’t have an audience where it’s saying you
have to do x amount.” So what we do is we partner up with three people, we do balancing
and what we call mirroring where we have to just mirror those actions and then we’ll
layer a theme on it. So, if I do want to go somewhere where it’s got to be about
homelessness or something like that, find a key phrase, often a verb, that will kickstart
that, and we’ll layer it on and, say ‘Don’t ever leave me’ is an obvious one which is more
generalized but say that’s a key phrase and so they come up with a series of beginning,
middle and end movements to depict the story. So, we start often times with the body
telling the story. That way people aren’t using their, they aren’t intellectualizing and
saying, “What am I doing here?” They’re just doing it, and from there some lovely stuff
comes out. So then we go back and say, “OK. Can you do it again, now, just layer on the
same physical action, let’s layer on any words that might come out” and people,
hopefully if they’re in their bodies enough, they’ll say these random words or phrases
that then may be used down the track and sometimes you can get absolute pearlers on the
first session, you know. So, that’s a sort of a key thing, and then things sort of coming to
and fro. It’s a very organic process, you know. Yes, there’s great artistry, there’s great
artists in our company, and yes, people have a real understanding why they’re doing stuff
and what they’re doing, but by the same token, there has to be this exchange because, you
know, it’s about the people you’re working with and what they’re offering and you are
kind of helping them to find more, to say more, to be more. You’re there encouraging
that and finding your skills as an artist to do that, and then you’ll reflect that. It might
even be a paragraph, they might have even gone away and written something and come
back. It might be for a song, and you might encourage them to take that idea further or
you might just decide you’re going to put some music to it. And that encourages the
whole group. Once something comes out, I always find the first thing, the first scene, the
first song, once you do that you’ve cracked something. People understand what it is and
what is possible. Before that, it’s a very big trust thing and groping in the dark and there’s
a little bit of bluff that goes on with that and you keep going until that sort of thing and
people get a sense of ah! what is possible now. Mmm.

And so how do you go from the part where you’ve done your balances with the words
coming out, how do you go from that to a scene? Like, it strikes me that you get to know
women you’ve been working with very well, in a certain way, very well and it’s through
the work that you’re doing. How do you get from balances with words to somehow
knowing what part of their story they’re going to be telling?
Well, it’s not all the body-work. You do tend to, without consciously doing it, you do tend to observe people. I think what I do well as an artist is I actually hear the way people say things. I actually capture that. I expand on that a lot at times. Sometimes less than others; it depends on what’s being offered there and encourage them to come forward more but I think it’s like well what is their particular voice and then what could they then maybe fit into as a character on that level? That’s a very negotiated thing, but generally, from balancing and mirroring and those process-work things, we’ll come back and we’ll say, “OK, well, this came out, we’re going to do something on …”. There’s the character and the overall storyline and they tend to run in tandem in a way, but really, unless you’ve got the overall what’s this story about, it’s very hard to hang a character in the nether nether so you really have to know what you’re doing there. So we tend to be doing both at the same time. I’m wanting to know say, who is ***? What is she? What’s her story? So something came up in the early days about gambling and that was a big thing for her, and also being for her and, I guess this is strange thing from a daughter, but the big picture was that they were going on a journey in a car and it was the first day out for one woman and they were picking up all these people and they were going to the beach. Now along the way they got side-tracked, as you do. (Laughs). So really they don’t go to the beach, they end up at St Kilda and the bay was good enough and that was the sunset. It was a beautiful story but in amongst that there were some key players and some key things that they offered as to where they were at and often it’s based on the truth, but it’s extrapolated out so that they can hang something on a character so that they’re not feeling that they’re playing something that’s absolutely totally them, raw in the person, it’s Lucy and me standing up there. No, it has to be the character and I guess the trick is still using the truth that they’re wanting to portray, the story, and I guess that’s the crucial thing, it’s a story they do, and I guess some times they might look at a piece of writing that’s come back from a discussion we’ve had over coffee, and like ***, as an example, she freaked. Seeing it in the written form she freaked out cos yes, it was what she said plus a bit of dramatic license but it was actually the key things she said but she didn’t know then that that was actually making it real for her. Now, am I going to say that? And then you have a process of negotiation because it’s not about us placing somebody up there when they’re too vulnerable, they’re in a place where they’re going to be revealing too much, so we walk away from the prison, we don’t stay with them overnight, we can’t leave people in a situation. It’s a very delicate balance, and it’s a great trust and you don’t always get it right. You might spend nights where you think, “Oh, I shouldn’t have opened that conversation up because I’ve left that person in there for 24 hours” and you do process that stuff because it’s a big responsibility to find the line where you’re actually working with the truth but you’re not working somewhere where people are vulnerable, too vulnerable in that environment. So, anyway, going back to *** she came back and she said, “Yep, I’m going to do that” and she tweaked a couple of words or whatever. It was a very empowering moment for her but it was a very brave moment too. And there’s often, there’s one or two people who go beyond others in the group that do take, and I find it interesting, because they tend to be the ones who are creating a different path for themselves. Ones that do tend to go beyond their comfort zone do tend to be creating a life away from the former lives that they’ve led. So, it’s an interesting journey.
Do you think one comes before the other?

Some are very clear about what they’re expressing and others find it throughout the journey. Like I think of *** in this *** show and one thing I’ve learnt, and it gets me every time, you never know when somebody is going to break away from that life. You never know. What you’d wish for someone is that they find some contentment and fulfillment within their lives and if it means that they’re actually going to be a moderate heroin user for the rest of their lives and they’re happy with that, so be it. OK, whatever it is, without judgement, it’s hard not to judge by our standards where people are at, but whatever it is they’re finding, you don’t know when it’s going to be that time. So, for example, ***, she got out just before the show but her big journey for this year was to come back and be involved. Now it was huge for her to make that whole journey. It was astronomical and we don’t know. I’m sure we’re still bumbling along and there’s still difficulties for a time, but still, within that, she has that and to her full credit she made that journey with a real commitment and that’s quite special because a lot of people don’t. They don’t. Whether they’re in a straight life or not, there’s always something that pulls them away. So, sorry what was the question (laughs)?

Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?

I don’t know. So it doesn’t always, whereas, like a *** who is now a Buddhist nun up in *** she in the prison and she had to serve another sentence just when we thought she was free of all that. She came back again and she did in her show she stated very clearly to the audience and in her characterization “There are two paths to take and that is the old path, that path on my right hand, that’s the old path, that’s the path I know, it’s comfortable. And this is the unknown. This is scary. This is where I’m going.” And that’s what she did. She mapped that path out. Now, she used that, and I believe this. Theatre, to me, is a ritual. It can be used, it can be a little ritual or it could be a large ritual, depending on how you want to choose it. I’ve become more and more conscious of that. What we express and what we put out there is very, very important, what people say. You know where I learnt this? I had *** who is now passed away, she was in that show. I was in my first year of performing art school as a director. I had to put on a show. I used performers from a different college. I did a play based on Lizzy Bordon. It was really the trial, it was the murder that came through there. Now that play was cursed. It was a great little show. But one girl was raped as a student. She pulled out. There was something else that went wrong. That was a minor catastrophe in terms of someone dying, but I know, only know now, that whatever energy you put out there, whatever you undertake, it’s so important to get it right. Because it goes out there and the ripples are out there in the universe and it’s heard. OK, so if somebody wants to say, they say, “Let’s do something” you get all these fun things on teenage suicide. Well, hello, we don’t want to do that. People want to talk about the darkness in their life but there’s a way of honoring that without drowning in it and taking somebody backwards or deeper into that pit of despair. It’s a very big responsibility. You must, must instill hope. You must. In the work we do, it has to go to a hopeful outcome. Even as a whole group, there has to be some hopeful outcome. That has to be the driver. And I think that’s a big responsibility. The words you use, they have
power. You have to be careful how you use what words for those people on stage and for the people who witness it too.

Let’s go on a slightly different path and talk about the relationship between theatre and music.

Oh, what’s that? (laughs). There’s a personal relationship between me, theatre and music because I didn’t realize, I think I was heading towards music theatre before I even knew about social justice theatre and the theatre that we do. Because there was something in it, from pantomime that I did when I was a tiddly-wink, because it’s always had some song element in it, so I didn’t realize it was something I already thought was wonderful. What I’ve seen, and this is only because I’ve come into the theatre company, and I guess it’s already pre-programmed because of the people who were there. So I wouldn’t have known how, I just would know how the music affected me and from then on I’d become aware of what the process of music and theatre was. So, I guess for me, they run very much in tandem. They always have, had such an interweaving relationship. For example, I mean, I guess the thing is that it’s always important to have the music and the drama starting at the same time in the process. So the people get to not only learn the music/singing skills but as they’re creating we’re all creating together we’re finding that the themes and those sorts of things, they’re marrying and supporting each other. And what I discover is that people when they find, I think a lot of people say they can’t sing but they love singing. They might not sing, but they love music, or something like that. It’s very rare to find people that don’t. You do find some of the younger people but it’s a rare thing. I think that once the music, what fascinates me is that somebody’s come up with a paragraph and then suddenly some music is added to that paragraph and then suddenly there’s a whole world that’s opens up and in a way that I, it’s incredibly exciting, it’s very rewarding and we all get it, we all get the tingles because the music and the words, suddenly the whole world has just opened up and I see the landscape, you know? And we all experience, we’re in another environment. To me that’s so exciting and so I think the music is an integral, I know that sometimes I say I’m coming back as a musician and I laugh about that but I do feel because it’s such a magical element that without it the theatre work, you know, our scenes stand alone. They’re very powerful but I think the music allows people to have that space where they can absorb so much more and they sit in within their emotions so much more and find what it is that they’re feeling and experiencing it in that moment. Therefore the music creates those spaces that are just allowing for that whole story to drop in and take people further along that journey and I think it’s a heart connection. People can find it within the dramatic and they do. But they own it within the, they acknowledge it, they feel it within the music, they understand it and that’s why, I mean, we probably have 7 or 8 songs in a one-act, 1 hour 20 play, and sometimes, it wouldn’t be more than that because it’d become something else, but the music weaves, it weaves the play, it weaves the scene-work, it embellishes it, it supports it and what I love about it, and especially what you were doing in the outside show this year, cos I had a chance to observe more in this show. Often I’m performing and I don’t get the chance, I don’t get that luxury to see how you would finesse what is required to support that scene so the music is supporting that dramatic work, it’s lifting it to another level. It’s not taking over it, it’s supporting it. You know, whereas the physical movement...
stuff would support the song, for example. So, it’s a very, very symbiotic relationship. Very powerful. And I think that’s what we do and we’re very fortunate to have such gifted artists doing that. Did that answer that? I get caught up in stuff, but you do see it, we all feel it. Music is a vital force in what we do.

What about your ideas on actual song, as opposed to music in general. What role do songs play?

You know what I think, just as you’re saying that, I think it depends on the group very much but a lot of the time people want to express something in a very simple form. And that simple form doesn’t necessarily lend itself to, you would have to change it or manipulate it too much if you were going to put it into the drama-work of a scene. So, for example, if I’m going to sit down with you and go, “Lucy, I just love him, you know? He makes my heart sing, and such and such, I don’t know anything but all I know is I love him.” Now, you could put that into a song and it wouldn’t sound as twee as if I were just to, you know, it would sound beautiful, the words are from the heart but if you were to go, but that’s what I really want to say (laughs). Well, hello. I’m not saying that music, see this is simplified but you can tell a simple story beautifully in song where you can’t necessarily tell that simple story unless it’s a fable. So what I find is that people get to write something or say something and it’s raw. It can be then developed into a song that just takes it to a totally other level. So, for me, the songs often will then weave the journey even further. That’s what we do. The songs should take the story beyond what we’re doing and make a connection between characters or sometimes the songs are just lovely. They complete that journey. They can take it and just send it off and it’s a magical thing. They can complete it or they start the journey like the star song, for example, or the calling. So, we don’t know what it means yet, we haven’t discovered what it means yet, but you can find out because in songs you can reveal yourself, you can reveal your heart in a way which you can’t do by direct address to the audience, you can’t get to that same depth because it’s a bit odd (laughs). It’s not the right place for it. So rather than setting up all these devices, a song can just come out and be pure and it can be quirky, it can be funny, it can have all those elements. It can be angry. It doesn’t have to be one flavour. But it can do it in a way that just takes that journey and we get to know more about the story through that.

What aspects of working towards performance ensure its success?

I think we have good processes. I think sometimes we do a lot in short spaces in time. I think the people who we have working with us, there’s a mixture of real great skill and depth of that skill, that artistry, but there’s also people who have been there and done that in terms of the groups that we work with. There the people who have had the real life experience, I think that that comes forward, I think that has shown there’s a, so this is even just working with people from the get-go, there’s a level of integrity in terms of intent and why people do things. And I reckon in the prison system if you want to come in with your bag of tricks and your bullshit you’ll be dropped, you’ll be cut down to size in two seconds, because they just know, they can smell it a mile away. So I think that it’s really important. And those people who are of that ilk tend to not last very long. People
that have personalities that emotionally, and it’s not a criticism of them, but they find it too overwhelming and they’re more reclusive, or whatever, they find it too difficult too. I think there has to be an ability to constantly change in that moment and to be willing to go with things instantly. By the same token I think it’s important to come with some sort of structure because people that we work with have very little structure in their life. Now, if we just went, “Oh whatever you think it’s a fair thing, we’ll go with you. Oh it’s all about you isn’t it so that’s why we’re doing it?” Nuh-uh. These people don’t have any idea how to get a show up and running. They have to entrust that and we have to earn that trust. We have to show that we can do it. So, we have to set up the parameters, we set up the guidelines, the structure, the circle, the physical work, the voice-work. Those things are vital. And they can’t be, sometimes we forget, and we always get reminded that it’s important and you come back to it. Sometimes you get tired and you skip some little process. You can’t do it. It doesn’t work. And I think it’s really important that those processes are really at the forefront because that’s what keeps us all together and keeps us going forward. And I think that - structure, process, group-work, keeping the group on some sort of even thing. The story is the thing, the show becomes the thing but you have to work very hard to make sure that individual’s personalities, egos and whatever don’t become bigger than that. That is the thing to make the group work towards that story and what it is. And I guess, too, it’s making sure that, is it really the story they want to tell. Now there are elements in there that embellish that story and make it better but as long as the core story is coming from some part of their being and there’s a belief in that and there’s enough of a belief from us. See, I think we come in with a belief that people can do it. I don’t think, and we also work with where people are at and encourage them to go slightly further but we don’t ask them to come in and then suddenly we don’t know the script but we’re going to do a piece of Shakespeare. And you’re going to do such and such. Now they might be able to do it brilliantly, I’m not saying that, but we don’t set up that. We don’t set people up to do something that they’re not at that stage to do but we encourage them to go beyond that and also to work, obviously crossing many lines, the comfort zone is one of them, and I think, my motto has always been close enough is never good enough. I think you always go for the best, the best that you could ever possibly do. It’s not good to say we’ll just wing that. There are elements where you have to cut corners but not with the essential things. It must be the best and I think that’s a driver. That’s a really strong driver. And I guess that’s why we all do that. We mull over what we could possibly do. What is it we can do better for this group, for this company, for these individuals, you know? They’ve entrusted us with themselves, their vulnerabilities, their fears, their faith, their whatever, their story. That’s a precious thing. You can’t take that for granted and so that’s a big responsibility and sometimes when you take on a new project, I knew the outside show was going to be bigger than Ben Hur on one level and there’s a big deep intake of breath before you go forward on something because you can’t get away with anything lightly. You can’t. You know it’s hours and hours and hours that go into that. And that’s what you do. You do what you do and you do as best as you can do. And you ask that of others. You demand that of others. In a gentle, encouraging, nurturing, warm-and-fuzzy way, but that’s what you’re doing. You’re saying, “Good, I know we can all sit back and say I can’t do it today, but really, we have to do it. So let’s get on with it.” (laughs)
So how would you describe the processes in the prison this year? Obviously it was very different. Do you think we were still able to do a performance that was, do you think it compromised the core principles?

No, I don’t actually. And I think this is a really interesting example because I think what you did with the women to maintain, see what we do is we have an outcome. The outcome, really, for people that have lives changing every day and attention spans of a bumble bee, people need some sort of outcome, a public outcome, they need to be witnessed. Hence, the whole ritual thing, witness that experience. That forces people into taking action, to doing, to moving. So, I think the main key that we pushed for which I think, if you had have just gone in and done your workshops it would have been a very different process. It doesn’t mean people wouldn’t have got things out of it. That’s not discounting that. I believe by the fact of placing a deadline for an outcome you pushed people to a level even with their songs, with they way their music was coming along, that they wouldn’t have got to otherwise. So, I think to know we had an outcome, I think that was vital. I think to maintain that group in such a disparate environment and over the year where there’s a whole lot of other things going on, like the whole building works, people were unsettled. Their physical location was uprooted and unsettled. We’ve never had that before. The prison has always been full of people coming and going, court cases, losing custody of their child, all these things that are bigger than them, bigger than our group. But we’ve never had to encounter the whole thing of that physical disruption. So, I think what you did with that, to maintain that group took a lot of real faith and belief and just keep going, just keep going. And what you did is you just kept going and those people kept going too. Now they might have straggled on days but you’ll find that there was one or two that were the bedrock and they were always there and that’s what you hang your hat on because you’ll find that others will come and go and in the end they’ll get there but you’ve got to keep the one or two going and belief that you’re going to get there. Sometimes you don’t even know, but you know you’re going to get there. I don’t know how, but you will. Now, having said that, then and I think there was a good discussion between us, we’d come off a major project, all of us, and maybe this outcome was going to be a series of music, musical songs that were going to be introduced by the individuals. The hope was for a little dramatic weaving of that. I think that in the discussion that alright, so we’re exhausted but what would you rather we do? What would be more beneficial for the overall process was to have some sort of dramatic weaving of the show. So, that’s what we went for. Now, with five days to go, or whatever like that, that was a bit of a push, but I believe that what it did, it created an energy that was a very positive, joyful, inclusive energy and you find that people started to come, you know, people started to get more involved. They wanted to help. That’s what happens when you do that. You start to put a backdrop up. Then you’ve got the visual arts. Everybody starts to get involved and that’s what you’re encouraging and that’s where it becomes special, you know, so the music was the central part to this, this year. And that’s what was special. And the songs keep going over and over cos they’re fantastic songs. They needed something to support them. The dramatic supported them. I don’t think it changed it, it was different but I think the processes were still very much processes that we would go through. And I think that conversation that we were having, that dialogue, yes it’s bloody hard, it’s almost impossible in that environment, and so what you came out with was
great, was fantastic, it couldn’t have been any better. And what I got from the women is that they felt proud of what they did, they felt special, they had a professional outcome, they were well received.
Appendix 5D – Transcript of Interview with the Visual Artist

What do you think the most important aspects are of the work you do with the theatre company?

Well, I think that really, in the context of where we work and the people we work with, giving them an opportunity to come into a safe space and to connect with their creative selves is really important for them and in a weird kind of way it’s also really enriching for me as well. So, it’s definitely a two-way street, I think. And it’s just such a privilege to be able to facilitate that and we never really know what the ripple-out effect of that is going to be, though in some cases some of the women kind of find that safe space and they go into that part of themselves while they’re in prison and they may not necessarily continue doing it on the outside, but some of the women do. And in actual fact, I know for a fact, that in a couple of cases the art class has changed their life. And I know that because a couple of women have told me that and I’ve seen evidence of it so that it’s kind of helped to break a cycle and to develop kind of self-confidence and, you know, that sense of being able to tap into what they’re doing in a non-judgemental environment and to be able to create a product which is very tangible, in other words an artwork, that other people see and that they can get a lot of positive feedback on. So, it really has a lot of intangible effects that are very positive and very important. And I certainly couldn’t claim that this happens for all the women who come into the art class but I’ve seen enough evidence of it now to know that, you know, it’s a really positive thing.

Yep. So, with the women for whom it has changed their lives, as in you’ve seen that, in what tangible ways?

Well, I’m thinking of ________ for example who, when we met her a few years ago, I think it may have been the second or third time she’d been in prison. She had a really long history of drug use. She’d lived on the streets of St Kilda and, you know, she was definitely not in a good way and she joined the class and we just worked with her and we did some collaborative work with her and she kind of just, you know, she came to the class every week and it was clear that it was a real refuge for her, which is what happens. Then she left and we didn’t hear from her or see her and then she came back in again for a little while and then she left again, but in the years since she’s been out she has, well we’ve exhibited her work and she got a lot of positive feedback on it. She got an implant so she could stop using heroin and she made a very conscious decision that she really wanted to change her life and change the pattern of her behaviour, so she has. She got a place to live, she got a job. She kept coming to our post-release program, not always consistently but it was still working, and then last year she decided to go back to study so she did a drug and alcohol course and she is now working with people with drug and alcohol problems. So she got a job. She’s got a boyfriend. They’re going to get married. And she has said to me on a number of occasions that it was the art class that changed her life, changed her attitude, gave her that key, that thing to hold onto, at a point in her life when she was obviously ready to change. So, I think that’s really powerful. And I can
think of other examples of women who, you know, maybe their transformation hasn’t been as dramatic but it is still there. Yep.

OK. And when you said it’s very enriching for you as well, can you talk about how and why?

Well, I just get a lot of pleasure out of their pleasure, in a way. Like, it’s really lovely when, often when we first meet the women they’re very insecure. They’re not all that confident about themselves and they usually say “I can’t draw. I’ve never been able to draw. I don’t have any abilities.” But what happens is that over the weeks they start unfolding like a flower and it’s really beautiful to see that and, of course, I suppose for me that comes back. Again in an intangible way but it’s their pleasure in their own discovery of themselves that is very enriching for me because I can see that it’s a really positive thing for them, if that makes sense.

Yep, it does. And so when they say to you, I can’t draw, I’m really scared, how do you deal with the first things?

I usually just say, look, I often show them the catalogue of the show. You know there are two publications that we’ve done. And often when people come into the class and they’re new I show that to them and I say to them, “98% of the women who come through the class say exactly the same thing to me and this is what they’ve produced, you know. This is what happens when the women come consistently, so therefore it’ll be the same for you. You just need to basically trust that this will happen” and so hopefully that puts them at their ease and they often just see what the other women in the class are doing as well. Then we really gently introduce them to using charcoal initially and over the weeks they’ll find a medium that they really resonate with. But we always say, “Look, you’re not the only one who feels like this. I mean, pretty much every woman feels this way.”

So, before you said it’s about connecting women to their creativity. What is it about creativity that’s so important?

Well, I reckon, particularly in such a stressful environment as a prison, that to be able to go somewhere safe and to kind of go into themselves, I mean, it’s good for all of us, basically, but particularly in really stressful environments it’s a different way to express a whole lot of stuff that’s going on. ‘Cause I don’t know what it’s like with your music women but quite often our art women come in and you can just tell they’re having a really hard time and they don’t really want to talk, they just want to get into their work and zone out for a day. And that is incredibly important, I think, because often they’re not in a position where they can talk about what’s going on inside themselves. A lot of them keep stuff to themselves a lot, because there’s nowhere really safe for them to debrief or to, you know, to trust. So, this is an alternate way of processing a whole lot of stuff that’s going on in their lives. And it is through, you know, just sitting there and making an image. And the way the energy changes from the time they come into the room to the time they leave is quite extraordinary sometimes. Like, you know when you can virtually see the cloud hanging over their heads. And when they’ve worked through, they’ve just
gone into their own space, then they come out of it and it’s transformed, the energy’s transformed. Therefore it’s not going to be expressed in a negative or destructive way. It’s actually a creative process. And I think for a lot of people, and I’m no exception to this rule, really, that being creative is a really good way of processing stuff and finding an alternative language for really difficult emotions and the great thing about it is it’s not destructive. It’s a creative process. So, often there’s a product at the end of it so it sort of does a whole lot of things, really.

Yep. And before you said part of it’s about going into yourself. With the music and drama, music can be going into yourself if you’re playing your own instrument but in the situation with the theatre company in the prison, it’s a more communal group thing, there is not much of a chance to go into yourself and yet it’s still creative in a sense. What do you think of the two different ways, of the group creativity or collaborative creativity, I guess, and the creativity of going into yourself?

Well, they’re both equally, you know, they’re both really important. Like, the internal creative space that the art women go into is like a meditative thing, you know? And I reckon, well I know for myself when I go into that zone it’s like time shifts and changes and, you know, you can spend hours doing it and not realize it and it’s a very interior, quiet, meditative process. Singing and acting and working as part of a group activates a different part of themselves. Like, singing I know releases endorphins. Like, that’s actually a fact. So, you know, to be able to express themselves vocally and to activate all those endorphins is actually a great way of learning that you can have all those wonderful feelings physically, emotionally and mentally just through singing, you know. And that whole process of working in a group is really important too, for lots of reasons. It’s about developing communication. It’s about learning to pull together as a team and all that sort of stuff. They’re different processes but the end result is quite similar, in a way, although drama is much more physical, of course, than sitting down and painting. But see, when the big shows come up the art women often work as a team, you know, putting together the backdrops or making the cloak. So, that’s activating their creative selves but not in an egocentric way. They’re actually part of a group and they’re able to work collaboratively and it’s not about them. It’s about the bigger picture.

So, does that mean that when they are in their own space that it is egocentric or that it is about them?

I don’t see much evidence of an egocentric process, really.

I guess what I’m trying to get at is, I think that when you’re doing your own art it’s just as valid, in very different ways, but I don’t think it’s egocentric. I think it’s actually very vital, and I guess what I’m trying to get at with my question to you is to clarify when you see these women working as a group and you say it’s less about them and it’s less egocentric, what do you/

/Maybe it was the wrong choice of words because see, out in the art world there’s a lot of egocentric behaviour. There’s a lot of artists who are in it strategically, you know.
They’re in it for a career and quite often they’re very egocentric and it’s kind of toxic because they’re not opening themselves up to the energy in a humble way. They’re very much imposing their own personalities on the process, if you know what I mean. So, maybe egocentric isn’t the right word to use to describe what happens in the classes in the prison, for example, because … I don’t think there’s ever been a case of anyone who’s, I don’t know how to put this, really. Often the women are so grateful to be able to do this, to go through this process that they’re quite humble about it, if you know what I mean. They don’t start off with the “I’m a great artist and I’m going to achieve these amazing things”. They come at it from a very different perspective. So, definitely egocentric is not the right word. I think probably what I was trying to say was that the individual process is very much about going into their own selves. But having said that, they’re very encouraging of each other as well. They’re very supportive of each other and the work is their own journey. They’re all taking an individual journey. But sometimes we collaborate with the women as well. But we always, and I’m veering away from your question, but we always, if we do a collaborative work with one of the women, that woman is always credited with the work. Sometimes we put our name to it, but not very often, so yep. So, it’s still their energy, their work, their process. Yeah, so, you’ve got me thinking because you’re right. Egocentric is not the right word to describe this process. It’s very rare that we see evidence of that. It’s more an internal journey of discovery, really. Because not many women come in with the notion that they’re great artists and therefore blah, blah, blah. They come at it from a perspective of, you know, “I can’t do this. I don’t know how to do this. I have no confidence.”

Yep. What would you say about, there was a girl *** in my group who you know of who was a beautiful songwriter and a great guitarist, a great musician basically. And she really wants to do it when she gets out, actually work on becoming a musician. So she does have that preconceived notion of “I am a musician and I would like to try and make it.” How would you think that that would sit within the processes of the theatre company? Like, would you see that that’s a problem or something to be/

/No, I don’t think it’s a problem. Not at all. I mean, she’s obviously had some experience already, hasn’t she? And clearly something’s brought her into the prison system. Like, she already has a talent but there’s some kind of … how do I put it, I mean, I don’t know her history at all but clearly there’s some, there’s something that went wrong for her to end up in prison. So, the work that she’s doing is really important because it’s strengthening the positive creative qualities that she already has. So, hopefully she doesn’t fall into whatever hole she fell into in order to get into prison. So that’s really really important because I’ve had conversations with some of the women who’ve come through the art class, like this gorgeous woman called **** and she was really talented, innately talented. She hadn’t done much art since high school but she actually said to me, “If I had discovered I had this talent I wouldn’t have done what I did. I would have pursued the creative part of myself.” And that’s what I’m beginning to realize more and more is that the women who are drawn to the creative process in the prison, they already have something in them that says to them, “I want to be developed. I’m in here and I need to be developed.” And I reckon it’s our role, in a way, to strengthen that part of themselves so that whatever retrograde or rogue part of their psyche has led them into the
path into prison is going to be balanced by this strong, creative process that can say, you know, “Let’s develop this side of myself.” Like, I know with ****, she said to me that hitherto, before she discovered art, she would just go into such a place of despair that she would just have to hit up because it was the only way she knew how to handle it. Now, she will sit down and she will draw for five hours and get lost in that process and somehow through that process, all those negative awful feelings start to dissipate and she doesn’t reach for what used to save her. So, in a way, I guess, that’s our role, to help women find that part of themselves and to strengthen it to the point where it’s able to stand up and say, “Look, you know, take this path. This is more creative. It’s more positive. It’s more healthy.”

Beautiful. That just took care of my next question (laughs) which was ‘role’. But back on the egocentric thing, because I am actually very interested in this aspect, one last question on it is how it relates to you as an artist. Do you feel, I’ll be blatant and feel free to be blatant back, do you feel that if I said “I have to go and take care of my own art. I’m going to make a CD” and all that sort of stuff, is that part of my egocentric behaviour or do you feel the need to nurture your own art?

Yeah, that’s a really good question. Well, my history is that I went to art school and I actually spent a decade making art and having shows and there was a part of me, because I put out a lot of energy and I did a lot of stuff, but I never felt I got back enough, if you know what I mean. So, my ego was saying I want a lot more recognition than I’m getting and it’s not happening and I’m getting frustrated and hurt and blah, blah, blah. Then I was offered the job with the company and in a way it was a huge relief to not have to pursue my career because I think maybe my impulse to be creative had somehow gotten caught up in the whole notion of having a career and having, you know, my ego fed and all the rest of it and it wasn’t healthy. It didn’t work for me and that’s probably why my career didn’t take off because there was too much ego invested in the process. Now, I’m helping other people find their creativity and that’s very rewarding. And it’s good for me because my ego has taken a back seat. I’m just happy to support them. I very rarely feel those twinges of ego going, “What about me? What about acknowledging me for what I’ve done?” So, that’s nice. It’s a real relief. However, I am aware of the fact that I have put a certain aspect of myself on a shelf and I’m not honouring that part of myself at the moment. I’m putting a lot of energy into the work and helping a lot of people but I’m not following that path for me. But there’s a part of me that thinks what is the value of that? And I always used to question that anyway, like, what is the value of me making this art? What purpose is it going to serve? How does it help people? I’ve always struggled with that. So, until I can find the right framework for that it, I don’t know if I’m making sense. And I’m not saying that people who pursue their careers as solo artists and all the rest of it are just ego-driven maniacs because that is not the case. I’ve seen quite a lot of evidence of it in the art world but that’s not to say that there are not a lot of genuine artists who really have something important to say.

Because you’ve put that other side of you on the shelf, and from the sounds of it you’re OK with that, it doesn’t cause you pain, so you don’t find the work that you do with the theatre company draining because you’ve explored that already?
Do you know what? I’m using my creativity in a different way. I’m creating an environment. I put my creativity into my garden. I’ve got to do something with it otherwise I’d be sad, I would. If I wasn’t do something I’d go insane. Yep, but I’ve transmuted it into a different form of creativity. I’m always creative but I’m not making art, not doing it that way. What was your question again? Oh, is it draining? Yep, the thing that I find draining is not so much working with the women. It’s more organization stuff that goes around it, you know, the driving, all that kind of stuff. I think we’re lucky in that most of the time the women are pretty grateful for what we offer. So, it’s not like, you know, we’re being sucked dry but, you know, having said that I get to the end of the year and I’m completely done in. Because in actual fact we’re giving a lot. You’re giving a lot. But I don’t feel like my creative sense is being particularly drained. It’s more the sort of physical aspects of the work that wear me down, if that makes sense, but if I, I’ve sort of put myself in a situation where my home environment is very nurturing and it’s a creative environment. And if I didn’t have that I think it would be much much harder for me, if that makes sense.

Yep. OK, I think you’ve already spoken about how art fits into the whole theatre-driven company, but do you want to answer it more directly? So, what is art’s place in the world of this theatre company?

I think it’s important and having said that, I think that within the company, art is a small component. In relation to the theatre and the music, we take up a very small corner in terms of, well that’s how it feels sometimes. It’s almost like the art is sort of the quiet achiever of the company. Do you know what I’m saying? ‘Cause we just keep doing it and doing it and doing it. It’s pretty consistent. It just keeps happening and then we have the shows and it’s not as out there. It’s not as in your face as the drama and the theatre and the music. I don’t know how to put it really. ‘Cause we always seem to be in the background. Is that what you’re asking? But I think the art component is very important. I think that in terms of the sort of connections we make and in terms of what the women get out of it, ‘cause the difference with art is it’s enduring. People keep seeing it. So, that’s what I mean, when I say we’re a quiet achiever is that it’s always there. The evidence is always there and it works on a different level to the theatre, ‘cause theatre is ephemeral and it’s very much out there. But what we do is like the bedrock in a sense. Do you understand what I’m saying? It’s not as dramatic and in your face, in a way, but it just keeps happening, bubbling along, and it’s there, yeah.

OK. And where do you see music fitting in?

Well, music’s really important. Music is sort of a languageless, I don’t know how to put this really. It’s a universal language. So, to sing, like I said before is really good for physical and mental health, basically, and music is such a powerful, non-language based medium that it has a really healing, positive quality in itself. In terms of, you know, it shifts energy. When people are involved with music their energy shifts. So again, like I was talking about with the art, the women could come in with a cloud hanging over their head and go through that process of singing or be involved with the drumming or the
music or something like that. It shifts the energy and it’s a healing process so they can
leave the music feeling a hell of a lot better than when they came in. So, I think all the
aspects of what the company does is important in different ways, yeah. But I know for
sure that, because I’ve been involved with choirs and stuff, I always feel better after I’ve
done it. So, it’s very positive, yeah.

OK. What aspects of the devising process, let’s talk about you with the art program, what
aspects of starting from nothing and getting to a point where someone has produced
something beautiful lead to its success? Because there’s always such beautiful artwork in
the end and it’s a marvel to me that when people come in having never done art to get to
these beautiful products at the end, what elements help the success of it?

Well, it’s a bit of a mystery to me as well, to be honest, because as you say, the women
usually come in with no previous experience or a really negative experience of
themselves, you know, “I can’t even draw a stick figure” sort of thing. So, the elements
are to set them at their ease and to nurture them through it and to give a lot of positive
couragement and also quite often to say to the women, because they’ll do something
and they’ll want to screw it up right at the start because they hate going through that. I
don’t know what it’s like with the music, but it’s very common when you’re making an
artwork to start and realize you don’t have the technical expertise and just finish it. And
there’s so many times we’ve stopped the women from scrunching up their work and
saying “I hate this. I can’t do it.” When you catch them at that point it’s a really critical
moment because that’s the make or break point, really. I always say it’s amazing how
many times this has happened. I always say, “Look, this is really normal. You’ve gotten
to a kind of a moment in the process where you need to put that critical voice inside your
head that’s rampant, put it into a cupboard in your mind and lock the door and trust the
process. Give yourself a bit of breathing time. Relax and then come back and keep
going.” And I always say this is normal. Every artist goes through this process. You reach
a moment when it really is a breakthrough if you can get through that point then you’ve
made a major breakthrough and that’s when the learning process really takes off. So, it’s
amazing how many times the women, it’s a really consistent pattern where a new woman
will reach that point and if she’s able to just work through it and have faith then she’ll
make a massive breakthrough. But it’s really important to be encouraging, like not to
make any critical comment because sometimes you can feel it. Like, I can feel all those
negative thoughts in that woman’s head are just, and we can’t afford to buy into that. It’s
a process of breaking the thought pattern in a sense, and that in itself has a ripple-out
effect into every aspect of life. So, it’s a real metaphor for life, you know, reaching a
point where you think “I can’t do it.” Making a breakthrough and then anything’s
possible, so I don’t know if that’s answering your question, but it’s a very critical
moment in the creative process.

OK. You said at the beginning of that that they get to a point where they realize they
don’t have the technical skills. How do you get past the technical skills part?

We show them. We demonstrate. Absolutely. We sit down and quite often we will work
collaboratively on that picture. *** or I will sit down and go, “OK, why don’t you just
watch and I’ll show you how to approach this.” We talk about the qualities of the medium. We talk about how to look at an image and how you translate that onto the page and we just demonstrate. It’s hands-on. You can’t really explain it on an intellectual level. You’ve got to actually do it. So, it’s a combination of us working with the woman collaboratively, demonstrating the use of materials, blah blah blah. And then, you know, the women kind of find their medium, they find what they’re actually comfortable working with. And because we offer a whole range of materials, from charcoal right through to oil paints, the women always find what they enjoy and then they start owning their skills. Someone like *** really has only every worked with pencil. You’ve seen her images, haven’t you? And that’s the result of a number of years just working with pencil. And she’s getting more and more sophisticated, better and better at what she does. So, yeah, it’s sort of, I don’t know, does that answer your question?

Yep. It does.

So, it’s a combination of a whole range of things. It’s psychological. It’s understanding, in a way, at what point that woman is going to reach that critical moment and catching her before she spits the dummy and leaves, you know. Sometimes some women get to that point and they don’t come back. They’re just not ready to make that transition into the next phase and that’s fine. But, as I said, when the women do do that and they start developing their skills it does translate into other aspects of their lives as well.

There’s really only one other question that I have, which is how important do you think the exhibition of the artwork is?

Very important.

So, why?

It’s really important because the women get an opportunity to see their work framed and presented in a really professional way and it’s then that they get lots of feedback. Like, the work goes from being their own private babies, it goes out into the world and then via that they get lots and lots of positive feedback coming back. So, I think it’s always important for artists to put their work up because you’re putting it into an environment where you actually look at the work differently as well. You can analyse it in a different way.

Why is that?

When you’re working on something it’s a very subjective process. It’s a very intimate relationship and then there’s a certain point where you decide that the work is finished and when you put it up on a wall in a gallery or an exhibition space and you frame it and it looks really fantastic you’re able to move into the objective phase and look at it from a distance.

OK. Well, what would happen if you didn’t do that aspect?
Well, having a show is the climax of the year. It’s the, I think if we didn’t have that we’d puddle along, as we do all year, we just keep the ball rolling, the creative process happening, you know? But if we didn’t have the exhibition there wouldn’t be that sense of achievement. There wouldn’t be that climax of the year, the sort of excitement that surrounds it. Even though, like with **** the women actually don’t see the show but we talk about it. We show them photos. Their families go to the show and that is really important because their family and friends see what they’ve been doing. They get feedback that way. I think it’s absolutely essential. It’d be like running drama classes but never having a play. I think it’s the same for us. And I think that because it’s a drama company essentially, to showcase the women doing the art is very important in terms of maintaining their profile as well. Because it could be very easy just to let it go and not have that sense of achievement of the visual artists. So, I think it’s very important. Psychologically, it’s very important. The women love it. They really thrive on it.

OK. Great. Is there anything else you’d like to say?

Well … ‘cause you’re looking at this from the framework of a therapeutic model, as well, aren’t you?

Not so much. I did that with my master’s. There is that element obviously because there is that tension between health and art and wellbeing and all that sort of stuff so if you want to mention anything on that it’d be great.

Yeah, well all I can mention is that from personal experience, for myself, and also talking to the women who we work with, that there is definitely a healing, healthy aspect that comes into play. And like I said before, it actually ripples out into a whole lot of other areas in life as well. Whether one uses the word ‘therapy’ is debatable but I just know that it has very positive effects. It’s really good psychologically and emotionally and creatively and personally and physically. So, it has to be good.

Yep. Well, would you use the word therapy?

I don’t know, ‘cause there’s that whole idea that if we were working in a therapeutic model that’s sort of putting ourselves in a higher position or in a position of authority, or the givers of the whatever, to the women. In a way, that is sort of what happens, but it’s definitely a healing process but it’s not a process of us saying we’re better than you and we’re giving you this thing. We’re trying to work on a level playing field. So, if that answers your question, but without doubt, from what women have said to me and what I’ve observed, it’s a very healing process. It’s really good. And art is something, like I said before, you can go into your own zone and you can literally go into a different space-time continuum and especially in the context of the prison that is really vital to their wellbeing, I think. It’s the closest thing to meditation that they’re going to get.

OK. You’ve talked about how it can be healing. Do you ever see any time when it can be dangerous or unhealing or causing damage?
Oh gee, that’s a big one. Not directly, no. I mean, the only thing I can think of is if a woman, and it has happened a couple of times where a woman comes into a class and reaches that critical moment I was telling you about and then they just can’t, and then they sort of, we’ve never had anyone spit the dummy and completely lose it at that point but sometimes it feels like it’s dangerous because actually what it’s doing is confronting the woman with her own mind. All the negative messages in her own mind are coming up big and strong and there have been times where, and I’ve said this to you before, where you can feel it. It’s like this aura around the woman. You can feel it. All her self-doubt, all her loathing, all her negative inner stuff is going full bore and that’s when they can get really angry. And so, interestingly what happens is that all that inner talk comes up, faces them, they come face to face with it, and what happens with that moment like I said before, is really critical, but there are times when women have confronted that aspect of themselves and can’t cope with it. They have to leave. Now, whether that’s dangerous I don’t know because that self-talk is going to come up in all sorts of contexts in that woman’s life but in that particular situation it’s within a creative framework and the stronger the self-loathing and the inner critical talk is, the stronger the reaction is going to be. So, now, the women who can’t make that break-through or don’t want to or are not ready can therefore say, “Oh, the art class is shit. Couldn’t handle it.” Or the drama or the music, for example, I don’t know if you come up against it. I know when *** was doing the drumming there was a case of a woman in the drumming circle who just, you know, so that is a potentially dangerous situation; the stronger the inner talk the more extreme reaction there’s going to be. Now, we’ve never had an occasion where someone has spat the dummy but it’s come pretty close on a number of occasions.

Yep. So, how do you as an artist work around that danger?

Well, you have to handle it with a lot of sensitivity and go very carefully, essentially, and not make it personal. Just make it normal, you know, “What is happening here is really normal. Everybody comes to this point. Take some time out. Just go out and have a cigarette. Be easy on yourself.” But it depends on where they’re at in their own head. Like, sometimes that just doesn’t work and you’ve got to let it go, basically. I mean, I think there’s a certain point when you know this is not worth pursuing. It’s worth pursuing but it’s not a good idea to push it, ‘cause if you push you’re going to meet massive resistance. So, you sort of feel it as it comes. Sometimes it’s better just to let it go.

Can I just ask, you said when you push you get massive resistance. I felt for me this year the women, more so than any other year, I really had to push. I almost felt like I was coercing. They’d go, “I don’t want to do this” and you could sort of tell that they did want to because they were there, but I came up with massive resistance all the time because I was pushing. How do you get around not pushing, just in the general “I can’t do this. I won’t do this.”

Hmmm, ‘cause I reckon the drama and music are very different to the art, in a sense. I mean the creative process is probably identical really but the manifestation of it is quite
different, isn’t it, ‘cause with music and drama the women have to put themselves physically in that space, don’t they, like they have to take that step into exposing themselves. With art it’s a little bit different. They’re not physically putting themselves on the line. It’s what’s coming out on the page that’s critical … Was the question when do you push, was that the question?

How do you get around not pushing? It’s a fine line between pushing and nurturing.

It really is. Yep, yep. It is. I know. It’s a difficult question to answer. In some cases, and it hasn’t happened very often, I’ve just totally let go. “That’s fine. I respect where you’re at.” I reckon it’s very different with performing ‘cause you’ve got to have bodies there, you’ve got to have performers, don’t you, otherwise you ain’t got nothing and that’s what’s scary about it. You can’t just let the women go because you’ve got nothing. Exactly. I get what you’re saying. And in fact, when I first started with the company I was actually ***’s assistant so I had to go in, no previous experience thank you very much, and get women to rehearsal and get them doing stuff. Terrifying. I mean, that was trial by fire as far as I’m concerned. That was really hard because you do have to be strong. You have to go, “Look, we’ve got this thing. Come on, let’s do it. End of story.”

And interestingly, the women that I worked with were there for music. Normally, they’re there for drama, and music is just an aspect of that. But I think they were way more introverted as a result because I think musicians tend to be a little different to drama-heads.

That’s right. Dealing with different creative types. Yeah, it’s true.

So, I could actually understand their desire not to perform, not wanting to be part of the group, ‘cause I’m fairly introverted as well so it felt weird pushing them to do something that I could totally understand they didn’t want to do. So that was very hard.

So, you have to come up against your own inner resistance in order to help them break through their inner resistance. This happens with art as well. It’s not like we as the artists are immune to this shit ourselves. Like, we’re probably drawn to the work ourselves because we’re knee-deep in it. I mean, I know that I have resistances. I know that I have areas in which I have to make breakthroughs myself which is how I’m able to identify it when I see it in other people. I don’t know if it’s whether us pushing in that situation because you’re going to have someone there who just simply doesn’t want to be there. And sometimes they come back later. They see what the other women have done and they go, “Oh, so-and-so has really got a lot out of it and maybe I’ll do it too” so we have a bit more latitude than you do, in the sense that we’ve got the classes running all the time so the women can come and go. It’s not like we have to have x amount of people to put on a performance or whatever. I think I’m rambling again. But I think all of this stuff is really critical to what we do. It’s really important to understand psychologically what’s going on and sometimes, you know, when you’ve got women who react in quite an aggressive way it’s really fear, isn’t it? It’s all about fear, so negotiating around that, it’s manifesting in a particular way but really what’s happening behind it?
Yep, and that takes a really strong personality. Like, I had one woman who was very aggressive and I got very upset by it whereas I shouldn’t have, I mean, if I had have been more evolved (laughs). Next time I wont take it personally and I will see it more as/a manifestation of a whole dialogue, a lifetime’s worth of dialogue, that she’s bringing to the situation. It has nothing to do with you or any of us, really. I mean, we can see the benefit of the creative process but sometimes they, maybe a lot of the time the women think “It’s a piece of cake. Easy-peasy.” But it’s not, because they’re going to come up against a lot of shit in themselves and that’s why I think the creative process is actually a metaphor for life. No matter which path we take we’re going to come up against the inner barriers and boundaries and how do we negotiate? How do we have the courage to move through it?
Appendix 5E – Transcript of Interview with the Choreographer

What do you see as your role within the theatre company?

My role is to bring in the movement, health, dance component, so primarily working in the prison, it’s with the shows that they put on so that’s generally, or has been up until now, is the choreographic component of the shows when they’ve already been created. In between time it’s often getting the more health-work, as in Yoga or Pilates or just stretch, body awareness and body-potential work. And then working with the pilot program with marginalised kids it’s mainly been up until now, in the last six months it’s been more the health component, so it’s giving them awareness of their bodies, a little bit of nutrition advice and dance, which is just for health and fun.

OK. Cool. And what drew you to this work?

Mmm. Originally, having had a career in dance I hit a point where it was no longer fulfilling. There wasn’t a reason behind it and even, I finished a project in Europe actually and had decided to myself that that was it, because I was dancing on stage and just realized I didn’t know what it was all about. I did fall into working with the theatre company pretty much by accident, so it wasn’t like I went out there and sought it but it all became pretty clear once I’d started there, it was pretty clear that was where I was meant to be because there was a purpose behind working with the body which was beyond just the sort of yeah, egocentric-type vision, so it was to bring other people into it … to more than anything make them more aware of the magic that there is and being able to have some sort of, control’s not really a good word but, yeah control of their body, yeah, and the creativity and the release and the overall wellbeing that’s just improved by working with your body and feeling at home in your body and owning your skin.

Beautiful. And so do you find the work draining at all? It just struck me because you’d got to the point where you’d done the whole dancer thing and it wasn’t as fulfilling as you’d previously thought, that you’d probably um, what am I trying to say? Often I’ve felt at war with, you know, I want to do my own music because I haven’t got to that point yet where doing my own thing feels unfulfilling. But, what I’m trying to ask is do you find the work draining or exhausting in terms of your artistry?

Draining. (laughs) There’s frustration. I don’t think it gets to draining. It doesn’t get to draining because my experience with draining was more so working for months on end on a piece that had no meaning in it and was just physically tiring and so draining came in with physically just being spent. Possibly what happens now that there is that thing that you get used to working at a virtuosic level and you don’t get there. It doesn’t get anywhere near it and so there’s frustration and it’s only alleviated by reminding myself that when you’re working with these kinds of people, it’s not what it’s about. And that if I want to do that then I’ll go off and do my own thing. It’s the balance, yeah.

Yep. OK. And how do you see music fitting in?
Largely. In terms of the dance?

In terms of the dance and the whole thing.

The whole thing in terms of the theatre company? I think it’s one of the largest components, I think, and if they say that music and singing is your connection to the divine, then that is probably when I talked about magic before, that’s one of the avenues where I’ve witnessed from the outside where you just see amazing change in the women, even if it’s just in the moment, so it’s just a momentary taking away of the scenarios that they’re in, so it’s just to sweep them up and take them into a creative and imaginative world which is going to open them up into positive choices later. Music in itself takes people to different places and within the theatre company I don’t know that they could create anything without having a music component. I think it’s really really important. It sets the atmosphere and, I mean, there’s the drama component that’s really really important and it’s hard to separate, one thing’s more important than the other but I don’t know that the drama could exist without the music, so they’re really interdependent. Yep. Which is linked in with the dance bit as well, really interdependent, like, I don’t know, you could create dance but without that kind of inspiration I don’t know how you would do it. Yeah.

So, what aspects of wellbeing do you think that this work is really good at addressing?

The women go into their stories and that’s out of choice and I think that that gives them the opportunity to, I don’t want to use the word therapy now (laughs). It gives them the opportunity to address the choices that they’ve made in the past. How they’ve gotten there and where to next? It’s a way of also, I mean, coming from a dance point of view, much is stored in the body. It gives them an opportunity to play out with the body, to see what comes out for them, whether it be that it makes them feel completely ill or whether it gives them joy, it gets them in touch with where they’re going with the choices that they’ve made and … kind of forgotten the question (laughs).

(Laughs). What aspects of wellbeing do you think it addresses?

Yeah. Primarily that. Choice and that everybody has the ability or it opens, I think, opens it up to them to believe that everybody has the ability to move on and to create positive things for themselves. Yep.

OK. Cool. In the devising process, what aspects of the process do you think ensure a successful outcome? So even if you look at it in terms of dance. Although you don’t really/

/The dancing comes in afterwards. What ensures its success is keeping the truth of the stories. So, yeah, it’s the fact that all of it comes from their personal worlds and that each individual feels comfortable with what’s being talked about or what’s being said. It’s also the atmosphere which the theatre company creates, ‘cause I think it’s a very open atmosphere and also enables for people to go up and down and so, it’s also a non-
judgmental environment so I think that all the participants feel really safe, so there’s a lot of trust and I think in the end too that there’s also components of, that it’s not all negative, that there’s components of fun, there’s also a message of hope at the end for them. I’m just trying to think back to some of the things that have been said. I think it’s mainly that, that the participants for the time that they’re in the project that they feel completely safe.

OK. I think we’re almost done. The only other, oh I’ve probably got a few more questions. What do you think it is about the performance that, and especially part of your role is as a performer with the theatre company as well, what do you think it is about performance that makes it so, well it’s successful in terms of it influences the audience really well, there are a lot of fractious people who manage to pull it out of themselves in order to do it, what aspects of the theatre company allow it to be successful in that way?

For the people who manage to pull it through and get there, yeah. I think that’s tied in with the last question, it’s the safety and I guess too, one of the things I remember and that’s going back to the artistic directors is that they, part of the road to recovery for, especially the women where a lot of it is drug-related sort of issues, it’s about the transformation from, you know, maybe because they’ve had such a hard time and it’s natural that they may be feeling what they might be able to get back from the world but the transition from that kind of thinking to perhaps what they can give, and so, the artistic directors, I think, in a successful way get the message across to the women that their stories are really invaluable for others out there and so the success of the participants is that they make that transition in doing the play. They realize that not only telling their stories, they’re also giving back something to the community by allowing, whether it be one individual in the audience, to identify with the stories. And I think that’s a big component, if not, yeah, apart from the fact that some of them get to sort of live out some creative dreams, whether it be to sing on stage or dance on stage or act or yeah. There’s something about performance that is so so special and there’s a, for participants who may have been in one performance they come back to do it again because they get the experience and understanding of what it is to get out there in front of people and what an amazing skill that is, yeah, and that not everybody can do it so it’s to feel that courage and to feel proud of themselves.

I think that that is all because you’ve very succinctly talked about it all. Is there anything else you would want to say about the work?

I guess, I don’t know if it’s even relative to what you’re saying, but it’s like one of those things that it’s the kind of work they do, like I’ve been working casually with the theatre company for four years and then part-time for part of this year and it’s been a really hard sort of thing to grasp. It’s sort of been something where you have to go in and just, as far as being someone who works for the company, it’s been a bit of a trust game. And so I can imagine for the people who come in to work with the company there’s a lot of that as well. But there is an amazing energy behind the people who work for the company that somehow creates, I don’t know, that safety net, I don’t know how to, it’s definitely something to do with the personalities of the people who run it. ‘Cause I imagine that, a
little bit like the pilot program that’s been running in ***, they couldn’t have just anybody step in and do it. So, whether it’s the years of experience of working with people in that world and the cross-meshing of people working for the company who’ve been in that world. So there’s like a cross-section of people, those who have worked in that world, those who haven’t, yeah, and underlyingly though, between all the individuals who work for the company there is a like a oneness. I think everyone understands that each person has their own individual journey. Like the company always says that there’s no coincidence, that people can do the work. It’s a hard one to answer why they’re so successful.

Yeah, it is, isn’t it?

Yeah. I’ve heard them described as a powerhouse. In terms of the fact that the theatre company have for years on end been able to continue to produce work and even though at times there seems to be complete chaos there’s this powerhouse of energy, a real desire, yeah.
Appendix 5F – Transcript of Interview with ActorI

What do you see as your role, your place within the theatre company?

My role is mostly focused in ***, and that’s pretty much co-ordinating the program up there.

And what about in other projects as well?

Well, I think probably more to be a support for, you know, in the group and doing the performance and the workshops and all that stuff. But not necessarily leading anything.

And what drew you to this work? Why do you stay here?

Why do I stay doing the work? I think the more I do it, I think initially when I started doing the work I think a lot was about me and my own journey and that’s shifted, that shifted, and it’s become about other people. And I believe in it. I truly believe in it.

Why do you believe in it? What are the things about it that give you such faith?

Because I think it’s from what I’ve seen, and what I’ve experienced myself, that doing the work of the drama and the art and music, that there’s a real personal understanding of how you can become more human, how doing these things allow you to be more human, especially coming from a situation where you’ve been dehumanized.

Yep. Can you go into any more detail about that? So, out of the three art forms was it the drama that got you in?

Yeah, I love music, but the reason the drama I believe in so much is because you’re working in a group. So, you’re working together for one purpose and it’s also about storytelling too, and it’s the same with music, you’re telling a story so … I don’t know. Sometimes I think that that’s what humans are supposed to do, is express themselves and be creative and artistic. So, if you come from a place where you’re oppressed or abused or you’ve been deprived and all that sort of stuff and you become cold like that and you’re not getting in touch with any of that part of yourself, so once you do start doing that, yeah. Did that answer the question?

Totally, yep. And so is that, when you say it’s a humanizing part to go along the creative process, what aspects of being human do you think that it gives you?

I think because you’re sharing stories so that part of understanding other people, understanding yourself a little bit more … Yeah, what else? Freeing yourself up a little bit more so your guards drop a little bit more and you become more of who you are, and what you’re naturally meant to be, rather than someone who is wounded, you know?
Yep. So, I’m assuming that as a child you didn’t really experience the creative process very much, is that right?

Yep.

So, were you fairly new to it when you came to the theatre company?

Yeah, very new to it.

And how important do you think the creative aspect is?

When I joined the group I was in prison, so I didn’t really and, you know, you just go along and you do what you do. It’s almost like I felt alive, doing it. I felt like it, yeah, you’re getting so much enjoyment out of it and, you know. You’re actually talking or exploring.

Do you remember your initial reactions to it? Like, can you reflect on your journey from back then with the creative process? Like, for instance, because this year I worked really closely with women in prison and I was just talking about how some of them come to the creative process for the first time and they don’t understand that, OK, when you get to a certain point you’re going to feel really vulnerable and you might want to leave and all that sort of stuff. But us being experienced in the creative process, we know that it’s just part of it. Did you sort of have any experiences like that, or/Do you know, it’s strange to me and it’s funny that I even do what I do, because it goes against what my natural instinct is, which is to hide. So to get on stage and to expose yourself in a certain way, it’s slightly bizarre when you’re not, you know, when that’s not naturally what you want. So, it was scary. Coming into the group and doing the creative work, I don’t think, you know, you feel uncomfortable, sure, at different points, but I think part of me felt like I was coming home. I felt there was a connection, I believe, with people. There wasn’t a part of me that wouldn’t have gone through that.

Yep, I get you. So, with the performance aspect, when you say your natural instinct is to hide, why do you go through it? Why do you go through the performance aspect of it?

Because you do. When I was in jail the first time, the reason I went through that is because you’re working with a group. So, you’re, and if you become involved in that then you can’t let that down. So, it becomes bigger than your panic (laughs). So, it doesn’t feel like there’s much of a choice. To continue doing it? Like I said, because I believe in the work. I see it with the young people. I see what it can do, you know, the effect it has on them and the growth that people get from it. And them doing what they do, I believe, you see their courage and that sort of pushes you through because you see this young person that’s completely vulnerable up there and sharing something and, yeah, I think that sort of, yeah, their courage and bravery maybe makes it easier. ‘Cause you’re doing it together too, that’s the other thing. So, if you’re doing something together you become stronger. Mmm.
Yep. And what do you think are the benefits of seeing these young kids who are so brave getting up and performing? Or even yourself, what do you get out of the performance aspect?

Look, I think, there’s always that adrenalin stuff too, that you, you know. So, you can enjoy that, even though you want to be sick sometimes, but you still, I can’t understand why (laughs). I don’t know. What was the question again?

So, what benefits do you see, either for yourself or for/

Well, when I’m looking at the young people you see people come out of themselves and just start expressing themselves and you see a certain journey of people who didn’t previously have aspirations or didn’t really see a future, you know, slowly start to want things for themselves. Yeah. And that’s probably the same for me. I think without that, if I kept going along the same path, you begin to accept what your life is, you don’t really see past it.

OK. Now, you’re a big part of the devising processes we do. What parts of those processes do you think ensure the success?

Yeah, I reckon the artistic directors stay true to people’s voice ‘cause you actually see something that’s on the floor, that’s been worked, and all of a sudden you’ll see and you’ll hear a person’s voice and I think they stay true to that. And if people really want to say something, I think that’s always incorporated too. Am I losing focus?

No, that’s great. So, you’re talking about what aspects of the devising process make it great.

I think because it’s true. It’s getting people’s truth. Yep.

So, say if someone new came along, say, a new musician to do work with you guys, what would you say are important to be aware of during the devising process?

Probably not to judge someone else’s voice. And not judge themselves, ‘cause that’s a hard thing, because I think people want things to be perfect and all nice, but you know, yeah, I actually don’t know. I can’t answer that.

OK. Have there ever been times where new people have come in or say, like we’re working with a partner organization, and they’ve done stuff where, OK, that’s different to our ideals. Are there certain things that you think are important that the artists do that other people aren’t quite aware of?

I think, I suppose from what I see, people get caught up in probably the way you’re meant to be with people, like, if you’re working professionally and cut themselves off on a certain level and I don’t think there’s a, there’s a point where you’re not relating to
someone as an equal, or a human being. And I think when, the processes that we go through, where you’re starting in a circle, where you’re actually, you’re physically making it OK to touch each other and stuff like that, I think that breaks down a lot of those barriers.

Yep. So, it seemed to me like you might have been saying, to have less boundaries as a professional. Is that right? Like, to actually just work on a human level.

Yep. And that’s not being taken for a ride, either. That’s seeing people and, you know … Yeah, I think a lot of people in that sort of work just cut themselves off on a certain level.

There’s actually not too much more I wanted to ask you – there’s one thing of how you see music within the theatre company.

Oh, we love music (laughs).

This isn’t fishing for compliments (laughs)

(Laughing) It’s always been a part of the work. It’s always been a part of the storytelling. So, it always extends the story. Yeah.

And do you remember when you started with the theatre company in prison, do you remember how music was for you then? Like, you would have been part of the music and the drama?

Yeah.

Was there any way that you saw how it related to it all, or was it something that you just had to get through?

No, it wasn’t ‘cause I had a song in that first show. You don’t realize that you’re capable of doing something too, so to be able to sing. And it was always part of the workshops, so, you go from doing some drama to some singing, you know, and passing on certain writings or whatever that were developed into a song, so yeah. I think it’s just part of it. I don’t know how to answer that. It’s part of it. Yeah.

Yep, that’s cool. The other thing, you’ve got a fairly unique position which is why I want to ask you this. You’re part of many different programs with the theatre company and you were also part of it in the prison. The main part of the study is looking at how it fits within the context of the prison, so how would you compare the different environments? Or what is it about the prison that’s different and how does it affect the work?

Yeah. In the prison, the reason I had difficulty in doing the performance stuff is because you’re putting so much and so many guards up to protect yourself and all of a sudden you’re up there performing in front of people who you don’t necessarily want to show anything to. So, that’s a difficult thing. I didn’t want any officers to see that I was human
in any way and had any, you know. So, I think that’s hard … So, comparison to other stuff?

Well, that’s pretty beautiful, what you’ve just said. It sums it up. Yeah, maybe if you can, comparing. Like can you imagine someone like me going from say, *** project, to the prison. What things would I come up against in the prison that I wouldn’t come up against in this other project, and one of the things you’ve said is the fear of appearing human to people you don’t want to show that to. Are there any other things like that?

Apart from, look … I don’t know. I can’t think. Sorry.

That’s alright. I’ll just see if there’s anything else. OK, can I ask you a few other things? So, how important, we’ve talked about performance. I was going to ask you how important the working towards a performance is.

Oh, that’s very important. I reckon that’s really important and that’s reflecting on even, reflecting on the young group this year ‘cause they haven’t had anything specific to work towards this year and it’s hard to maintain an energy and a focus. Because there’s something, when it comes to performance, and when you’ve got the whole group together working on one thing, there’s something that’s created that sort of invigorates people. Yeah. It’s so focused. So, it’s hard when you’re not doing stuff like that because you feel like you’re just getting through, yeah.

OK. The last thing I want to ask you is, you’ve mentioned quite a lot of things related to wellbeing or health or therapy or healing that this work can do. Do you have a viewpoint on where the work of the theatre company fits in terms of health and healing and therapy and all that sort of stuff?

I reckon I’ve pretty much answered that because it is about allowing someone to be themselves and what the drama does, it’s not necessarily, it’s not about the therapy of drama, it’s about doing something that brings you back to yourself a little bit more and what your true self is and from that, things come from that. And you see that with the young people too. And people start wanting things for themselves and dreaming.
Appendix 5G – Transcript of Interview with ActorII

OK, so the first thing I’d ask is what are the aspects of the work that you think are most important to it being successful or good?

There’s a few things. So, there’s completion of projects ‘cause a lot of people don’t complete things so if we get to performance there’s a completion of process. It’s also getting people to understand how much potential that they have and realize the potential that they have. You know, ‘cause people say they can’t sing and it’s all that sort of stuff but they can and they do and it’s grouse and it’s that end result. It’s also the working together that I think is important and being part of a group where, if you do pull out, like when one of the women in the prison decided not to do it and everyone was sort of a bit flabbergasted. She sort of had time to think about it and came back in saying she realized she was letting people down, it wasn’t just myself, blah blah blah. That sort of thing. So, looking outside themselves, I suppose, a bit and I suppose confidence-building on a level, and skills-building as well.

Yep. That’s cool. And what drew you to the work?

What drew me to the work? Ah, can I talk about the history when I first started?

If you want to, sure.

How I got involved with the theatre company was I was actually looking to do a masters by research and I was doing this thing and it was very similar, very funny, cos I was going to do the creative arts therapy course at RMIT but it was ten grand a year. And I thought, how do I get around that and I thought OK I’ll do a masters because I’ve got a bachelor of education. And so I started, I went to Vic Uni and I hooked up with the drama side of it and also nursing. It was this weird nursing thing because I was going to take a group, it was bit like women’s circus as well. Because I’d been a victim of childhood sexual abuse that was going to be my main client base and do, because at that time I’d being doing group therapy and I thought it would be a good thing to do creatively, a bit like women’s circus. So, I went along to a research conference and there was girl there I used to go to school with. And I caught up with her for a coffee afterwards and was sort of just explaining and she said she should put me in touch with the artistic directors of this theatre company and get me involved that way.

Interesting. So, you obviously saw a link with therapy, you wanted to study arts therapy, is there any way you thought that would have been like, compared to what this is like?

I suppose I would see and did see a lot of similarity between it, but knowing the CEO’s views on therapy as such, so I can actually see her point of view … Because she does do the thing that we’re meeting as equals and artists as equals, so it’s not like “I’m helping you to do stuff”, you’re meeting on equal ground. But I can see the similarities. Oh yeah. But I’d see it more probably … and therefore probably my views have changed about the
creative arts therapy because of this involvement with the CEO and seeing it and understanding that yes, it is meeting people as equals, which I think is really important, and it is.

So, are you glad you’ve fallen into this aspect as opposed to going down the masters track?

Yes, absolutely.

So, this has fulfilled what you were/?

Yep. Not that I got a masters from it (laughs). They had great subjects like group dynamics. I really wanted to have a look at stuff like that as well. I found that quite fascinating, so mmm.

OK. How do you see music fitting into it all? What do you think music’s role is?

I find it absolutely huge, music’s role, really I do. And particularly like, perhaps up in ***, this is where I’ve seen it with the *** kids, I sort of found, it was probably ‘cause I’m not the musician so it probably gave me time for a little breather as well and I didn’t have to do the workshop, but it’s just a lovely way in which everyone is sort of together and there was sort of like a calmness, not a calmness, but it’s sort of like a calmness comes over and everything is so fine and sometimes you can, like, when you’re singing out it just clears energy and I found it very clearing, I suppose. Yeah, clearing and calming. I always felt calm after music sessions.

Yep. Is that because it was more focused or/?

/Probably is ‘cause it was more focused, yeah, and the kids have got something to read. There’s an actual thing. It’s not, we’re not asking them to improvise, we’re not asking them to. Yeah, we’re stretching them by getting them to sing harmonies or even notes, getting them to understand that sort of stuff, getting words together blah blah blah but it’s there so it’s kind of more/

/OK. So, it’s a little more tangible.

Yes. Yep.

And what about in the devising process, cos you’ve been a big part of the devising process in all programs, really, what do you see as the most important aspects of the devising process?

The important aspects of that is, I suppose it’s what people are willing to offer and I often find it, and how that can change as well, when someone says I want to discuss this or I want to bring up this and whether or not they do it or not and then sometimes that pulling back of “Oh, maybe I don’t want to go down that path at all” that people can do … I
suppose it’s a, by doing the group-devised stuff, there is an involvement on all levels of all people who’ve been in there and it’s that sort of input that they’ve got and they can feel that they own part of it, more so than anything. Even though we try to devise up a title and we have thousands of names put in and everyone goes we like this or we like this but we know the artistic directors will choose the one they like. That’s right! Group-devised, grouse! (laughs). You know what I mean. But storyline-wise, particularly like that, and I suppose how they … It’s like a problem shared is a problem halved. Like, people sitting on a lot of stuff and all of a sudden, “I want to talk about this, bring this up” and the more you repeat it and you sort of work through it a bit, yeah, on that sort of level. Mmm.

OK. And if someone was coming in new to work with the theatre company, what would you say to them to help them along to understand what to do in the group sessions? Say if it was someone similar to yourself, so say it was an actor where your role is to get the devising thing happening …

To be able to, I suppose, there’s a flexibility and a flexibility that has to happen because the people we work with are so volatile and it can, something can happen and it can be blown out of the water and you can be working with someone, like if you’re doing a team-teaching situation and someone’s like having a moment or they’ve got to be spoken to or you’ve got to work on your own for a little while and all that sort of stuff and it’s a matter of not thinking that it’s, not being too prescribed as well, like, I need to do this and this and this by today. It may well like change by the nature of the group dynamic itself it might be throw that out the window and let’s go for a walk just to do that and clear some energy on that level. So, I suppose it’s malleability, really. And when I first came in, particularly working with the kids up in ***, I’d sort of try and teach by example. Oh, it depends, but in a workshop situation for example, stretching and the articulation, no what am I trying to say here? I’m trying to say … I don’t know what I’m trying to say.

Is it sort of being like a role model, is that what you mean?

Yeah, but sort of …

So, teaching through doing.

Yes. More that.

Rather than saying, this is what we’re going to do, you’re actually just doing it.

That’s right. Yep. That’s it. Thanks (laughs).

Cool. What are your ideas about creativity with this sort of work? Like, do you see it as one of the leading things or do you see it as, in the devising process, do you think that it’s them being creative that’s a big part of it?
Yep, I do. Absolutely. I do, ‘cause I think that, and this applies both to the women and the kids, like the environments that they come from, I think it’s highly important because it takes them out and puts them in a different space for x amount of time, and it’s that little bit of x amount of time and they’re inputting and they can own it so I think it’s highly important. I really do. And I don’t think people realize how creative they actually are, you know, and just by bringing themselves and their own personalities into the group is just as creative. ‘Cause I find that the writer can do, particularly with her scripting, she gets a certain type and style of how people speak and the way in which they present stuff and I find that brilliant because she can really get it. Whereas if I, ‘cause I’ve written a couple of scenes, and you find that you’re not, or if we scribe, say if we’re doing improvs, like the writer will get it but I’ll just write words and then make up the rest and it’s not what the person has said. It’s what I would say on that note, but she can actually get that actual speak of the person which I think that’s what her absolute forte is. That’s why when she says “Oh you can write scenes” you go “Oh, yeah, right” (laughs).

So, what do you see your role as, if not scriber of scenes?

Scriber of scenes, no. Well, OK, workshop-facilitator and that’s with the one-offs and perhaps, not so much this year because I haven’t been up with the kids but very much workshop facilitator and performer. Mmm.

Cool. So how do you view performance then? Like, imagine if there was no performance, just workshops.

That probably gets back to that whole thing about outcomes, that there needs to be a tangible outcome.

But what if it was a different outcome like a CD or/

Yeah, that’s fine, so long as it’s a/

/so, what is it about performance?

Oh, what is it about performance? Well, it’s funny you should ask that because before a performance, as the audience are coming in, I’m going “What the f**k am I doing this for?” and I get so nervous and I’m about to vomit and I’m swearing off-set. Because it’s a roller-coaster. Live performance is a roller-coaster and once that starts you’re on it and that’s it and you can’t get off and you think, “Right, I’m here for an hour twenty” whatever it is and here we go. But that sort of terror only really lasts just before you go on and then when you’re in the show of course it’s a little bit more, I don’t mind it once I’m in it.

OK. Compare the benefits of performance to say a CD in terms of outcome.

Because like a CD you can rework stuff, it’s a bit like film. You can edit it or add to it or whatever, but live performance is like a tightrope and so it’s just like, it really is like the
writer says, it’s moment by moment. If you stuff up in that moment don’t hold onto that moment and don’t beat yourself up for the next three scenes ’cause that moment’s gone. So, it’s real moment by moment stuff where you’re actually right in that moment and that’s all you can worry about, whereas a CD is probably a little bit more editable.

Yes. That’s very true.

But I did like doing the CD at the prison. That was good fun.

Yeah, it was almost relaxing, really.

(Laughing). It was. Everyone was so calm, really. And no-one did the heart failure thing, like I can’t do this halfway through a song. I knew _____ wouldn’t do that, but I thought _____ would at some stage. I think it’s singing to the wall. I think that helped.

Yep. And there was something about that day. ’Cause on Monday, that never would have happened. It was totally different energy. We just got them when we did, it was half an hour worth of gold.

Yeah, excellent.

OK. We’re almost done, I think. The other thing I wanted to talk about was the prison stuff. So, what was your experience of the processes in the prison and how would you describe it and all that sort of thing, this year, which was a different year?

I was a bit concerned cos I knew that you were concerned about the whole thing and where it was going to go and there was one week when came in when we started getting a little bit of script and then when we came in, whichever day it was, I was really concerned that the women would think, like I really didn’t want them to think, “Oh, now the crew’s here” sort of thing and like we’re going to overshadow them. I didn’t want them to feel that and I actually wanted to mention that at one stage but I didn’t, because I didn’t want them to think that none of them were up to doing it.

Yeah, ’cause that was different to normal. Normally they’re involved in that sort of thing.

Absolutely. And had there probably been more time I think the artistic director/ writer wanted to involve _____ more, which would have worked. But I actually enjoyed it again this year. You know, like people like ____ and ____ thanking you for coming in and you go, “You poor bunnies. Far out.” And so I didn’t, and then, oh that’s right, ’cause I hadn’t had a day off and I’m feeling blasted and ***’s like, “How are you” and I’m like, “I’d like a day off” and this is in front of the women and then I felt bad about doing that ’cause I didn’t want them to think I was doing it because I had to. It was more that I wanted to be there. That sort of thing. And having the different instruments was great.
You know how I was concerned, was that just in my head or did you, was that more concerning the few days leading up to it than normal, or is that just every year it’s like “Is this going to get there?”

No.

So, every year you just trusted that?

Yep. You’ve just got to, ‘cause it always does. It gets there. In whatever shape or form.

OK. You’d think after five years I’d have learnt that, wouldn’t you?

(laughs). But you were flying solo, Lulu, and that was the thing. It’s really difficult when you’re flying solo ‘cause you’ve got no-one you can really talk to about what’s going on in there, you’re just thinking by yourself ‘cause no-one else is there. It’s frightening. Jesus. So, I felt for you on that level.

Well, I appreciated you learning all those lines in a weekend.

Yeah, that was OK. And I thought it was good that one of the actors had a moment just before, ‘cause the women saw that and I thought it was good that they could see that it’s not as easy as we make it look.

Yep. Well, is there any other aspects you think are important compared with other ways of doing things?

I suppose it’s just, I suppose where the work differs and where the company actually differs is that it will support people if they have a dream, if they want to go on and do something there will generally be the funds or whatever sort of assistance for that person to actually realize that and I think that’s where the main difference lies, because rather than just going it’s great, we come together and do a performance or a CD, see you later or see you next year, there’s a real checking-in on people and seeing where they’re at and that contact needs to be maintained even if that person isn’t actually in a program, and that’s where I think it really differs from any other type of model.

Yep. It’s so true.

‘Cause last night we had the dinner with the kids and______ was handing out the reports to the school kids and each kid had to say what their dream is and little______, he’s bawling and he had everyone bawling and he went round the table thanking everyone. He stood there for a while and he was crying and______ started going. It was just, it was really sweet, and so you just realize and oh, and choices. It’s a matter of choices. Rather than thinking, what am I trying to say. Choices to, not to better themselves, that sounds really condescending.

Fulfil?
Or for betterment. Or it allows them to know that they have the ability to, if they want to do something, they have the ability to go out and do it, whatever form that is. And I think that’s important as well, yeah, with the women as well. You know, I’m thinking of ______ and how far she’s come and how wonderful her energy is, you know. She’s just a star, she really is. She’s just gorgeous, and so truthful and can say beautiful stuff and I really hope she makes it this time and doesn’t get done for old blues. And I think, yeah, it is that thing of giving people more options, I reckon, or realizing that they have more options than just oh, my Centrelink payment each fortnight.

Yep. And what is it that gives them that sense that they have more options? Cos it’s not like the theatre company gives all the options. They don’t say, “Here, we’ll help you to do a mechanics, oh they do in a way, but what is it that gives the women that sense that I have all these options if I want to take them?

Probably because the artistic directors are so positive in their, it’s almost personal, that they will say “You have” and “You can” and “You have the ability to” and just, or you know, even the pushiness of them (laughs), know what I mean? “Go and do something. Just go and do it! Stop wasting time!” (laughs). It’s that sort of thing. Sort of like an all-encompassing sort of thing. And I suppose they’ve realized just how long-term it is, that it’s a long-term process, not just a quick fix, “Yeah, if you do this course your life will be grous”.

Yep, yes. That is another really important bit.

That’s right. It’s really long and continual. Like, years and years and years.

And the commitment to that. Yeah.

Phenomenal. And I think that’s where the company actually differs from a lot of other companies is because of the two artistic directors, personally. Absolutely. It’s like that thing, were you at the meeting where the CEO was saying about how we want to hand it over up in ***?

No. I wasn’t there.

Which she’s been talking about for years, wanting to hand it over to the local artists, let them pick it up. And it’s sort of like, “But, it sort of only works because you’re you” and we are, and I’m not trying to pat us on the back but we are us, and more them, the artistic directors, but that’s why it works.

Exactly. And I think it’s because they are so strong about certain things that are important that other people would probably be more malleable on. Like, the fact that they’ve maintained their autonomy for so many years, you know, haven’t bought into having to speak to the prison, you know?
Appendix 5H – Transcript of Interview with ActorIII

How did you come to work with the theatre company?

OK. Well, I got involved as a worker in the community sector because of my belief in fairness and equality. There was a social conscience that I’ve always had, all my life. But working in the community sector, you tend to, I think if you’re committed to your work it’s very easy to burn out and I was working my last job in support and housing and the support was no problem but trying to find housing was like knocking your head against a brick wall and I thought I can’t do this anymore. And anyway other personal things came in. And the other thing was that I was an advocate and a voice. So, I was involved politically in left parties but also the job that I had at ______ enabled me to lobby and work with, you know, working on issues such as strip-search from the outside. So, I felt that there was a part where I was still advocating for people and giving people a voice. Now, this with the theatre company, I think I’m still out there advocating and lobbying for change, using the arts. So, it’s a different medium and you’re meeting people differently but you’re still having a voice out there. My social conscience hasn’t left. It’s still very much there in tact. My beliefs that I had when I was working in the community sector I can apply with my work with the theatre company.

And do you burn out as easily with this work as with your work in the community sector?

Well, I think you burn out in a different way. I think because also the work is intimate and you’re very much with somebody on an intimate level, the group that you’re working with, for me sometimes it becomes overwhelming that, I feel like I’ve given enough and I’ve got to cut off. Whether or not that’s me going to my house after work and not answering any phone calls, is a way of cutting off and it is something that I do do, so I think it does, but it’s not the fact that I’m burning out, it’s more that I’m overwhelmed with interactions and group dynamics. Yeah.

And why are group dynamics overwhelming in this work compared to your past work?

Because with the work that I’ve done in the past you’re working one-to-one. And the work with the theatre company is not usually one-to-one. It’s usually working in a group so therefore group processes come into play and I think you’ve always got to be aware of the leaders in the group, the scapegoats, all of what a group process entails.

OK. Now, how do you see music within the theatre company?

Well, when I talk about the creative I’m talking about anything you create, whether it’s music or drama or art. I don’t see one being better than the other. I see them as all being equal mediums for people to be creative, and the lovely thing with the theatre company is that music has always been weaved into the storyline. So, it’s an extension of the storyline and it helps carry a story through and I think it’s very important because sometimes, with the material that you’re putting out, a lot of the times there’s a lot of messages in there. It can actually give a person time to just sit back, take a bit of a rest,
you know, in a different way. So yeah, I probably wouldn’t like to be involved if music wasn’t a part of it even though I’m not very confident with it (laughs).

You’re very good (laughs). OK, so let’s talk about how you see your role within the theatre company.

Well, my main role I think is performing and facilitating in a group, liaising with different agencies, being a back-up person for, whether it’s you doing the music or it’s *** with the art. I think that I help create a very safe place for people.

You do, and how do you and the other artists create that place of safety?

Oh well, I think with our processes at times for people who haven’t been through that process it can be intimidating. And so, therefore, I don’t mind putting myself on the line and looking a bit silly or trying something that even I haven’t done in a group before to show other people that you just have to take that first step and that hopefully people in the group feel safe enough that they can do that. I think a lot of that comes back to trust and feeling safe. And the other thing is that with these projects they’re usually ongoing or long-term, I’m thinking about the work in the prison, so you’re not applying bandaids, you’re not opening up a Pandora’s Box if you go into work with a person because there’s consistency and continuity there all the time. So, you’re not running into a community and saying, “I’ll help you be the voice for this” and then running away from them. So there seems with most projects always to be ongoing stuff so people are just not worked with creatively and then you get them up to a point and then you say, “OK now we’ve got another project to do”. So I think that’s important, a bit of continuity. I got involved with the community sector because of my social convictions and I saw from a very early age what was fair and what was not fair, what was equal and what was not equal. And seeing people struggle and seeing an old person in the street and having the conscience to think, “I hope somebody cares about you.” And then, so, I see the women in prison, I was going to talk about how sometimes you strive for equality but because of the situation there can’t be and I’ll give you one explanation like that. The women in the prison are no different to you and I and I feel that I’m equal with them but what makes that very shaky is that I can leave the prison and I’ve got choices. So, in that sense we’re not equal. But when you’re working on performances, you’re working through to a production, and you’ve gone through all of that process, when you’re up there next to that person, you’re their equal. So, that can never be taken away from them or you. So, I like that.

OK. And how do you think the work helps the people who participate in it?

Well, just somebody to feel better. Somebody who you can feel their confidence has changed. I just had a flashback to ________ when we were working with her and she always had her hair up in a cap and by the end of that it had changed. So, there’s little things that you see change, and whether or not they can walk into a room with a bit more confidence or that they see their worth, that they’re actually able, because they’ve been told all of their lives that they’re crims, they’re bums, they’re addicts and so there’s no
sense of worth. And to know, for that person to see that they are unique and they have worth and they can contribute in a creative way is an absolute gift. Yeah. And it’s all those little measurements. Sometimes you’re not going to see it in a couple of weeks. You might see it in a couple of weeks but usually it’s after a six-month period or a twelve-month period, sometimes a two-year period that you’ve worked with people and you just see that their whole being has changed. And I think being able to feed the soul. The soul needs to be fed through the creative and I think that’s where you see change.

You used to work in the community sector without relying on the arts or creativity. How important is it to you now?

I can’t imagine that it couldn’t. I can’t imagine not being involved with something. I’d have to. Whether or not it was going to join a choir, I’d have to be involved with something where I felt that I was getting something, I was being fed, yeah.

OK. How do you see performance in terms of the work? Like, there are other outcomes that the theatre company works towards, like CDs and videos and exhibitions. What is it about performance that is integral to the work?

There’s an outcome, there’s a big outcome, there’s a build-up. A CD certainly, I’m not seeing a CD being less important than a performance depending on whatever the project is, but I think that it’s actually the process that you’ve been through together and it’s like, “If I’m going to jump, we’re all going to jump together.” So, does that make sense? And you can do that in a CD too. I think with performance you can’t hide. You’re totally vulnerable. You’re totally vulnerable up there and it’s like, we talk about when one person is up there you’re breathing with that person. You don’t want to see anything go wrong on that stage, you know? So, it’s the process that you go through and I’m not saying one’s more important than the other.

And what aspects of the process do you think help the performance to be successful?

I think it comes back to safety and trust and that comes back to establishing that in a group, and the person’s worth. Over that period of time they hopefully trust that they will be all right up there and this is where we come in too. If they’re not, then we have to use our skills to get them out and I suppose that’s another important thing that you’ve got to wing it if somebody has lost it, but that doesn’t happen very often, apart from us losing it (laughs). I mean, somebody wings me out of it. Does that make sense?

Yep, it does. OK, if someone was coming in as a worker, what would you say are some of the most important aspects for them to be aware of?

That we will be leading it by the creative and that there are processes that have been in place with this company for over 20 years that have worked and we will be working within those guidelines of what we know works. A lot of it, once again, goes back to establishing trust and safety in a group. I always go back to that because I don’t think you’re going to get much if you don’t have that. I think as artists we all are very good at,
I mean in the theatre company, we are very good at doing that because we know that that has to be established. It does have to be established to get where we want to be with them. And that’s not something that happens over night. It’s not something that happens over a couple of weeks. It’s something that happens over months or a couple of years. So, I’d be telling them that also an agency might have something in mind that they want to do and they say, “OK, this is what we want. We’ll fund you. You go in and work with this group of people” but if that group of people’s not interested in what that agency’s pushing we can’t artificially create that. This is where it comes down to community development. It has to come from the grass roots. Now, along the way, I think because our work is organic and I think it’s growing, it can change but it goes back to what that group wants to do. Why has that group got together? So, I’d be telling people that and “This is we’re you’re coming from and I’m sure we can help you get to that outcome but if that group doesn’t want to go in that direction,” you know, so I’d be very aware of that. I would probably leave it to us to facilitate and that they have to trust that we can do that. I think there’d be feedback mechanisms before and after workshops. And I think there’d be updating mechanisms, well this is where we are with the project at the moment, show them a bit of this, but there’d be no coming in and observing and standing around. If you’re going to be there, I’ve known in the past other workers have come in and they’ve brought a participant but that worker has to participate as well.

Yep. What do you think of the processes involved in the prison performance this year?

I think the difficulties this year is that, every year we do a big production. Now, I think, two things changed there. The group changed. The group definitely changed so a lot of the old people who’d been involved left prison and then, it was a lot of stuff was happening. A lot of new people were coming into the prison who don’t know a lot about the theatre company and what we offer. So there was a change with the guard in that way but there was also a change when the prison was renovating so we were told that we’d really have to curtail what we did this year. So, we knew it wasn’t going to be a big performance. We knew that it would be in-house. So, those things we were clear on. I think where it was a bit difficult is that we were devising a major production at the same time. I think it was difficult for you sometimes because I’d have to be in rehearsal or I was working on another project so at times you were alone in the prison and as we know in the company, that’s not a good process. And the outside performance became bigger than Ben Hur with the cast. We didn’t realize how big it was actually going to be. There were 17 cast members and not all of them were traveling well at any one time. So, a lot of energy was given to the group. Trying to keep up the other projects, the prison, I’d have to say suffered, the work in the prison suffered, but I think it was brilliant that you were able to work with the women getting their songs and, but to be perfectly honest, even though it was scaled down and there wasn’t very much drama, it wasn’t as huge as it usually was, it was just as good as anything that we’ve ever done. I was very happy with the outcome. At the end of the day, it’s about them. At the end of the day, I think that’s something you’ve got to know with the theatre company is that you can’t allow yourself to have a big ego because when it boils down to it, it’s not about you. But we’re all human beings and we do have an ego so that’s a thing that you battle with. But I think
they were the difficulties with this year and I just don’t think we realized how big the outside performance was going to take over everybody’s lives.

And so in terms of processes, it was very different but somehow it still got there.

Yeah, and the women loved it so I was very happy with the outcome, even though I was exhausted I was very happy with the outcome. Not for me, but for the women.

And what did you think about the fact that it was very light content compared to the usual?

I thought it was great. I honestly believe that that group was very much led by the music and they were a group about music and so that’s what I mean. In one way with what we were talking about before, though, we didn’t go in there and push drama where they didn’t really want to do drama. It was actually just putting some bits in there to thread around their music to tease it out for them. So, it was definitely led by the music and that’s what the group wanted it to do so therefore we achieved what the group wanted to achieve.
So, the first thing is, how did you experience the whole process from when you walked in that day ‘til the time of the performance? How would you generally sum it up?

It was great to see something followed through and put together the way that it was, from to start to finish and knowing that I played a vital part in that was fantastic. I suppose when I first came in I was very shaky. I was a mess, very sensitive and very scared of the situation I was in, actually coming to jail for the first time right through to getting the confidence to perform on stage. I think that says a lot in itself and the fact that I wrote a song and it was the first song I’d written for years and years and years and the words of the song speak for itself. That song is about a) the weight loss that I had where I lost 200 kilos and now I’m down to about 80, so I’ve done really well there and also it’s about the emotional being that I once was compared to what I am now. Some of the songs within the musical itself were fantastic and the first song that really grabbed me was “Awake” and I tell you what, that was great. I looked at the words and thought, “Shit, someone else has written this. I’m not alone in what I’m thinking” and I suppose I became like a sheep then and literally followed suit and wrote a song. But the funny thing is, is that I actually wrote all those words. I put the music to it myself, with your help.

Yep. You had totally designed it in your head and all I had to do was fit the chords in.

Yeah. It was just amazing. I was rapt.

I was so wrapped to have you there. I was like, “She can play flute! She can sing!” It was great. So, can I ask how long was it since you’d arrived here to the time you arrived in our little group?

Within two weeks.

Two weeks. Wow. OK, so that was a big thing for you, then.

Mmm, ‘cause I thought, “What is going to contain myself and keep my sanity in here?” First, I went to programs, education and I thought, “Well, maybe I could better myself that way.” But then I realized that I was at the acute stage of a breakdown and I thought, “Right. I need to focus on me for a little while and actually look after my wellbeing before I could learn anything, before I could do anything.” And I thought, “Well, what could I share with everybody else that I have?” And the only thing that I have is my music, and to be able to share that with everybody made me feel quite well and it made me, you know, come down the path, and as the staff have said to me up in my unit, I’ve come a long way in a short time.
Yeah. Obviously they loved your song when you performed. How has it been back at the unit? Has anything changed?

Everybody can’t get the song out of their head. They keep singing it, including the staff. Staff keep grabbing a pen and walking up to me asking for my autograph (laughs). Yeah, it was really good just to cop a bit of feedback, and positive feedback. It’s all been positive feedback. The afternoon after the performance, after I went back to my unit and got all the well wishes and all the - “Oh my goodness! What a voice!” – they were just so surprised and I thought, “Geez, what the hell have I done” but I suppose one of the main objectives I wanted on that day was, there are a couple of girls who are locked down for 24 hours a day in my unit because they are a major suicide risk to themselves, and one of those girls I actually got to know, and I begged and pleaded with the unit staff to let her out and get her down there, and to see her down there was just amazing and she loved it, because we’re not allowed to talk to her or anything. We’re not allowed to communicate with her, only the staff are. However, in the past I’ve communicated with her and I think she’s a lovely girl. She’s just mentally very unwell and it was just great to see her down there and clapping along and having a good time, a genuine good time. And she loved it.

Have you been able to communicate with her since?

No, the staff have told me. But I’ve said hello to her a couple of times when they’ve walked her past my unit.

Yep. That’s what’s great, ‘cause it’s such a gift what you and the others have been part of. You’ve actually given, by being so brave to be up there, you’ve given to people like that, which is a really cool thing.

Yeah, it’s really good because when you’ve got nothing in here which is 98 percent of the women, the only thing we’ve got is each other and that’s what I’ve learnt and if I can make others happy through my actions as a direct result of what I’ve done, if I can make others smile, if I can make others clap, if I can make others do positive things as a direct result of what I’ve done, or my voice or whatever, whether I’ve played a joke on someone or whether I’m performing in the musical, seeing them so happy and wrapped the way they were, I’m beside myself over that.

Yep. It’s cool. So, were there any challenges or hard parts to the process?

Oh yeah (laughs). Hard part was a lot of girls were emotional leading up to it, myself included, but I suppose I held it together a lot more than some of the other girls. And there were times when the group actually faulted as a result. However, and I’ve got to say this, between Lucinda, myself and Jane, we all worked as a team in the end and brought it all together. So, we did the background work during the week. However, girls still faulted. They didn’t believe in themselves and that was the main thing, and I thought, “If this girl loves herself for her own sake she’s got to love others too and not be so bitter and self-absorbed” and that’s how I saw it. In the end it was teamwork and right up ‘til
that time just before we got on stage they were bitching and carrying on but hey, I didn’t enter into it because I’m above that.

You did so well. You were very strong in that. So, when you say you had to do the ground-work during the week, what sort of things did you have to do?

I sat down and actually had singing lessons with a couple of them, and basically spoke to them and asked them what the song meant to them, asked them if there were any words they wanted changed, asked them about the song and to tell me some history behind the song and themselves, because a) I didn’t know these girls from a bar of soap, and b) if I was helping singing a song, or if I was helping play an instrument in that song, then I want that to be an interpretation of that girl, I don’t want it to become my song. So, by playing the flute and working out each girl’s personality and what would best attribute to that girl, I would bring that out in that person and say, “Look. If you’re loving yourself for your own sake, how about loving everybody else? How about spending some time with everybody else?” Or, I’d say to Jane “What flute do you want in it? What do you not want in it? What sort of things could I possibly add to your song to attribute it, not to embarrass it?” And I suppose I was harsh on myself in that way, because of how critical I was towards myself in that time. However, it did inspire me to work harder than ever to make sure I didn’t botch it up, which I don’t believe I did (laughs). But I think the last song was grouse, with me and Lucinda. We were just mucking around up there, having a great time and I think that radiated through and yet we still blitzed it.

OK. So, you’ve mentioned a lot about how it’s impacted your own wellbeing just through the way that you’ve talked, in a positive way. Are there any ways that we’ve got to be careful about, where it’s actually been harmful to your wellbeing?

No. No. I think it’s great. I think it was a great learning curve, too, to actually be part of a production in this capacity, yeah, and compared to the productions I’ve been in outside, I think it was fantastic, just the way things come together so quickly and so nicely is just great. Yeah, I was wrapped and I think the artistic director, she’s got a real dry wit about her and it’s sort of hard to, ‘cause we were put on the spot with those questions, but it was also good because it made us think, it was provoking, what she said, so it was quite good. But at first I didn’t know how to take her ‘cause I thought, “Oh, who are these people telling me what to do?”

Yeah, and especially because they came in just at the end.

Yeah, that’s what I thought, so I didn’t know who they were or what they were actually about. However, that’s fine, I was happy with that. It’s just the other girls took a bit of offence to it and I didn’t know how to take it so I just took a backseat where the other artists were concerned, a) because they were more involved with the dancers and that, so
I wasn’t part of that because I was a muso and a singer, and b) I have trust issues myself, so I find it hard to just trust anybody. Except I trusted you because you’ve been there since day-dot and I since found out you’ve been doing it for years anyway. So, and then I found out all the other girls have been doing it too.

Yeah. This year was different. Normally the other artists come in from day-dot too but this time it was just a different year, so that’s why it was unusual this time. Now, let’s talk about specific aspects. So, for instance, the song-writing aspect. What aspects of the song-writing part were important? Like, do you think it was important that you wrote something original?

Yeah I do. Definitely. Because that’s my heart and soul that I’m laying on the line. No-one actually knew that it was my song and they still don’t but I wrote that, not really knowing where it would fit in with the music. However, it totally worked and I was surprised ‘cause I thought it might be a bit self-absorbed. I thought it might be too full-on. I really didn’t know what to expect or what to do.

Do you know, I was amazed because the first week I totally threw you into it. I was like, right, let’s record your voice, let’s write a song and when we left I said to you, “Have a think about writing a song” and you said, “Oh no, I don’t really want to”. So, the next week I thought I’d just have to gently nudge you again, but the next week I came back and there you had, you’d not only written the words but you had the musical idea in your head. So, obviously you were a bit hesitant at first but you very quickly decided/

/ Yeah, it was about confidence and it was about finding the right time where I could sit down by myself because unfortunately in an environment like this it’s very hard to get time to yourself at all. The only time you get is lock-down, so I was actually looking forward to it (laughs). On the Monday, I was looking forward to it because you’d instilled it in me to write a song and I realized then that I was writing for me but I also felt very hesitant about it too, at first, worrying about what others would think of me and things like that.

And so, you said you were thinking about doing education first and then you thought no, you need to do something for yourself. Did this process suit you more than education would have because it was more something for yourself? How did it compare to the idea of education?

I decided, because of my mental state at the time, because I have a history of psychiatric issues, namely depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, it was easier for me to do something light, also something that I have some prior knowledge on. So it was actually going back to basics and that’s how I felt, ‘cause I’d only just gone to the mental health unit, which is intense psych. However, I displayed no self-harm features there. I displayed only happiness once I started the music and I lived for the music and my world revolved around that music and especially towards the end with the performance, it was great just to keep it going and just maintain that to an extent where we were just
rehearsing 24/7 and I loved it. I loved it. I kept going out for a smoke all the time, but I loved it (laughs). I was getting nervous towards the performance.

Yeah, that’s understandable. How important do you think it was to culminate the whole thing in a performance? So, imagine if we hadn’t had a performance and we were just doing regular music sessions. How important to you was it that we actually did work toward something like a performance?

I was of the mind of “Let’s just rehearse every week. Just enjoy the music. Let’s just go with it.” However, when we had something to aim for, in the last two weeks, it was actually quite good. It kept me on my feet. It kept me on my toes and it made me realize that I had structure, routine and times to be there and times not to be there and I was always on time, never late, so/

/Yes, you were a dream person to have. I thank my lucky stars you entered when you did.

Yeah, so it was great to come down and do something that was structured and know that other people would reap from the rewards that we presented. So, it was great that way.

So, which aspects of your wellbeing were most affected by the performance?

My mental state. Definitely.

In what way was your mental state changed by the fact that you did a performance?

Well, according to the doctors and the psychs up in my unit, because my unit is a very specialized unit that deals with psych and special needs, so I was actually doing cartwheels around the unit. I was having an impact on the others because I was radiating happiness throughout the unit. Everybody soon got whiff of what was going on in the music program in my unit. My unit’s very sheltered and I was on the other side of the unit which is total seclusion at that stage and I was having a lot of hassles on that side. I was being bullied and stood-over big-time, and abused. So, it was very nasty on that particular side of the unit. So, the fact that the music, I had something to go to and also it gave me an excuse to get out of the unit and actually interact with others. And I suppose that was very important for my mental state in order to vent and in order to talk about certain things with other prisoners, but also with yourself, just talking music. So, it was great and it made me realize I was human and it got me to a point where I was switched over to the A side, which means that there’s no seclusion. You can have your sharps on you. They trust you when you’re on the A side and it also means that you have unlimited compound access.

So, why did you get switched from one side to the other?

I think it was an attribute to the music.

Really?!
Yeah, because I could prove to them that I was safe. I could prove to them that I was coming a long way.

**Wow, that’s great.**

Yeah, ‘cause I used to be in my room crying 24/7 and I didn’t have the confidence to even walk out of my cell. So, for me to actually come out of my cell and come down to music class all those times is just a feat in itself.

**It is, and the thing is, I don’t know that. So, for me to know that now is so heart-warming for me.**

Yeah, but you know I’m a pretty private person anyway. I don’t usually say a lot. However, when the time comes I do. If I need to say something it does get said, but tactfully and how it needs to. I’m quite sensible like that. I don’t go off half-assed (laughs). I don’t let emotions get the better of me.

Which aspects of the lead-up to the performance do you think contributed most to the success of the performance?

I think you did, Lucy.

(laughing) **This isn’t the I Love Lucy show**

(laughs) No, it’s not but without your musical skills we wouldn’t have been able to get where we were. There were a couple of times when you ran late and the other artists were there, however it wasn’t the same because the music wasn’t there. So, it didn’t get the same sort of routine that we were used to, that we were accustomed to. I suppose, I’ll be honest here, you spent more time with all the others than me, but however I also know that I was OK with that because I didn’t need as much help musically as the others.

Exactly. And that’s something I get a bit frustrated about when we are leading up to a performance. You came in as we were leading up to a performance and at that point I can’t think, “Let’s develop you musically” because I’m so focused on getting the group together to perform, whereas early next year, because the performance won’t be so close I can give you more attention, basically.

Yeah, but I don’t think I needed it. ‘Cause I realized, I’m not big-noting myself, but the others needed more help because they didn’t have the experience or the confidence that I had, or grew, or found again from years ago. So, I believe it was justified, so don’t worry (laughs).

OK. Did you think we rehearsed enough before the performance?

I was a bit nervous but I did feel we rehearsed enough. Yeah.
Excellent.

I think there were times at the start with that group where a lot of women came and went. And I think that’s not your fault. I think that’s them … How will I put this? I don’t know how to put this but a lot of those girls were hyperactive but I think they wanted to take everything and just basically turn it into a rock-band-come-popstars and I wasn’t in agreement with that and that soon rubbed off on some of the others too, and soon those girls left and they didn’t bother coming back and I was actually quite relieved about that. So, yeah, it was actually quite good not to have them in there because it would have been disruptive in the whole getting it together, rehearsals, that sort of thing. And it just goes to show that they are obviously people who can’t follow things through, whereas us as a team did. And I bet that at that musical, had some of them been there, I think they would have been very disappointed or pissed off because they weren’t up there where they should have been, knowing that others actually put in the time to do it, and you reap what you sow.

OK, great. Now, we’ll just talk about the voice. So, do you think your singing voice has changed since from when you first came in to now?

I think it’s changed slightly, just slightly but because of how much singing I actually did in here.

Yep. So, you developed more muscles, is that what you mean?

Yeah, with the voice exercises and things like that. It was quite good. It was quite effective.

And what about your relationship to your voice? So, when you first came in were you shy about, you weren’t really shy about your voice, you were quite confident. And now you’re equally as confident.

I think I was confident and then went shy and then at the performance I just belted it. So, it was good it all came back and I think it was good that I had nerves (laughs) ‘cause even on the dress rehearsal I did stuff up the flute a bit and I’m thinking, “Oh no.” And then my voice was going all shaky and I was thinking, “Don’t do this to me” so I grounded myself and actually did the performance, so I was quite happy.

You did very well. How did you ground yourself?

I told myself where I was and told myself what I was about to do, which was, “You’re in jail and everyone else is in jail too that’s at this performance, pretty much. You’re going to have the people in charge of you there” because the chief came over in the morning to check out if it would be suitable for *** to come and watch, but also checked me out singing and now he wants carols on Christmas day, so I’ve run it past the girls and they’re happy with that.
How important is it to you to feel that you’re being heard or that you have a voice in here? And be totally honest. It may not be that important to you.

It’s not that important but if I’ve got something I can share with everybody, I will. But it’s not important as far as I’m not better than anybody else, however I may be able to communicate things on a better level than some people so I’ll offer to speak for them. However, I’m in here to look after me at the moment and I don’t really get heard in my unit either but I’m happy about that though. I’m happy to just slip under the radar and just be me.

But the irony is that with that performance you didn’t slip under the radar and now back at your unit you’re not slipping under the radar so much, are you?

Apart from the autographs (laughs).

(Laughing) Oh really? Everything’s gone back to normal except for the autographs.

No. Everybody can’t get the songs out of their heads, especially my mirror song. Everyone around the compound is singing it. And I saw Jane last night, she delivers the DVDs up in protection and that’s next door to us and I saw her from our carell and it’s got little fence things and all I sang to her was (singing) “Into pieces” and she just burst out laughing, going “Who’s that?” and I just went, “Ha ha”. And then I started singing my song and she’s like, “Ooohh”. So, we’ve got a running joke. But I haven’t seen the girls really since the performance. I have sort of hidden away in my unit for a few days.

Have you? Why is that?

I’m too shy. I’m really shy about it because I went down to canteen, which is a big long line to go to the local canteen, and everyone has just overwhelmed me with compliments and I got real scared and ran back (laughs). But it was allright. I was happy with that.

Two more general questions. So what do you reckon was the role of music in this?

It was a key role. It was a definite key function of our production as a performance and also through the compound. It’s a vital thing in here, I believe, yet let alone to put on a performance. I mean, those girls loved it. They were just roaring and roaring for more and more and more, and the fact that Mr *** was there watching, he’s the regional manager of women’s prisons, I was like, I saw him at the end. He was clapping away, having a good old time, and I thought, “Oh my goodness.” I just didn’t realize he was there ‘cause I didn’t look at the audience. I just looked at the no smoking sign at the back of the gym (laughs). So, I didn’t see, I saw a few faces but I was too scared to look. Every time I looked somebody’d be putting their thumbs up and going, “Hey!” And then all my psych nurses were there as well and they said I had a brilliant voice and to just keep going. Keep going is what they said and they couldn’t speak more highly of me and I’ve got a review coming up and they’re right onto it. So, it’s good.
Is that a mental health review thing?

Correct. A risk and assessment. So, one of my key goals in my actual file and in my local plan with my caseworker, the prison officer is a case-worker, was to attend performances on time, attend rehearsals on time, attend all of this stuff. So, music actually played a very vital part in my mental health in that way because I’d actually set goals surrounding it. It was all there.

OK. Last question, what are your hopes for next year?

Next year we’ve got to put on a bigger and better one than this one. I don’t know how we’re going to top it, though.

Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Yes. A heartfelt thank you to you. Big-time. A heartfelt thank you. It was great.

 Structural Meaning Units

Experience of being in the group

- Knowing that I played a vital part in that was fantastic
- To be able to share that with everybody made me feel quite well
- We all worked as a team in the end and brought it all together.
- So, we did the background work during the week.
- In the end it was teamwork
- I sat down and actually had singing lessons with a couple of them
- Spoke to them and asked them what the song meant to them
- Asked them if there were any words they wanted changed
- Asked them about the song and to tell me some history behind the song and themselves, because I didn’t know these girls from a bar of soap
- I suppose I held it together a lot more than some of the other girls.
- I thought, “If this girl loves herself for her own sake she’s got to love others too and not be so bitter and self-absorbed” and that’s how I saw it.
- Right up ‘til that time just before we got on stage they were bitching and carrying on but hey, I didn’t enter into it because I’m above that.
- “Look. If you’re loving yourself for your own sake, how about loving everybody else? How about spending some time with everybody else?”
- And it just goes to show that they are obviously people who can’t follow things through, whereas us as a team did.
- And I saw Jane last night, she delivers the DVDs up in protection and that’s next door to us and I saw her from our carell and it’s got little fence things and all I sang to her was (singing) “Into pieces” and she just burst out laughing, going
“Who’s that?” and I just went, “Ha ha”. And then I started singing my song and she’s like, “Ooohh”. So, we’ve got a running joke.

- The first song that really grabbed me was “Awake” and I tell you what, that was great. I looked at the words and thought, “Shit, someone else has written this. I’m not alone in what I’m thinking”

Experience of self in the beginning

- I suppose when I first came in I was very shaky
- I was a mess
- Very sensitive
- Very scared of the situation I was in
- I thought, “What is going to contain myself and keep my sanity in here?”
- First, I went to programs, education and I thought, “Well, maybe I could better myself that way.”
- But then I realized that I was at the acute stage of a breakdown
- I thought, “Right. I need to focus on me for a little while and actually look after my wellbeing before I could learn anything, before I could do anything.”
- And I thought, “Well, what could I share with everybody else that I have?”
- And the only thing that I have is my music
- It made me, you know, come down the path
- I decided, because of my mental state at the time, because I have a history of psychiatric issues, namely depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, it was easier for me to do something light
- Also something that I have some prior knowledge on
- So it was actually going back to basics
- I used to be in my room crying 24/7
- I didn’t have the confidence to even walk out of my cell
- So, for me to actually come out of my cell and come down to music class all those times is just a feat in itself

Experience of self during the process

- Actually coming to jail for the first time right through to getting the confidence to perform on stage. I think that says a lot in itself
- As the staff have said to me up in my unit, I’ve come a long way in a short time.
- I think it was a great learning curve, too, to actually be part of a production in this capacity
- Compared to the productions I’ve been in outside, I think it was fantastic, just the way things come together so quickly and so nicely is just great.
- Yeah, I was rapt.
- It made me realise I was human
- I’m in here to look after me at the moment

Experience of creating songs

- The fact that I wrote a song
- It was the first song I’d written for years and years and years
That song is about the weight loss that I had where I lost 200 kilos. Also it’s about the emotional being that I once was compared to what I am now. I suppose I became like a sheep then and literally followed suit and wrote a song. But the funny thing is, is that I actually wrote all those words. I put the music to it myself, with your help. That’s my heart and soul that I’m laying on the line. No-one actually knew that it was my song and they still don’t. I wrote that, not really knowing where it would fit in with the music. However, it totally worked. I was surprised ‘cause I thought it might be a bit self-absorbed. I thought it might be too full-on. I really didn’t know what to expect or what to do. It was about confidence. It was about finding the right time where I could sit down by myself. Unfortunately in an environment like this it’s very hard to get time to yourself at all. The only time you get is lock-down, so I was actually looking forward to it (laughs). On the Monday, I was looking forward to it. You’d instilled it in me to write a song. I realized then that I was writing for me. I also felt very hesitant about it too, at first, worrying about what others would think of me and things like that.

Experience after the performance
- Staff keep grabbing a pen and walking up to me asking for my autograph (laughs).
- Yeah, it was really good just to cop a bit of feedback, and positive feedback. It’s all been positive feedback.
- The afternoon after the performance, after I went back to my unit and got all the well wishes and all the - “Oh my goodness! What a voice!” – they were just so surprised.
- I thought, “Geez, what the hell have I done?”
- It got me to a point where I was switched over to the A side, which means that there’s no seclusion.
- You can have your sharps on you.
- They trust you when you’re on the A side.
- It also means that you have unlimited compound access.
- I think it was an attribute to the music.
- I could prove to them that I was safe.
- I could prove to them that I was coming a long way.
- Everybody can’t get the songs out of their heads, especially my mirror song. Everyone around the compound is singing it.
- I haven’t seen the girls really since the performance.
- I have sort of hidden away in my unit for a few days.
- I’m too shy. I’m really shy about it.
I went down to canteen, which is a big long line to go to the local canteen, and everyone has just overwhelmed me with compliments and I got real scared and ran back (laughs).

But it was allright. I was happy with that.

They said I had a brilliant voice and to just keep going. Keep going is what they said

They couldn’t speak more highly of me

I’ve got a review coming up and they’re right onto it

Next year we’ve got to put on a bigger and better one than this one.

I don’t know how we’re going to top it, though.

Experience of performing to others

I suppose one of the main objectives I wanted on that day was, there are a couple of girls who are locked down for 24 hours a day in my unit because they are a major suicide risk to themselves, and one of those girls I actually got to know, and I begged and pleaded with the unit staff to let her out and get her down there

To see her down there was just amazing and she loved it

It was just great to see her down there and clapping along and having a good time, a genuine good time.

And she loved it.

If I can make others happy through my actions as a direct result of what I’ve done, if I can make others smile, if I can make others clap, if I can make others do positive things as a direct result of what I’ve done, or my voice or whatever, whether I’ve played a joke on someone or whether I’m performing in the musical, seeing them so happy and wrapped the way they were, I’m beside myself over that.

Experience of the performance

I think the last song was grouse, with me and Lucinda

We were just mucking around up there, having a great time

I think that radiated through

We still blitzed it

At the performance I just belted it

It was good it all came back

I think it was good that I had nerves (laughs)

The fact that Mr *** was there watching, he’s the regional manager of women’s prisons, I was like, I saw him at the end. He was clapping away, having a good old time, and I thought, “Oh my goodness.”

I just didn’t realize he was there ’cause I didn’t look at the audience.

I just looked at the no smoking sign at the back of the gym (laughs).

I saw a few faces but I was too scared to look.

Every time I looked somebody’d be putting their thumbs up and going, “Hey!”

And then all my psych nurses were there as well

Experience of self during the process
Hard part was a lot of girls were emotional leading up to it, myself included...
And I suppose I was harsh on myself in that way, because of how critical I was towards myself in that time.
We were put on the spot with those questions, but it was also good because it made us think, it was provoking, what she said, so it was quite good.
But at first I didn’t know how to take her ‘cause I thought, “Oh, who are these people telling me what to do?”
So I didn’t know who they were or what they were actually about.
I didn’t know how to take it so I just took a backseat where the other artists were concerned because they were more involved with the dancers and that, so I wasn’t part of that because I was a muso and a singer.
I have trust issues myself, so I find it hard to just trust anybody. I trusted you because you’ve been there since day-dot and I since found out you’ve been doing it for years anyway.
So, and then I found out all the other girls have been doing it too.
I’d only just gone to the mental health unit, which is intense psych.
However, I displayed no self-harm features there.
I displayed only happiness once I started the music.
I lived for the music.
My world revolved around that music.
I was actually doing cartwheels around the unit.
I was having an impact on the others because I was radiating happiness throughout the unit.
Wouldn’t you say this is her experience of self in prison, or overall, as you had it?
So, the fact that the music, I had something to go to
Also it gave me an excuse to get out of the unit.
And actually interact with others.
I suppose that that was very important for my mental state in order to vent and in order to talk about certain things with other prisoners.
Also with yourself, just talking music.
I suppose, I’ll be honest here, you spent more time with all the others than me.
I also know that I was OK with that.
I didn’t need as much help musically as the others.
I don’t think I needed it.
I realised, I’m not big-noting myself, but the others needed more help because they didn’t have the experience or the confidence that I had, or grew, or found again from years ago.
I think I was confident and then went shy.
One of my key goals in my actual file and in my local plan with my caseworker, the prison officer is a case-worker, was to attend performances on time, attend rehearsals on time, attend all of this stuff.
So, music actually played a very vital part in my mental health in that way because I’d actually set goals surrounding it. It was all there.
Experience leading up to the performance

- Especially towards the end with the performance
- It was great just to keep it going and just maintain that to an extent where we were just rehearsing 24/7
- I was getting nervy towards the performance.
- I was of the mind of “Let’s just rehearse every week. Just enjoy the music. Let’s just go with it.”
- However, when we had something to aim for, in the last two weeks, it was actually quite good.
- It kept me on my feet.
- It kept me on my toes
- It made me realize that I had structure, routine and times to be there and times not to be there
- I was always on time, never late
- It was great to come down and do something that was structured
- I loved it. I loved it. I kept going out for a smoke all the time, but I loved it (laughs).
- Know that other people would reap from the rewards that we presented
- I was a bit nervous
- I did feel we rehearsed enough.
- Even on the dress rehearsal I did stuff up the flute a bit and I’m thinking, “Oh no.”
- And then my voice was going all shaky and I was thinking, “Don’t do this to me”
- I grounded myself and actually did the performance
- I was quite happy.
- I told myself where I was and told myself what I was about to do, which was, “You’re in jail and everyone else is in jail too that’s at this performance, pretty much. You’re going to have the people in charge of you there”
- Right up ‘til that time just before we got on stage they were bitching and carrying on but hey, I didn’t enter into it because I’m above that.

Experience of self in creative collaboration

- If I was helping singing a song, or if I was helping play an instrument in that song, then I want that to be an interpretation of that girl
- I don’t want it to become my song.
- So, by playing the flute and working out each girl’s personality and what would best attribute to that girl, I would bring that out in that person
- I’d say to Jane, “What flute do you want in it? What do you not want in it? What sort of things could I possibly add to your song to attribute it, not to embarrass it?”
- However, it did inspire me to work harder than ever to make sure I didn’t botch it up
- I don’t believe I did (laughs).
I don’t know how to put this but a lot of those girls were hyperactive but I think they wanted to take everything and just basically turn it into a rock-band-come-popstars and I wasn’t in agreement with that.

That soon rubbed off on some of the others too, and soon those girls left and they didn’t bother coming back and I was actually quite relieved about that.

It was actually quite good not to have them in there because it would have been disruptive in the whole getting it together, rehearsals, that sort of thing.

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**Experienced Meaning Units**

**I played a strong and vital part within the group**
- Knowing that I played a vital part in that was fantastic
- So, we did the background work during the week.
- I suppose I held it together a lot more than some of the other girls.
- I sat down and actually had singing lessons with a couple of them
- Spoke to them and asked them what the song meant to them
- Asked them if there were any words they wanted changed

**I helped others to build their musical skills**
- I sat down and actually had singing lessons with a couple of them

**I helped others to take ownership of their songs**
- Spoke to them and asked them what the song meant to them
- Asked them about the song and to tell me some history behind the song and themselves
- Asked them if there were any words they wanted changed

**I got to know others through their songs**
- Asked them about the song and to tell me some history behind the song and themselves, because I didn’t know these girls from a bar of soap

**I’m wrapped we followed it through as a team**
- And it just goes to show that they are obviously people who can’t follow things through, whereas us as a team did.

**I loved seeing it all come together**
- Compared to the productions I’ve been in outside, I think it was fantastic, just the way things come together so quickly and so nicely is just great.

**Knowing others through their songs helped me to feel more comfortable playing music in them**
- So, by playing the flute and working out each girl’s personality and what would best attribute to that girl, I would bring that out in that person
I didn’t want to take over their songs
  • If I was helping singing a song, or if I was helping play an instrument in that
    song, then I want that to be an interpretation of that girl
  • I don’t want it to become my song.

Nor botch them up
  • I’d say to Jane, “What flute do you want in it? What do you not want in it? What
    sort of things could I possibly add to your song to attribute it, not to embarrass
    it?”
  • However, it did inspire me to work harder than ever to make sure I didn’t botch it
    up

So I asked each woman how she wanted me to contribute
  • I’d say to Jane, “What flute do you want in it? What do you not want in it? What
    sort of things could I possibly add to your song to attribute it, not to embarrass
    it?”

I’m wrapped with how I was throughout the process
  • Knowing that I played a vital part in that was fantastic
  • So, for me to actually come out of my cell and come down to music class all those
    times is just a feat in itself
  • Actually coming to jail for the first time right through to getting the confidence to
    perform on stage. I think that says a lot in itself
  • I was wrapped.
  • As the staff have said to me up in my unit, I’ve come a long way in a short time.
  • I was always on time, never late

I’ve come a long way in a short time
  • Actually coming to jail for the first time right through to getting the confidence to
    perform on stage. I think that says a lot in itself
  • As the staff have said to me up in my unit, I’ve come a long way in a short time.

I was one of the leaders in the group
  • So, we did the background work during the week.

I wished others in the group were less self-absorbed and more caring of others
  • I thought, “If this girl loves herself for her own sake she’s got to love others too
    and not be so bitter and self-absorbed” and that’s how I saw it.
  • “Look. If you’re loving yourself for your own sake, how about loving everybody
    else? How about spending some time with everybody else?”

I didn’t get involved when others bitched or carried on
  • Right up ‘til that time just before we got on stage they were bitching and
    carrying on but hey, I didn’t enter into it because I’m above that.
I now have a running joke with one of the group members

- And I saw Jane last night, she delivers the DVDs up in protection and that’s next door to us and I saw her from our carell and it’s got little fence things and all I sang to her was (singing) “Into pieces” and she just burst out laughing, going “Who’s that?” and I just went, “Ha ha”. And then I started singing my song and she’s like, “Ooohh”. So, we’ve got a running joke.

I was a mess when I first came into prison: sensitive, shaky, scared, emotional, self-critical

- I suppose when I first came in I was very shaky
- I was a mess
- Very sensitive
- Very scared of the situation I was in
- I used to be in my room crying 24/7
- I didn’t have the confidence to even walk out of my cell
- And I suppose I was harsh on myself in that way, because of how critical I was towards myself in that time.

I still wanted to better myself but I needed to do something to match where I was at

- I thought, “What is going to contain myself and keep my sanity in here?”
- First, I went to programs, education and I thought, “Well, maybe I could better myself that way.”
- But then I realized that I was at the acute stage of a breakdown
- I’m in here to look after me at the moment

I needed to go back to something familiar rather than learning something entirely new

- I decided, because of my mental state at the time, because I have a history of psychiatric issues, namely depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, it was easier for me to do something light
- Also something that I have some prior knowledge on
- So it was actually going back to basics
- I thought, “Right. I need to focus on me for a little while and actually look after my wellbeing before I could learn anything, before I could do anything.”

Music was something familiar that I could share with others

- And I thought, “Well, what could I share with everybody else that I have?”
- And the only thing that I have is my music

The process was difficult emotionally

- Hard part was a lot of girls were emotional leading up to it, myself included
- I think I was confident and then went shy

Thought provoking in a good way

- We were put on the spot with those questions, but it was also good because it made us think, it was provoking, what she said, so it was quite good.
It was difficult when the other artists came because I didn’t know how to take them

- But at first I didn’t know how to take her ‘cause I thought, “Oh, who are these people telling me what to do?”
- So I didn’t know who they were or what they were actually about.
- I didn’t know how to take it

Nor if I could trust them because they hadn’t been there from the beginning

- I have trust issues myself, so I find it hard to just trust anybody.
- I trusted you because you’ve been there since day-dot and I since found out you’ve been doing it for years anyway.

So I just took a backseat where they were concerned

- So I just took a backseat where the other artists were concerned because they were more involved with the dancers and that, so I wasn’t part of that because I was a muso and a singer

I trusted you because you’d been there from the start and I knew you’d been doing this for years

- I have trust issues myself, so I find it hard to just trust anybody. I trusted you because you’ve been there since day-dot and I since found out you’ve been doing it for years anyway.

And then I found out that the other artists had been doing it for years too

- So, and then I found out all the other girls have been doing it too.

I felt human again

- It made me realize I was human

I’m proud of my song, my musical collaboration and the performance

- The fact that I wrote a song
- But the funny thing is, is that I actually wrote all those words. I put the music to it myself, with your help.
- I wrote that, not really knowing where it would fit in with the music. However, it totally worked
- Everybody can’t get the songs out of their heads, especially my mirror song. Everyone around the compound is singing it.
- However, it did inspire me to work harder than ever to make sure I didn’t botch it up. I don’t believe I did (laughs).
- Next year we’ve got to put on a bigger and better one than this one. I don’t know how we’re going to top it, though.
- We still blitzed it
- At the performance I just belted it
- I grounded myself and actually did the performance. I was quite happy.
I haven’t been musically creative for so long
- It was the first song I’d written for years and years and years

My song is about my past and how I’ve changed
- That song is about the weight loss that I had where I lost 200 kilos
- Also it’s about the emotional being that I once was compared to what I am now

Songwriting in here can be too exposing
- That’s my heart and soul that I’m laying on the line.
- No-one actually knew that it was my song and they still don’t

I was worried that others might think it was too full-on and self-absorbed
- I was surprised ‘cause I thought it might be a bit self-absorbed.
- I thought it might be too full-on.
- I really didn’t know what to expect or what to do.
- I also felt very hesitant about it too, at first, worrying about what others would think of me and things like that.
- It was about confidence

I could really relate to other songs from the group
- The first song that really grabbed me was “Awake” and I tell you what, that was great. I looked at the words and thought, “Shit, someone else has written this. I’m not alone in what I’m thinking”

You motivated me to write a song
- You’d instilled it in me to write a song

I followed the example of someone else in the group
- I suppose I became like a sheep then and literally followed suit and wrote a song.
- The first song that really grabbed me was “Awake” and I tell you what, that was great. I looked at the words and thought, “Shit, someone else has written this. I’m not alone in what I’m thinking”

I realized I was writing it for me
- I realized then that I was writing for me

The only time I could be by myself to write was in lock-down
- It was about finding the right time where I could sit down by myself
- Unfortunately in an environment like this it’s very hard to get time to yourself at all. The only time you get is lock-down, so I was actually looking forward to it (laughs). On the Monday, I was looking forward to it

I was actually looking forward to lock-down for once
• Unfortunately in an environment like this it’s very hard to get time to yourself at all. The only time you get is lock-down, so I was actually looking forward to it (laughs). On the Monday, I was looking forward to it

I copped a lot of positive feedback
• Staff keep grabbing a pen and walking up to me asking for my autograph (laughs).
• Yeah, it was really good just to cop a bit of feedback, and positive feedback. It’s all been positive feedback.
• The afternoon after the performance, after I went back to my unit and got all the well wishes and all the - “Oh my goodness! What a voice!” – they were just so surprised

Which at times made me feel overwhelmed or shy
• I thought, “Geez, what the hell have I done?”
• I have sort of hidden away in my unit for a few days.
• I’m too shy. I’m really shy about it
• I went down to canteen, which is a big long line to go to the local canteen, and everyone has just overwhelmed me with compliments and I got real scared and ran back (laughs).
• They said I had a brilliant voice and to just keep going. Keep going is what they said
• They couldn’t speak more highly of me

I was trusted more by prison staff and therefore given more liberties
• It got me to a point where I was switched over to the A side, which means that there’s no seclusion.
• You can have your sharps on you.
• They trust you when you’re on the A side
• It also means that you have unlimited compound access
• I think it was an attribute to the music
• I could prove to them that I was safe
• I could prove to them that I was coming a long way
• I’d only just gone to the mental health unit, which is intense psych. However, I displayed no self-harm features there.

I lay low after the performance
• I haven’t seen the girls really since the performance.

I’m beside myself that I was able to give others a good time by performing to them
• I suppose one of the main objectives I wanted on that day was, there are a couple of girls who are locked down for 24 hours a day in my unit because they are a major suicide risk to themselves, and one of those girls I actually got to know, and I begged and pleaded with the unit staff to let her out and get her down there
• To see her down there was just amazing and she loved it
• It was just great to see her down there and clapping along and having a good
time, a genuine good time.
• And she loved it.
• If I can make others happy through my actions as a direct result of what I’ve
done, if I can make others smile, if I can make others clap, if I can make others do
positive things as a direct result of what I’ve done, or my voice or whatever,
whether I’ve played a joke on someone or whether I’m performing in the musical,
seeing them so happy and wrapped the way they were, I’m beside myself over
that.

I enjoyed the actual performance and this radiated out to others
• I think the last song was grouse, with me and Lucinda
• We were just mucking around up there, having a great time
  I think that radiated through

I was also very scared to look at the audience during the performance
• I just didn’t realize he was there ‘cause I didn’t look at the audience. I saw a few
  faces but I was too scared to look.

It was good that I was nervous
• I think it was good that I had nerves (laughs)

The audience was very appreciative
• Every time I looked somebody’d be putting their thumbs up and going, “Hey!”

It was very special that the people in charge of me came to watch
• The fact that Mr *** was there watching, he’s the regional manager of women’s
  prisons, I was like, I saw him at the end. He was clapping away, having a good
  old time, and I thought, “Oh my goodness.”
• I just didn’t realize he was there ‘cause I didn’t look at the audience.
• And then all my psych nurses were there as well
• I told myself where I was and told myself what I was about to do, which was,
  “You’re in jail and everyone else is in jail too that’s at this performance, pretty
  much. You’re going to have the people in charge of you there”

The music program made me very happy
• I displayed only happiness once I started the music
• I lived for the music
• My world revolved around that music
• I was actually doing cartwheels around the unit.

And this radiated through my unit
• I was having an impact on the others because I was radiating happiness
  throughout the unit.
The music program got me out of the nasty environment in my unit
- I was on the other side of the unit which is total seclusion at that stage
- I was having a lot of hassles on that side
- I was being bullied and stood-over big-time, and abused.
- So, it was very nasty on that particular side of the unit.
- So, the fact that the music, I had something to go to
- Also it gave me an excuse to get out of the unit

I was able to vent with others about prison
- And actually interact with others
- I suppose that that was very important for my mental state in order to vent and in order to talk about certain things with other prisoners

And to talk with you about music
- Also with yourself, just talking music.

You spent less time with me than with all the others but it was OK because I knew I didn’t need as much help musically
- I suppose, I’ll be honest here, you spent more time with all the others than me
- I also know that I was OK with that
- I didn’t need as much help musically as the others
- I don’t think I needed it
- I realized, I’m not big-noting myself, but the others needed more help because they didn’t have the experience or the confidence that I had, or grew, or found again from years ago.

The music program became a large part of my life
- One of my key goals in my actual file and in my local plan with my caseworker, the prison officer is a case-worker, was to attend performances on time, attend rehearsals on time, attend all of this stuff.
- So, music actually played a very vital part in my mental health in that way because I’d actually set goals surrounding it. It was all there.

Especially as our involvement increased leading up to the performance
- Especially towards the end with the performance
- It was great just to keep it going and just maintain that to an extent where we were just rehearsing 24/7

I enjoyed the structure created by working towards a performance
- It was great to come down and do something that was structured
- It made me realize that I had structure, routine and times to be there and times not to be there

Even though I was getting nervy
- I was getting nervy towards the performance.
I was a bit nervous
Even on the dress rehearsal I did stuff up the flute a bit and I’m thinking, “Oh no.”
And then my voice was going all shaky and I was thinking, “Don’t do this to me”

Initially I just wanted to enjoy making music
I was of the mind of “Let’s just rehearse every week. Just enjoy the music. Let’s just go with it.”

However the performance gave us something to aim for
However, when we had something to aim for, in the last two weeks, it was actually quite good.

It kept me on my toes
It kept me on my feet.
It kept me on my toes

I was relieved when some of the women left the group because it would have disrupted our ability to get it together
I don’t know how to put this but a lot of those girls were hyperactive but I think they wanted to take everything and just basically turn it into a rock-band-come-popstars and I wasn’t in agreement with that
That soon rubbed off on some of the others too, and soon those girls left and they didn’t bother coming back and I was actually quite relieved about that.
It was actually quite good not to have them in there because it would have been disruptive in the whole getting it together, rehearsals, that sort of thing.
APPENDIX 6B – Lucinda

Transcription of Interview

So, you came in fairly late into the process but I was very happy that you did. So, we’re just going to talk about the process from when you came in to the performance, OK? So, you participated a lot in putting drum beats or music to songs that had already been written. How did you find that?

I enjoyed it.

You can be as honest as you want, by the way.

(laughing) I enjoyed it and you’re great.

(Laughing) Oh, thanks darling.

No, I actually enjoyed it and because I’ve done previous plays as well, I felt a bit more confident in doing it this year. I think every year I feel better and better. And I haven’t had the chance to play drums for a while, so I kind of enjoyed the time on them. And it was nice to see it all come together and you can see how teamwork pays off.

Yep. So, at the show, you were saying you would have liked a bit more time so that I could have directed you more. So, “OK, we need this drumbeat here” and that sort of stuff. Did you find that a bit unsettling, the fact that I hadn’t done that?

I think as I got closer to the performance I got a bit more nervous about it and I think I just needed some reassurance that it was the right thing, yeah.

Yep. OK. So, that creative part where you’re making up drumbeats and all that sort of thing, how does that affect your wellbeing? It can affect it badly as well. We’re not just talking positive here.

I think it’s a good thing. It’s nice to be able to do something positive that you know if you put your mind to it you can get something good out of it. Yeah, and it lets you know that you’re not stuck in the same old institutionalized thing where you need someone to tell you what to do 24/7 with everything. You have to use a bit of your own initiative and remember that you’ve got some.

Yay! (laughs). Nice answer. Which songs did you prefer and why?

I enjoyed Sarah’s song because it was a beat which I’m very familiar with and she’s got a big strong voice so the drums didn’t feel like they were overpowering her or anything. They worked well together. I didn’t very much enjoy the dancing song (laughs). Shadowlands.
Why is that?

Because I think I have a bad habit of, if I learn to do something in a certain way, like say the guitar for instance, you learn the chords or whatever, well I find myself afterwards, even though I know exactly where they are, I’m in the habit of watching my hand when I do it. And I felt a bit like that with the dance where we started without the capes on so we could see what was going on and then we put the capes on with the hoods and I couldn’t actually see what was going on. And I think that out of the twenty or whatever rehearsals, I think I only got it right once.

(Laughing) Did you? Did you get it right at the performance?

No.

(Laughing) No-one would have known. That’s the beauty of it.

Well, they said it was a bit funny because everyone else was doing the shadowy character thing and my hand is like (demonstrates).

(Laughs). You were part of the dancing. You were also part of the drama because you did that beautiful introduction and the end. You were also part of the music. How do you think music fits into all of that?

It gives you an outlet because I’m usually a quiet sort of person and to be honest I was going through a little bit of a patch while that was going on but I had a really good day the day that the play was on. I really enjoyed myself because you can get up and have a really good sing and blast your lungs out whereas when I’m feeling a bit like that I can be withdrawn a bit from the group. But in the play you can’t be withdrawn, you’ve got to put yourself into it and it feels good to be able to because you, I don’t know, sometimes it’s about confidence, sometimes people don’t think their opinion is very valued but when you’ve got a thing there in front of you written out what to do, and you just put everything into it and you feel like you’ve had a venting session, an airing, I don’t know what you’d call it. Yeah, you just feel like you have a chance to say things your way and be as loud and proud as can be and, being in jail, you know everyone’s going to love it.

Well, why are so many women scared more about performing in front of the jail instead of to general public?

I think they might be worried because a lot of people fall into peer pressure around here and people are very paranoid about what other people think. I’m sort of a little bit the opposite. I would rather do it for the jail ‘cause if I do it for the other people I’ll never see them again. They don’t know who I am, whatever. So, I’m a little bit the opposite. I used to be a little wary about it to start off, with the whole jail thing, but over the years after doing it a few times you realize that half of them are crying and they can all relate to it really well.
Yep. How did you find this one, because obviously it was very different to normal years, it was shorter, the drama only came in at the end and all that sort of stuff, but how did you find it compared to last year’s?

I think it was a little more light, a bit lighter, but we still went through all the emotions that you go through when you’re watching the girls up there on the actual day. ‘Cause I get really emotional seeing everyone when they pour their heart out. They would never sing in front of anyone ever, but there they are, poured their heart out and written a song and then, I think it’s very ballsy, very gutsy of them. I don’t know what it is, very moving. And to see them all doing something positive and having a good time. Yeah.

Oh, you’re such a sweetie.

I feel like a bit of a suck sometimes with all these compliments. But I just think it’s very, yeah, no it’s good. We’ll cut that part out (laughs).

(Laughing) Oh, you’re a dag. So, in terms of the music, how do you think the music fits into the drama and the dance. Where does the music fit for you in the whole performances? Like, what role does it have?

Yeah, I think it stitches all the different parts together, the drama and even costumes and that sort of thing. It sort of brings it to life with the dance and the song is, people relate to the girls when they’re singing up there a little bit more than if they’re just acting. It’s a little bit more honest and I think that it gives you a chance to do the play in your own way. Like, the artistic director always says “You’ve got to own it and do it like your own thing.” Whereas if you’re doing a play that has been written out by someone else, I guess you don’t feel like it’s your own as much.

Yep. So, it’s harder to do.

Yeah, I think it’s like offering a present to everyone.

It so is, isn’t it? Exactly. That was what I was trying to tell people when they were so scared, before you got there. It’s actually you giving something.

Yeah, they appreciate it.

How has the feedback been after the performance?

Pretty good. We had a few giggles about the Shadowland dance and people in my house saying, “How come you don’t sing like that for us?” I said, “Because you don’t ask me” (laughs). And I don’t have music, I’m pretty limited with the songs I can play. I’m pretty limited when it comes down to having a bit of a jam session or whatever. I don’t know many songs. I need to get a good music book. I remember you had one one year, 101 Greatest Busking songs, or something like that.
OK. You want one of those do you? That’s a good idea.

Yeah. And I want a band too in the jail.

Well, did this time feel a little bit like a band? How is it different to a band?

I think it’s only different because it has a storyline right throughout it.

So, do you reckon you could get together with the girls again and keep going as a band?

Yep.

And I liked what you said about Sarah’s song. You and her worked really well together because she has such a strong voice, the drums can totally let loose and they won’t detract from the words or anything. OK, what else can I ask you? What aspects of your wellbeing are affected by the performance?

It gives you a window out. You’re not doing all the usual day-to-day jail crap. You can go and relax and make some new friends that you probably wouldn’t know from the different units and just the chance to let your hair down and not worry about saying the wrong thing in front of someone or hearing gossip and all that sort of stuff. And you do, you get that opportunity, because I think all girls in their life probably wish that they were a singer at some stage in their life and I think it’s a good opportunity to get that.

Yep. Is that your favoured thing in music? Singing? Or drums? Or guitar or both?

I think I really like singing. I like drums too but I’m a bit limited on that too because we don’t have a teacher and I’ve sort of learnt by myself and just play a bit by ear.

Which you do well. It’s amazing. So, you’d like to do singing a bit more?

Yeah. And I’d like to do songwriting too because I feel a bit limited with topics to write and that sort of stuff. I think if we had a bit of a teacher they could teach us how to choose different topics and/

/Inspire and broaden.

Yep. Exactly.

Cool. Well, we can talk about that in the debrief. Now, I was very relieved when you joined the group because you’ve done the performances many times with the theatre company, so you know what it’s about. A lot of the women it was their first time so they had no idea what was needed. So, it was really great that you joined and I was aware that you and Jane and Sarah were quite key in talking to other women during the week and checking and getting Gillian involved. What stuff did you have to do behind the scenes to get it all happening?
A bit of reassurance with people where it was the first time and even though sometimes I was stressed as well I would try to say it with a big smile on my face, “It’s the greatest thing on earth! … Behind the scenes … I think we just had to be a bit supportive of each other and me and A, with songs, ‘cause I’d come in at the last moment too, just to be, for other people, to let them know that you’re there and that you feel the same.

You were saying you went through a rough patch yourself. From my perspective I wasn’t very aware of that all, so you handled it very well and very in your own sort of thing.

A lot of people say that to me but I feel so obvious and stupid. They’re like, “I didn’t even know” and I’m there doing my head in, thinking people think I’m a big sook and they don’t even know I’m upset.

No. So, how did you get through that patch?

I just dragged myself down there a little bit but knowing that by the end of the day I would have had a much better day than I would have in the compound. I’d think, “Go down. You’re going to have a good time.” And it all pays off. It might be a bit stressful leading up to it but I just think this pays off well, it was worth sticking your head out.

Are the stressful aspects of it potentially harmful for you?

Not really. I think when we say goodbye, then that’s music. It has its own time, if that makes sense.

So, the stress of it doesn’t filter through.

It’s like a bit of a confidentiality thing. It stays there. Yeah.

Yep. I get you. Now, before you were saying some people don’t feel like their opinions are valued and that in there it’s a good opportunity for that. How important do you think it is in the prison for women to have their voice heard, or for you to have your voice heard?

I think it’s pretty very important. I think you get left behind if you don’t feel you can offer anything, any opinions or anything, and people tend to not ask you if they think you’re not, “Oh, she doesn’t care what happens. We wont ask her.” So, you get left behind in places. But with the music you can’t get left behind because if you’re not there there’s a hole in it.

What voices did you contribute to the process we just went through? When I say voices, it’s not just your singing voice. What parts of you were in that performance?

Well, I think to start off with the opening part was very deep. I was talking about something that I think is beautiful and all that sort of stuff and I felt there’s one side that
there’s not much room for in this place. Before when I said that I feel like a suck, I think I said that because there’s a lot of nasty heads and bad attitudes and that. And when you come along with an attitude like, “That’s a nice top” instead of “Oh my god, did you see what she was wearing?” Anyway, that was one. And I had a chance to goof off a bit even though I wasn’t feeling very much like it but when I was in the play I had an important phone call beforehand but it was still the show must go on … It’s good to get up on stage. It’s enjoyable.

How did you like that end bit? Normally, the theatre company would never do that, the singalong bit at the end.

We accidentally went a bit far, didn’t we? (laughs) I think if we had have been up there playing with Mecchano sets, they probably would have liked it (laughs). Because they think, “Oh goody. We’ve got an hour out. We can go and watch a show.” I liked it because I knew the songs off by heart so it made it a bit easier for me to perform.

It’s obvious from everything that you’re saying that you do see it as something you’re giving to the jail where you’re trying to make people feel good.

Yeah, just so they can see that it’s not all bad. You sort of get what you give with it, and I think it’s the same with just about anything.

It’s obvious that you give a lot so that the women can benefit from it. What do you get from it for yourself?

Well, an applause is nice. That’s always good and afterwards girls comment, people you don’t even know, “Hey, you were great yesterday” and, I don’t know, you get satisfaction from completing something and learning something and you gain new skills out of it, whether it’s people skills from mixing with the group or you get a lot of people skills out of it, I think, because you do get up and do character and stuff like that and I think that gives you a stronger idea of yourself. You do another one and when you come back to you, you sort of, you can see that, especially when you do something funny and you come back and think, “Oh, maybe I can be taken seriously” (laughs). They react to that differently than they do your everyday, so they must be taking you seriously somewhere.

OK. I think we’re almost done.

I’m sorry. I’m a little bit down and I’m probably saying some terrible things about myself here.

Do you know what? You’re not. So, you’re feeling a bit flat, are you?

Yeah, I moved to the mental health unit today so I have to move over to the B side. I want to be locked in.

Oh, seclusion. How long are you going to do that for?
Until I get back on my feet again. I just need some head space.

Good on you for recognizing that. You’re a very strong woman.

Yeah, but the thing that does upset me is when I don’t feel like I’m in control, when I’m not in control of a situation, like I’m very emotional or whatever or when I’m getting paranoid. Yeah, so I just need to get my shit together and get my confidence back and stuff.

‘Cause you’ve just come back from the minimum-security prison, haven’t you? Moving is very stressful.

Yeah, I think I was a bit stressed before I came here and it’s just snowballed.

Yep. You know how you were talking about seeing women up there and you get a bit emotional and think it’s gutsy, it’s just so gutsy of you, you’ve got all that going on, you’re going through your rough patch, you’re feeling unsettled having just come back from a minimum-security prison, and yet you were one of the lynchpins in the whole thing. I just think it’s amazing that you can do that while everything else is going on.

I think that is one of the things that upsets me is that I can look around and see other people with obviously bad self-worths or whatever and I think they’re coping all right. Does that make sense to you? I’ve got all the friends in the world, all that jazz, been here forever, know how it all works and everything and yeah, that’s what upsets me is that I’m not coping. I know I’m smart, I’m not stupid. I can normally tell if I’m having a riff with someone or whatever but when I’m like this I feel like the whole world hates me ‘cause I don’t like myself so I think everyone else must, “How could they like me? I’m a dickhead,” you know?

It’s so in your world. Everyone loves you. We all love you in the theatre company. You’re gorgeous.

I think sometimes that I annoy you because when I get into these moods I’m withdrawn and snappy.

I was worried about you after the performance because you did seem withdrawn. I wasn’t quite sure what it might have been. It might have been the call beforehand, so I was a bit worried. But you’re so playful. You’re so strong and you keep the group together.

It was only in the last couple of days before the play that I felt myself being able to have a good laugh. When I was having a good laugh it sort of made me see how flat I was as well.
But you don’t need to be down on yourself for not coping. It’s so understandable that you’re not coping. You’ve moved. And also, this environment, no matter how long you’ve been here is hard to cope with. So, don’t be down on yourself for that.

I think I’m just my own worst critic, my own worst enemy.

You gotta listen to Gillian’s song more. (singing) “Loving myself for my own sake” (laughs).

(Laughs) I can’t believe we were able to do that in the play. Yeah, that was good of her. I know how she feels, when you throw the towel in and you feel like you don’t want to come. It was pretty big of her to come back after that. She just felt really bad. She must have a good heart ‘cause she didn’t want to leave everyone posted.

Yeah, it’s good. Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Just that it’s good having you guys around ‘cause it’s like an outlet to normal part of life. AA come in or the churchies or whatever, but it’s good to have you around and you are all really good people. Like I said, it is an outlet, you go out for the day, out of your mind. And you should get paid more (laughs).

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**Structural Meaning Units**

**Experience of the process**
- Because I’ve done previous plays as well, I felt a bit more confident in doing it this year. I think every year I feel better and better.
- It was nice to see it all come together
- You can see how teamwork pays off.
- It’s nice to be able to do something positive that you know if you put your mind to it you can get something good out of it.
- It lets you know that you’re not stuck in the same old institutionalized thing where you need someone to tell you what to do 24/7 with everything. You have to use a bit of your own initiative and remember that you’ve got some.
- I was going through a little bit of a patch while that was going on
- It gives you a window out. You’re not doing all the usual day-to-day jail crap.
- You can go and relax and make some new friends that you probably wouldn’t know from the different units
- Just the chance to let your hair down and not worry about saying the wrong thing in front of someone or hearing gossip and all that sort of stuff.
- I think when we say goodbye, then that’s music. It has its own time, if that makes sense. It’s like a bit of a confidentiality thing. It stays there.
- It is an outlet, you go out for the day, out of your mind.

**Experience of playing music**
- I haven’t had the chance to play drums for a while, so I kind of enjoyed the time on them
I enjoyed Sarah’s song because it was a beat which I’m very familiar with and she’s got a big strong voice so the drums didn’t feel like they were overpowering her or anything. They worked well together.

I don’t have music, I’m pretty limited with the songs I can play. I’m pretty limited when it comes down to having a bit of a jam session or whatever. I don’t know many songs.

I really like singing. I like drums too but I’m a bit limited on that too because we don’t have a teacher and I’ve sort of learnt by myself and just play a bit by ear.

With the music you can’t get left behind because if you’re not there there’s a hole in it.

Experience in the lead-up to the performance

I think as I got closer to the performance I got a bit more nervous about it.

I think I just needed some reassurance that it was the right thing, yeah.

It all pays off. It might be a bit stressful leading up to it but I just think this pays off well, it was worth sticking your head out.

Experience of the performance

It gives you an outlet because I’m usually a quiet sort of person.

I had a really good day the day that the play was on.

I really enjoyed myself because you can get up and have a really good sing and blast your lungs out whereas when I’m feeling a bit like that I can be withdrawn a bit from the group.

I think it was a little more light, a bit lighter, but we still went through all the emotions that you go through when you’re watching the girls up there on the actual day.

I think to start off with the opening part was very deep. I was talking about something that I think is beautiful and all that sort of stuff and I felt there’s one side that there’s not much room for in this place.

I had a chance to goof off a bit even though I wasn’t feeling very much like it but when I was in the play I had an important phone call beforehand but it was still the show must go on.

Experience of performing

But in the play you can’t be withdrawn, you’ve got to put yourself into it and it feels good to be able to.

Sometimes it’s about confidence, sometimes people don’t think their opinion is very valued but when you’ve got a thing there in front of you written out what to do, and you just put everything into it and you feel like you’ve had a venting session, an airing, I don’t know what you’d call it. Yeah, you just feel like you have a chance to say things your way and be as loud and proud as can be and, being in jail, you know everyone’s going to love it.

I would rather do it for the jail ‘cause if I do it for the other people I’ll never see them again. They don’t know who I am, whatever.

I used to be a little wary about it to start off, with the whole jail thing, but over the years after doing it a few times you realize that half of them are crying and they can all relate to it really well.
I get really emotional seeing everyone when they pour their heart out. They would never sing in front of anyone ever, but there they are, poured their heart out and written a song and then, I think it’s very ballsy, very gutsy of them. I don’t know what it is, very moving. And to see them all doing something positive and having a good time.

I think it’s like offering a present to everyone.

They appreciate it.

I think if we had have been up there playing with Meccano sets, they probably would have liked it (laughs). Because they think, “Oh goody. We’ve got an hour out. We can go and watch a show.”

An applause is nice.

It’s good to get up on stage. It’s enjoyable.

You get that opportunity, because I think all girls in their life probably wish that they were a singer at some stage in their life and I think it’s a good opportunity to get that.

I liked it because I knew the songs off by heart so it made it a bit easier for me to perform.

Experience of devising original work

I think that it gives you a chance to do the play in your own way. Like, the artistic director always says “You’ve got to own it and do it like your own thing.” Whereas if you’re doing a play that has been written out by someone else, I guess you don’t feel like it’s your own as much.

Experience after performance

People in my house saying, “How come you don’t sing like that for us?” I said, “Because you don’t ask me” (laughs).

I want a band too in the jail.

I’d like to do songwriting too because I feel a bit limited with topics to write and that sort of stuff. I think if we had a bit of a teacher they could teach us how to choose different topics.

It all pays off. It might be a bit stressful leading up to it but I just think this pays off well, it was worth sticking your head out.

Afterwards girls comment, people you don’t even know, “Hey, you were great yesterday”.

Experience within group

A bit of reassurance with people where it was the first time and even though sometimes I was stressed as well I would try to say it with a big smile on my face, “It’s the greatest thing on earth!”

I think we just had to be a bit supportive of each other and me and A, with songs, ‘cause I’d come in at the last moment too, just to be, for other people, to let them know that you’re there and that you feel the same.

Just so they can see that it’s not all bad.

Experience of others in group

That was good of her. I know how she feels, when you throw the towel in and you feel like you don’t want to come. It was pretty big of her to come back after that.
She just felt really bad. She must have a good heart ‘cause she didn’t want to leave everyone posted.

Experience during process

- I feel so obvious and stupid. They’re like, “I didn’t even know” and I’m there doing my head in, thinking people think I’m a big sook and they don’t even know I’m upset.
- I just dragged myself down there a little bit but knowing that by the end of the day I would have had a much better day than I would have in the compound. I’d think, “Go down. You’re going to have a good time.”
- The thing that does upset me is when I don’t feel like I’m in control, when I’m not in control of a situation, like I’m very emotional or whatever or when I’m getting paranoid. Yeah, so I just need to get my shit together and get my confidence back.
- I think I was a bit stressed before I came here and it’s just snowballed.
- I think that one of the things that upsets me is that I can look around and see other people with obviously bad self-worships or whatever and I think they’re coping all right. Does that make sense to you? I’ve got all the friends in the world, all that jazz, been here forever, know how it all works and everything and yeah, that’s what upsets me is that I’m not coping. I know I’m smart, I’m not stupid. I can normally tell if I’m having a riff with someone or whatever but when I’m like this I feel like the whole world hates me ‘cause I don’t like myself so I think everyone else must, “How could they like me? I’m a dickhead,” you know?
- I think sometimes that I annoy you because when I get into these moods I’m withdrawn and snappy.
- It was only in the last couple of days before the play that I felt myself being able to have a good laugh. When I was having a good laugh it sort of made me see how flat I was as well.
- I think I’m just my own worst critic, my own worst enemy.

Experience of the prison

- There’s a lot of nasty heads and bad attitudes and that. And when you come along with an attitude like, “That’s a nice top” instead of “Oh my god, did you see what she was wearing?”

What she got out of the experience

- You sort of get what you give with it, and I think it’s the same with just about anything.
- You get satisfaction from completing something and learning something
- You gain new skills out of it, whether it’s people skills from mixing with the group.
- You do get up and do character and stuff like that and I think that gives you a stronger idea of yourself. You do another one and when you come back to you, you sort of, you can see that, especially when you do something funny and you come back and think, “Oh, maybe I can be taken seriously” (laughs). They react to that differently than they do your everyday, so they must be taking you seriously somewhere.
Experienced Meaning Units

Every year I feel more and more confident with this process
  • Because I’ve done previous plays as well, I felt a bit more confident in doing it this year. I think every year I feel better and better.

I enjoyed seeing it all come together
  • It was nice to see it all come together
  • You can see how teamwork pays off.

It’s nice to do something positive
  • It’s nice to be able to do something positive that you know if you put your mind to it you can get something good out of it.

You get what you give with it
  • If you put your mind to it you can get something good out of it.
  • You sort of get what you give with it, and I think it’s the same with just about anything.

It gets you out of an institutionalized mind-set
  • It lets you know that you’re not stuck in the same old institutionalized thing where you need someone to tell you what to do 24/7 with everything. You have to use a bit of your own initiative and remember that you’ve got some.

I was going through a rough patch during the whole thing; feeling stressed, self-critical, out of control emotionally and paranoid.
  • I was going through a little bit of a patch while that was going on
  • I feel so obvious and stupid. They’re like, “I didn’t even know” and I’m there doing my head in, thinking people think I’m a big sook and they don’t even know I’m upset.
  • The thing that does upset me is when I don’t feel like I’m in control, when I’m not in control of a situation, like I’m very emotional or whatever or when I’m getting paranoid. Yeah, so I just need to get my shit together and get my confidence back.
  • I think I was a bit stressed before I came here and it’s just snowballed.
  • I think that one of the things that upsets me is that I can look around and see other people with obviously bad self-worths or whatever and I think they’re coping all right. Does that make sense to you? I’ve got all the friends in the world, all that jazz, been here forever, know how it all works and everything and yeah, that’s what upsets me is that I’m not coping. I know I’m smart, I’m not stupid. I can normally tell if I’m having a riff with someone or whatever but when I’m like this I feel like the whole world hates me ‘cause I don’t like myself so I think everyone else must, “How could they like me? I’m a dickhead,” you know?
  • I think I’m just my own worst critic, my own worst enemy.

This process showed me how flat I was
  • It was only in the last couple of days before the play that I felt myself being able to have a good laugh. When I was having a good laugh it sort of made me see how flat I was as well.

I dragged myself to music knowing that it would be better than staying in the compound
• I just dragged myself down there a little bit but knowing that by the end of the day I would have had a much better day than I would have in the compound. I’d think, “Go down. You’re going to have a good time.”
• I worried that it made me too withdrawn
• I think sometimes that I annoy you because when I get into these moods I’m withdrawn and snappy.
• When I’m feeling a bit like that I can be withdrawn a bit from the group.

It gives you a window out of the usual jail bitchiness and out of your mind
• It gives you a window out. You’re not doing all the usual day-to-day jail crap.
• Just the chance to let your hair down and not worry about saying the wrong thing in front of someone or hearing gossip and all that sort of stuff.
• There’s a lot of nasty heads and bad attitudes and that. And when you come along with an attitude like, “That’s a nice top” instead of “Oh my god, did you see what she was wearing?”
• It is an outlet, you go out for the day, out of your mind.
• I think when we say goodbye, then that’s music. It has its own time, if that makes sense. It’s like a bit of a confidentiality thing. It stays there.

You can meet people you wouldn’t ordinarily get to know
• You can go and relax and make some new friends that you probably wouldn’t know from the different units.

I enjoyed playing drums again after such a long time
• I haven’t had the chance to play drums for a while, so I kind of enjoyed the time on them.

Especially in songs where they didn’t overpower others and the beat was familiar
• I enjoyed Sarah’s song because it was a beat which I’m very familiar with and she’s got a big strong voice so the drums didn’t feel like they were overpowering her or anything. They worked well together.

Everyone plays a vital role in the songs
• With the music you can’t get left behind because if you’re not there there’s a hole in it.

I became more nervous as it got closer to the performance
• I think as I got closer to the performance I got a bit more nervous about it.

And just needed some reassurance
• I think I just needed some reassurance that it was the right thing, yeah.

The stress leading up to it pays off in the end
• It all pays off. It might be a bit stressful leading up to it but I just think this pays off well, it was worth sticking your head out.

You can vent, air, blast your lungs out
• It gives you an outlet because I’m usually a quiet sort of person.
• You can get up and have a really good sing and blast your lungs out.
• You feel like you’ve had a venting session, an airing.

I really enjoyed performing
• I had a really good day the day that the play was on.
• I really enjoyed myself because you can get up and have a really good sing and blast your lungs out.
It’s good to get up on stage. It’s enjoyable. I still did it even though part of me didn’t feel like it.

I had a chance to goof off a bit even though I wasn’t feeling very much like it. When I was in the play I had an important phone call beforehand but it was still the show must go on. But in the play you can’t be withdrawn, you’ve got to put yourself into it and it feels good to be able to.

It feels good to put everything into the performance.

But in the play you can’t be withdrawn, you’ve got to put yourself into it and it feels good to be able to. You just put everything into it.

I always get emotional when I watch the others pour their hearts out on stage. It’s moving and gutsy.

I think it was a little more light, a bit lighter, but we still went through all the emotions that you go through when you’re watching the girls up there on the actual day.

I get really emotional seeing everyone when they pour their heart out. They would never sing in front of anyone ever, but there they are, poured their heart out and written a song and then, I think it’s very ballsy, very gutsy of them. I don’t know what it is, very moving. And to see them all doing something positive and having a good time.

I was able to bring something beautiful and deep to the prison environment.

I think to start off with the opening part was very deep. I was talking about something that I think is beautiful and all that sort of stuff and I felt there’s one side that there’s not much room for in this place.

Women in prison are really appreciative and can relate to it really well.

Being in jail, you know everyone’s going to love it. I used to be a little wary about it to start off, with the whole jail thing, but over the years after doing it a few times you realize that half of them are crying and they can all relate to it really well.

They appreciate it.

I think if we had have been up there playing with Mecchano sets, they probably would have liked it (laughs). Because they think, “Oh goody. We’ve got an hour out. We can go and watch a show.”

You can say things your way, loud and proud.

You just feel like you have a chance to say things your way and be as loud and proud as can be.

I think it gives you a chance to do the play in your own way. Like, the artistic director always says “You’ve got to own it and do it like your own thing.” Whereas if you’re doing a play that has been written out by someone else, I guess you don’t feel like it’s your own as much.

I prefer performing for the jail because they know who I am.

I would rather do it for the jail ‘cause if I do it for the other people I’ll never see them again. They don’t know who I am, whatever.

It’s like offering a present to everyone.
• I think it’s like offering a present to everyone.
I like the applause and the positive feedback
• An applause is nice.
• Afterwards girls comment, people you don’t even know, “Hey, you were great yesterday”
• People in my house saying, “How come you don’t sing like that for us?” I said, “Because you don’t ask me” (laughs).
You can live out your dream of being a singer
• You get that opportunity, because I think all girls in their life probably wish that they were a singer at some stage in their life and I think it’s a good opportunity to get that.
• People in my house saying, “How come you don’t sing like that for us?” I said, “Because you don’t ask me” (laughs).
I reassured others even though I felt stressed myself
• A bit of reassurance with people where it was the first time and even though sometimes I was stressed as well I would try to say it with a big smile on my face, “It’s the greatest thing on earth!
• I think we just had to be a bit supportive of each other and me and A, with songs, ‘cause I’d come in at the last moment too, just to be, for other people, to let them know that you’re there and that you feel the same.
• Just so they can see that it’s not all bad
It was good of G not to leave everyone posted
• That was good of her. I know how she feels, when you throw the towel in and you feel like you don’t want to come. It was pretty big of her to come back after that. She just felt really bad. She must have a good heart ‘cause she didn’t want to leave everyone posted.
I get satisfaction from completing something
• You get satisfaction from completing something
Learning new skills
• Learning something
• You gain new skills out of it, whether it’s people skills from mixing with the group.
And a stronger sense of myself
You do get up and do character and stuff like that and I think that gives you a stronger idea of yourself. You do another one and when you come back to you, you sort of, you can see that, especially when you do something funny and you come back and think, “Oh, maybe I can be taken seriously” (laughs). They react to that differently than they do your everyday, so they must be taking you seriously somewhere.
OK. So, how would you sum up the whole experience? ‘Cause I’ve been seeing you for the whole year, basically.

Yep. It was really fun. It dragged out a bit and we were a bit unorganized but we got it together and it was good.

OK, and what about the part leading up to the performance? So, when I started really pumping people to write songs, you’d already written yours but sort of around that time when we started focusing on the performance?

It was good because we always had something to do. We were working towards something. Yeah, I would have liked a bit more time for it to be a bit longer.

For the performance to be a bit longer?

Yeah, but it worked out good.

OK. And have you had any good feedback?

Yeah, heaps of people have said that they loved the play and they wished it had gone longer.

Yeah, normally they do go longer so maybe people who had seen it before thought it was really short. OK. So, basically what I’m trying to find out is how music in this context of the prison can affect your wellbeing. So, whether it can either harm it or make it better. So, basically talking about the performance and the songwriting and having people play instruments in your song and all that sort of stuff, were there any positive things from all of that?

Yeah, definitely. Just getting together with the people. Some of the people don’t usually do things like that so it was good to get them into something like that that they can enjoy and yeah, just teaching some people some stuff that I did. Yeah, we had fun together so it was good for everyone.

And how about having people playing instruments to your songs?

It was good, to get it all together and yep.

OK. What about any hard things. You said it dragged out, so/

/Yeah, I think just going over the songs that needed to be gone over so many times and just people not showing up when they should, yeah, a bit unorganized.
Yep, so were there any ways in which the whole experience affected your wellbeing in a negative way at all?

Nup. Nup.

So just tedious boredom sometimes. And that’s hard because you were the one that stayed with it for the whole process so it would have been the longest for you. Now, how important to you was it that we culminated the whole thing in a performance? Like, what if we had have kept going along just doing music and never actually working towards a performance.

Yeah, I would have done that but it was also good to have a story to what we were doing to get something together properly ’cause if you did it the other way it’d be great ’cause it wouldn’t be as hard but it was good to have a flow-on.

OK. And did you feel well-rehearsed going into the performance?

Yep.

Too well-rehearsed, maybe?

Some bits, maybe yeah.

And what aspects could be improved next year for you? Obviously it’s hard because you have way more musical skills than most of the women involved so it’s hard to get them happening and you, but what would you hope for yourself?

Probably singing, doing that, writing some new songs, maybe a bit of piano.

Was that song that you wrote, was that the first song you’ve completed?

There’s another one that I wrote, it’s sort of not finished. I play it as a whole song but it’s short but yeah, that one was pretty much my first.

And have you written complete ones since?

Yes, I’ve written two others.

OK. And how do you find the songwriting process?

It depends on what mood I’m in. Sometimes it just comes out and sometimes I get really stuck.

So, obviously you do it by yourself. You know how we did a bit of songwriting as a group with the Moving Forward song, how do you find that?
It’s different. Yeah. When I do stuff like that in there, unless it’s with the music, I don’t really say much.

Why is that?

Because we’re not all writing about the same things so you might have a line before it that just doesn’t match up with what you want to say so I just leave it and think I’ll just go write one (laughs). But I like writing the music to them.

You were really great, I remember you were helping *** to write a song and you were providing all the music.

Yeah, I’ve done that before with her and plus, I like helping people like that.

OK. Do you reckon your voice has changed?

Yeah, I reckon from just practising.

In what way do you think it’s changed?

It’s a bit stronger. It’s not fully strong yet but it’s gotten better. And I’m not using my throat as much so I’m not getting sore much.

And do you reckon your relationship to your voice has changed? I know that’s a funny question but/

/Yeah, I know what you mean, ‘cause the last few days I’ve been singing and I’ve been thinking about it more and how I’m using it, which I never used to do before so that has changed.

How important is it to you to feel heard in the environment of the prison?

It’s pretty important. Well, I get around pretty quiet most of the time but it’s good to be able to have that if you need it.

What is it about music for you? How does it help you in here?

It gets me through the day because I play every day and it sometimes makes me think that I’m not in here.

And you know how you don’t like to talk very much? (laughs).

Yeah.

You said to me once that that’s why you like music so much.
Oh yeah, like I can express myself. Yeah. That’s definitely true.

So, what do you think the role of music was in the lead up to the performance? So, there was drama, movement, lighting …

Oh, it gives you the feeling, like what you were doing with Matilda’s song, it was sad, and you feel it when you play.

Which songs did you prefer and why?

I loved Matilda’s song because it was really nice and I loved playing the guitar to it (laughs). Gillan’s song was really fun, just the beat, it was just happy. I like my song. Sarah’s was a bit boring for me, I don’t know why. And the last song because we all did it together. So, all of them (laughs). Probably my favourite is Matilda’s.

And is it your favourite because of the electric guitar part?

No, I think it’s a really nice song. I like the words to it, too.

Can you relate to them?

Some of it, yeah. Some of it doesn’t make sense to me. But I can usually relate myself in some way to anything.

OK. Last question. You know how we were talking about voice and whether it’s important for you to have a voice? What voices did you contribute to the performance, do you reckon?

What do you mean?

So, you contributed a lot of the musical design, really.

Yep. So, that. Just with the music or with the group?

With the group, ‘cause I’ve heard you and Lucinda and Sarah had to do a bit of the groundwork during the week when we weren’t here to keep it together.

Yeah, we’d occasionally get together and I got together with Matilda and Majella to get their drumbeats right. Just a couple of times ‘cause they needed to go over it. With some of the girls in the group we’d have to talk them through staying, so a bit of that.

And how did you deal with the other artists coming in at the end?

Oh yeah. It worked out. It would have been nice if we’d had more time but we got it together.
Is there anything else you want to say?

No, just thank you for coming in. It’s really good.

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Structural Meaning Units

Experience of the process
- It was really fun.
- It dragged out a bit
- I think just going over the songs that needed to be gone over so many times
- We were a bit unorganized
- People not showing up when they should
- It was good to get it all together
- We got it together

Experience of working towards performance
- We always had something to do.
- We were working towards something
- I would have done that but it was also good to have a story to what we were doing
to get something together properly
- if you did it the other way it’d be great ‘cause it wouldn’t be as hard
- but it was good to have a flow-on
- It would have been nice if we’d had more time

Experience of the performance
- I would have like a bit more time for it to be a bit longer. Heaps of people have said that they loved the play and they wished it had have gone longer.
- We got it together

Experience of others
- Just getting together with the people.
- Some of the people don’t usually do things like that so it was good to get them into something like that that they can enjoy
- Just teaching some people some stuff that I did
- We had fun together so it was good for everyone
- I like helping people like that
- I got together with Matilda and Majella to get their drumbeats right. Just a couple of times ‘cause they needed to go over it.
- With some of the girls in the group we’d have to talk them through staying, so a bit of that.

Experience of song-writing alone
- That one was pretty much my first
• I’ve written two others (since)
• It depends on what mood I’m in. Sometimes it just comes out and sometimes I get really stuck.

Experience of song-writing in a group
• It’s different.
• When I do stuff like that in there, unless it’s with the music, I don’t really say much because we’re not all writing about the same things
• You might have a line before it that just doesn’t match up with what you want to say
• So I just leave it and think I’ll just go write one (laughs).
• But I like writing the music to them.

Experience of singing voice
• I reckon from just practising, it’s a bit stronger
• It’s not fully strong yet but it’s gotten better
• I’m not using my throat as much so I’m not getting sore much
• The last few days I’ve been singing and I’ve been thinking about it more and how I’m using it which I never used to do before

Experience of music in general
• It gets me through the day because I play every day
• It sometimes makes me think that I’m not in here.

Experience of the songs
• I loved Matilda’s song because it was really nice
• I loved playing the guitar to it (laughs)
• I like the words to it, too
• Gillian’s song was really fun, just the beat, it was just happy
• I like my song
• Sarah’s was a bit boring for me, I don’t know why
• The last song because we all did it together

Experienced Meaning Units

It was fun
• It was really fun.

It seemed to drag sometimes because we rehearsed the songs so many times and people often didn’t show up
• It dragged out a bit
• I think just going over the songs that needed to be gone over so many times
• People not showing up when they should
• We were a bit unorganized
But we got it together
- It was good to get it all together
- We got it together

Working towards the performance made us do something properly
- to get something together properly
- We always had something to do.
- We were working towards something

It was harder than not having a performance but it was good to build momentum
- if you did it the other way it’d be great ‘cause it wouldn’t be as hard but it was good to have a flow-on

It was good to put a story to our songs
- It was also good to have a story to what we were doing

I would have liked the performance to be longer
- It would have been nice if we’d had more time
- I would have like a bit more time for it to be a bit longer. Heaps of people have said that they loved the play and they wished it had have gone longer.

I enjoyed getting together with the others
- Just getting together with the people
- We had fun together so it was good for everyone
  And helping them with their music skills
- Just teaching some people some stuff that I did
- I like helping people like that
- I got together with Matilda and Majella to get their drumbeats right. Just a couple of times ‘cause they needed to go over it

It was good to get them into something different that they can enjoy
- Some of the people don’t usually do things like that so it was good to get them into something like that that they can enjoy

Some of us had to talk some of the girls through staying
- With some of the girls in the group we’d have to talk them through staying, so a bit of that

Writing songs as a group is different.
- It’s different
  I like writing the music to group songs
- When I do stuff like that in there, unless it’s with the music, I don’t really say much because we’re not all writing about the same things
- But I like writing the music to them

But I don’t usually help with the lyrics because they don’t usually match up with what I want to say
• When I do stuff like that in there, unless it’s with the music, I don’t really say much because we’re not all writing about the same things
• You might have a line before it that just doesn’t match up with what you want to say, So I just write my own
• So I just leave it and think I’ll just go write one (laughs)

My voice has become stronger from all the practice
• I reckon from just practising, it’s a bit stronger
• It’s not fully strong yet but it’s gotten better
And I’m using it more sustainably
• I’m not using my throat as much so I’m not getting sore much
And thinking more about how I use it
• The last few days I’ve been singing and I’ve been thinking about it more and how I’m using it which I never used to do before

Music gets me through the day and sometimes makes me think that I’m not in here
• It gets me through the day because I play every day
• It sometimes makes me think that I’m not in here

I loved most of the songs for different reasons. I loved playing the guitar to one of them. I liked the words to it too. I liked another one because it had a fun, happy beat. I liked the last song because we all did it together. And I liked my song.
• I loved Matilda’s song because it was really nice
• I loved playing the guitar to it (laughs)
• I like the words to it, too
• Gillan’s song was really fun, just the beat, it was just happy
• I like my song
• The last song because we all did it together
Overall, how would you describe the experience?

I loved it. Yeah. It was all about having fun and I really enjoyed it. I loved the way we all came together towards the end. We all gave it what we gave it, our best shot, and I thought it turned out really well.

It did, didn’t it? And have you got any feedback from after the performance?

Yeah, a few women told me it was really good but a few women didn’t get it. I expected that but overall they loved it. They really loved it and they realized that there’s a lot of talent in the prison. You know what did happen though? When I got back they wanted to copy my song, the lyrics, they thought they were really good. And I said, “Yeah, yeah, no problem” and they’d go, “Oh, don’t worry. We won’t” - what’s that word when you copy someone else’s stuff?

Plagiarise?

I don’t know. It’s a word when you’re taking someone to court or something.

Sue?

No.

Copyright?

Copyright, yeah. And I said “Oh no” and then all of a sudden my music book went missing. I said, “Yeah, you can.” It didn’t worry me but I’ve just got back, let me just relax and put my things down. And the thing was I was doing my special spends and I went into the office and I went to one of the lady officers to talk about the cream they’re using, which one’s the best. Obviously the person who’d pinched it, I didn’t realize it had been pinched, actually, ’cause I had had such a good time, you know? Nothing fazed me. But anyway, it was obviously taken from my room and because they’d seen me in the office obviously they thought I must have been talking about my book being missing. And then the book all of a sudden showed up on the table and then I went over to the A side and straight away someone said to me, “Did you find the book that you were looking for?” Straight away I knew that that person had taken it but I said, “Oh, do you know who took it?” And I said, “That was funny. All of a sudden the book showed up,” like I made out that I didn’t know who had taken it. And ever since that person’s been around my stuff had been going missing, turning up in strange places.

Gee, that’d be hard. Is that the person/
The person who walked into prison a couple of days ago and I basically don’t have any time for her anymore. Anyway, I had a good time.

Good. So, with the songwriting, how important was that to you? Did you enjoy that part of it? So, remember when we had a conversation?

Yeah, I loved it. I loved it and I’ve got heaps of stuff I’ve been writing. I remember when I was little, when I was in prep, they told everyone in prep to write a poem and it’d be published in the newsletter at the end of the year and I didn’t think anything of it, basically just wrote it from my heart. I used to admire a teacher there really good, she was really grouse to me, and I wrote that I wished she was my mother.

Did your mum read it?

Oh yeah, and I didn’t realize it was going to get published and I never lived the end of it, and I think that just from then on just stopped me from writing anything and now that I’ve woken up in here and never want to come back in here again and I want to live a straight life and I’ve realized why I’ve been using for so long and the problems come back from your childhood. All of a sudden when I do pick up, I write everything that I say now and write it all down. Yeah. Even when I’m writing letters to my partner. It just flows and I can’t stop. And sometimes the thing is I write it too quickly. I mean, my mind’s going so quickly that I forget to put the ‘u’s and the ‘e’s but I’m getting better at it. I’m getting better at it. When I got diagnosed last year with bi-polar the doctor said, “Your brain runs so quickly. This is why you’ve chosen heroin. It makes you normal. You’ve been self-medicating for the last 20 years and it’s because your brain runs so fast” and he goes, “When you talk to people sometimes they don’t get it and you’ve got to repeat it a hundred times before they get it but when you talk to another bi-polar person, you and that person seem to pick it up quicker than other people do.” ‘Cause I was like, “Nup, you’re wrong” and my partner’s going, “Oh, it’s all right,” making me feel like I’m disabled or something and basically the thing that he was trying to say is, “Look, we’ve got heaps of people who have had bi-polar” and he went through heaps of people like the artist Picasso and Van Gough and all of these wonderful people and he said “It’s not a disability. It’s a gift that you were given” and that way I sort of, it took probably a year to diagnose it all because I was very yeah, and then I get in court three weeks ago and the judge says, “No, you’re not bi-polar.” I mean, what the hell’s he on about? But the thing is I’ve never been a pill person. No way. I hate pills.

OK. So, did your experience of doing the music and doing the performance, do you reckon that helped or hindered your wellbeing?

Sure did. A hundred percent.

In what ways?

I think that it just helped me realize, like, people always put you down and everything else and a lot of people were surprised, you know? And I surprised myself as well. And I
think if you love, that’s why I came back because I love music and I’ve always loved music and people were saying things to me like almost telling me not to go back and this and that, you know. And then I realized when I had a good sleep that, “Hey. It’s something I love doing so why should I listen to other people?” Obviously because they can’t do it. You know what I mean? Anyway, I had a ball but it did a lot for my wellbeing because I realized that I can write heaps. I can express everything I feel and I believe that life is without any limitations and growing up with my parents I was only good with my hands. I wasn’t good with my brain, and to grow up with a family like that, like, to be so critical at whatever you do. It’s wrong. And not to praise you but to put you down all the time. It’s wrong and it made me feel like when I talk to my daughter and my son, I tell them “You can do anything your heart desires as long as you want to do it” and it’s unlimited and you’ve got to believe in your heart. My mother puts my daughter down a lot and I can see her doing what she did to me and my father doing what, you know, and I said, “Don’t worry about it. At the end of the road, we’ll get there.”

Mmm. So were there any difficult parts for you?

/You know what made me realize? I needed someone up there to do the song but the more I got up there the more confident I got and I thought, “I can do that on my own.” I didn’t need her there. Maybe that’s why I spun out a little bit when she turned around and told me to put the cape on and then all of a sudden what’s-a-name wanted to put the cape on and I thought, “Well, here you are trying to dominate me. I can sing too. I mean, I might not be as good as you” but I felt like she was, yeah.

OK. That explains that. So/

/And I’m not schizophrenic like the lady at the gym said I was. I’m not schizophrenic.

Did someone say that?

Yeah, she turned around and said, “Well, you’re schizophrenic” and I thought, “Well, no I’m not.” I thought to myself, “Go ahead. Say whatever you feel.” The lady with the boofy hair. But I don’t care what she thinks because I know who I am and I’m not.

No, you’re not. OK. Well, is there anything else you wanted to say about the experience?

It just gave me confidence and/

/Did it help you with your singing voice?

Yeah, it did.

Yeah? Do you feel more confident about singing?

Definitely. Yeah. That’s what I mean. The more I got up there, the more I felt like I could do this on my own. Like, you know when you said before, “Do it on your own” and I was
very fearful and … and then, just being up there made me feel good for myself and I felt I could do this on my own and the more practice we had the more confident I felt behind there, even though the microphone was too high for me (laughing). I still could have done it on my own. I didn’t need her there, but I also felt that if I had have said that she would have felt that I had betrayed her or something. But I also felt that she was also trying to take over because she kept saying for a while there that it’s our song.

OK. So, that’s where it got confused.

I got really confused in what she, yeah.

Do you feel in the end that you did get to have your voice heard with the singing or do you think you just compromised?

Oh yeah. Yeah, but I got into it. So next time I’ll be able to perform on my own. That’s what it’s given me. It’s given me courage. And it doesn’t matter how little I am (laughs).

Is there anything else you wanted to say?

Yeah. Thank you to all you ladies and it took me away from being in prison. That’s the good thing about it. It felt to me like it would have been beautiful if we could have done a couple of performances after all that work but overall thank you very much, all of you ladies, that took me away from being in such a dark place. You brought out what we’re all capable of, which I never knew I was capable of doing.

Structural Meaning Units

Experience overall
- It was all about having fun
- I really enjoyed it
- I loved the way we all came together towards the end
- We all gave it what we gave it, our best shot
- I thought it turned out really well.
- I surprised myself as well
- It took me away from being in prison.
- Took me away from being in such a dark place
- You brought out what we’re all capable of, which I never knew I was capable of doing.

Experience of feedback
- A few women told me it was really good but a few women didn’t get it. I expected that but overall they loved it. They really loved it
- They realized that there’s a lot of talent in the prison.
- A lot of people were surprised
Past experiences of creativity that influenced this

- I remember when I was little, when I was in prep, they told everyone in prep to write a poem and it’d be published in the newsletter at the end of the year and I didn’t think anything of it, basically just wrote it from my heart. I used to admire a teacher there really good, she was really grouse to me, and I wrote that I wished she was my mother. I didn’t realize it was going to get published and I never lived the end of it, and I think that just from then on just stopped me from writing anything
- I’ve always loved music

Experience during process

- That’s why I came back because I love music
- People were saying things to me like almost telling me not to go back and this and that, you know.
- I realized when I had a good sleep that, “Hey. It’s something I love doing so why should I listen to other people?” Obviously because they can’t do it.
- I needed someone up there to do the song but the more I got up there the more confident I got I thought, “I can do that on my own.” I didn’t need her there.
- Maybe that’s why I spun out a little bit when she turned around and told me to put the cape on and then all of a sudden what’s-a-name wanted to put the cape on and I thought, “Well, here you are trying to dominate me. I can sing too. I mean, I might not be as good as you”. It just gave me confidence The more I got up there, the more I felt like I could do this on my own. Like, you know when you said before, “Do it on your own” and I was very fearful and … and then, just being up there made me feel good for myself and I felt I could do this on my own and the more practice we had the more confident I felt behind there, even though the microphone was too high for me (laughing).
- I still could have done it on my own. I didn’t need her there
- I also felt that if I had have said that she would have felt that I had betrayed her or something
- But I also felt that she was also trying to take over because she kept saying for a while there that it’s our song
- I got really confused

Experiences because of process

- I realized that I can write heaps. I can express everything I feel
- I’ve got heaps of stuff I’ve been writing.
- So next time I’ll be able to perform on my own. That’s what it’s given me. It’s given me courage. And it doesn’t matter how little I am (laughs).

Experience of performance

- It felt to me like it would have been beautiful if we could have done a couple of performances after all that work.
Experienced Meaning Units

I really enjoyed the experience
  - It was all about having fun
  - I really enjoyed it
It took me away from being in such a dark place as prison
  - It took me away from being in prison.
  - Took me away from being in such a dark place
And I was surprised at what I was capable of
  - I surprised myself as well
  - You brought out what we’re all capable of, which I never knew I was capable of doing
I loved how we all came together
  - I loved the way we all came together towards the end
We gave it our best
  - We all gave it what we gave it, our best shot
And it turned out well
  - I thought it turned out really well.
Overall, the women loved it. A lot of people were surprised at the talent in prison
  - A few women told me it was really good but a few women didn’t get it. I expected that but overall they loved it. They really loved it
  - They realized that there’s a lot of talent in the prison.
  - A lot of people were surprised
A bad experience when I was little stopped me from writing
  - I remember when I was little, when I was in prep, they told everyone in prep to write a poem and it’d be published in the newsletter at the end of the year and I didn’t think anything of it, basically just wrote it from my heart. I used to admire a teacher there really good, she was really grouse to me, and I wrote that I wished she was my mother. I didn’t realize it was going to get published and I never lived the end of it, and I think that just from then on just stopped me from writing anything
But now I’ve realized I can write and express myself as much as I want to
  - I realized that I can write heaps. I can express everything I feel
I’m writing heaps now
  - I’ve got heaps of stuff I’ve been writing.
I’ve always loved music
  - I’ve always loved music
And that’s why I came back to the group
  - That’s why I came back because I love music
People outside the group were encouraging me to quit
  - People were saying things to me like almost telling me not to go back and this and that, you know
But I realized after a while that I shouldn’t listen to them
  - I realized when I had a good sleep that, “Hey. It’s something I love doing so why should I listen to other people?” Obviously because they can’t do it.
Initially I needed S to help me sing my song but the more I rehearsed the more confident I became and I didn’t need her support anymore.

- I needed someone up there to do the song but the more I got up there the more confident I got I thought, “I can do that on my own.” I didn’t need her there.
- It just gave me confidence The more I got up there, the more I felt like I could do this on my own. Like, you know when you said before, “Do it on your own” and I was very fearful and … and then, just being up there made me feel good for myself and I felt I could do this on my own and the more practice we had the more confident I felt behind there, even though the microphone was too high for me (laughing).
- I still could have done it on my own. I didn’t need her there
- I didn’t feel comfortable telling her this
- I also felt that if I had have said that she would have felt that I had betrayed her or something

So I spun out a little bit. I felt she was trying to dominate me and take over my song.

- Maybe that’s why I spun out a little bit when she turned around and told me to put the cape on and then all of a sudden what’s-a-name wanted to put the cape on and I thought, “Well, here you are trying to dominate me. I can sing too. I mean, I might not be as good as you”.
- But I also felt that she was also trying to take over because she kept saying for a while there that it’s our song
- I got really confused

I wish we could have done more than one performance after all that work

- It felt to me like it would have been beautiful if we could have done a couple of performances after all that work.

I feel much more courageous about performing now

So next time I’ll be able to perform on my own. That’s what it’s given me. It’s given me courage. And it doesn’t matter how little I am (laughs).
How would you overall describe the whole process that you were involved in, from when you started coming to the end?

Scary.

Scary? (laughs) Why?

I had to sing in front of a crowd of people who I live with. I didn’t want to sing.

How did you go? How do you think you went?

Not well.

Really? Why is that? How did your unit think you went?

My unit are just being nice.

Ah, I see. Well, they’re not. You did very well.

Well, I live with a bunch of people, they’re namby-pambies (laughs). They’re the caring unit. “Oh that was good! You look nice today!” “What do you want?”

(Laughing) OK, do you think your voice has changed from the start to now?

Maybe. I don’t know.

(Laughing) Well, has your relationship to your voice changed in any way? Do you think you’re more confident or less or whatever?

About the same. I don’t have a good relationship with my voice. (In a strained voice) It’s like the rest of my relationships – strained (laughs).

(Laughing) Oh you’re a dag. OK. So, how did you experience the performance?

Scary.

What did you think afterwards?

Scary.

(Laughing) Why scary afterwards?
Because it was “Oh God, now I’ve got to face everyone’s crap.”

OK, then once you faced everyone’s crap which wasn’t crap, how was it?

Scary.

(Laughing) OK, did you feel like we rehearsed enough?

I don’t feel like I focused on what I needed to focus on, sort of thing. It was like, “Oh, that’s good” and it sounded like mumble to me (mumbles).

But remember, we did right at the end work on articulation.

Yep, but we should have worked on that from the start.

Yep, ‘cause that would’ve made you feel more comfortable, would it?

Yep.

OK. Would you do something like this again?

Yeah.

You would? Why?

Why not? Got nothing else to do. I’m making fried ice-cream. That doesn’t take too long. Forty-five minutes, actually.

Oh right. How did you feel singing someone else’s song?

Well, I wouldn’t write my own.

Why not?

Because I’m just not that sort of person that, “I’m going to write down my feelings.” I’m not like that.

OK. What if I bought violin in next time?

It’s not so great.

OK. How did you find the drama aspect? ‘Cause out of all the women, you were more involved in the dancing and the acting. How did you go with that?

Well, I think we could have practiced the whole lot a lot more. Like, the singing and the songs, they were really well-practiced, but the rest just wasn’t.
Yep. Which do you enjoy more, the music or the drama?

Drama.

That’s good to know because next year there’ll probably be more drama. Do you think that your participation in the music part of it impacted your well-being at all?

Well, it could have.

What do you mean “it could have”?

It didn’t do much for my mental anguish, did it? The drama kept me busy on a day when I needed to be kept busy so I think, because that day was the worst day of the year for me, because I was doing drama I didn’t think of it, I didn’t focus on it, if that makes sense. So, at least I was kept busy from thinking about it.

So the day we performed was the worst day of the year for you?

Yeah. It’s the anniversary of my dad’s death and so it was something that, ‘cause my dad didn’t die very long ago, ‘cause that’s a really hard day for me to deal with, it was good to be kept busy that day. I think it may have helped me through, that I had something to focus on and not focus on, well the week leading up to it when we practiced, I wasn’t focusing so much on that, if that makes sense.

Yep. Cool. Is there anything else you want to say about the whole thing?

No.

(Laughing) I’m going to have to drag it out of you, aren’t I? In terms of the performance, which aspects of your wellbeing were affected, either negatively or positively? So, negatively you’ve said mental anguish, so lots of fear, lots of nerves and stuff like that. Any other negative aspects of it?

Not really, no.

OK, and what about the positive aspects? So, it gave you distraction/

/Yeah, and the drama side of things, I love. The singing side of things, not so much.

Well, you were very brave saying yes to singing the song then.

Yeah, but you cried.

(Laughing) But you’d said yes before I cried, remember?
I said maybe and then when you cried I thought, “Oh God”. So, do you want your class to know about that? She cries to blackmail people (laughing). And then, all of a sudden, when everyone participated she wasn’t a crybaby anymore (laughs).

(Laughing) Oh, you’re hilarious. They’re going to love that. They’ll hear that.

Crybaby.

OK, so you loved the drama. So, what do you get out of the drama in terms of wellbeing, do you reckon?

I don’t know. I’ve always liked drama. Ever since I was little. I used to do my school musicals and everything. Always.

Did you? Are you going to be here next year?

I surely will be. I will be.

Well, you’ll be able to do the drama here then. Which song did you prefer and why?

I liked Jane’s song.

Why?

I don’t know. And I liked Gillian’s song too. I even liked my song. I just didn’t like me singing it. Like, I thought they were really thoughtful and I thought there was something behind it whereas some music is like “Oh, I’m in love, I’m in love, I’m in love”. I just don’t think that has anything behind it. There’s no depth behind. There’s no nothing behind it.

OK, cool. You know in the lead-up to the performance which was very up and down and I cried and a lot of people stormed out and all that sort of thing, what aspects of that lead-up process do you think were important to the performance being successful?

… I’m not really sure. I thought the whole crying thing was a bit like, OK, like especially with Gillian and I walk in and she’s sitting there and I’m like, “What are you doing? You had a go.” That was a bit like well, “You had a go. You said some really not nice things.” And she was ranting and raving out here about it too and all of a sudden she’s back here and it’s like, well, I thought it was really unnecessary. I thought, “If you’re having a stressful day, I don’t believe that you should take it out on other people.” So, I found, the crying not so much, I thought “Pansy” but the whole carrying-on and behaving like that I see as really unnecessary in any aspect of anything. Like, if you’re having a stressful time I think there’s always a way to work through it rather than carry-on and I do it myself sometimes but then I think, “Why did I do that?”

OK. And what aspects helped to make it successful?
I think everyone supporting one another was good. Yep. That’s about it.

I’ve got two more questions. How important is it to you to feel that you are being heard or that you have a voice, in the prison?

Not really important at all. In the context of the prison, nup, not at all. I find that when you are always trying to be heard you get involved in dramas and things. I can’t be bothered with it, in all honesty. The people in here, I have a couple of people that are close to me, but the rest of the people I could not care less about, personally, and I don’t want them involved in my life. I don’t need them to hear what I’ve got to say. I would prefer for them to just, “Oh, let’s talk about her behind her back” because it’s like, really, at the end of the day, I’ve seen some of these people on the outside and I ran in the other direction because I didn’t want to talk to them and I hid from them because what am I going to do? Stand there with my mum and my son and my partner and say, “This is a person I was in jail with”? Or people I work with and I run into these people and they’re going to turn round and I’ve seen how they behave on the outside too. I just don’t want or need people like that in my life. However, I met my best friend in here and I’ve bought her to my son’s birthday parties. So, it’s not a case of I think that I’m better than the other people. I just don’t need their lifestyles involved in my life because then I’m going to turn around and I’m gonna, my mum won’t tolerate me coming back here anymore. Although I’m here for the same set of charges as the first time, my mum doesn’t accept that. My mum says, “Well, you’ve come back. I’m not coming to see you.” And I haven’t seen her the whole time I’ve been here. Yeah, I’ve seen my son but my son’s five years old and I’m stuck in jail and I can’t take him to school and things like that. So, the more I involve these people in my life the more dramas I’m going to get in.

Yep. Totally, that’s well explained. OK, unless there’s anything else you wanted to say, the last question is what did you think music’s role was in all of this?

I don’t think it really had any sort of context without the music because the whole thing was based around the music.

On the crybaby note, I just wanted to check, you didn’t seriously feel bad about it, did you?

I did. I felt really bad. I was like, “I made her cry” and it wasn’t the first time that day.

Oh really. You’d made someone else cry that day?

I didn’t mean to make her cry but we were in group and I said something to her and it was a topic where I asked her about it and she started crying and I was like, “Oh no”. I’m like, “I’m sorry. I didn’t bring it up to make you cry” and then you cried and I’m like, “Oh my god. I’m on a mission today.”
Structural Meaning Units

Experience of performing
- I didn’t want to sing.
- So, how did you experience the performance? Scary.
- It didn’t do much for my mental anguish, did it?

Experience of own performance
- How do you think you went? Not well.
- I even liked my song. I just didn’t like me singing it.

Experience of performing to others
- I had to sing in front of a crowd of people who I live with.
- My unit are just being nice. Well, I live with a bunch of people, they’re namby-pambies (laughs). They’re the caring unit. “Oh that was good! You look nice today!” “What do you want?”
- What did you think afterwards? Scary. Because it was “Oh God, now I’ve got to face everyone’s crap.”

Experience leading up to the performance
- I don’t feel like I focused on what I needed to focus on, sort of thing. It was like, “Oh, that’s good” and it sounded like mumble to me (mumbles).
- But remember, we did right at the end work on articulation? Yep, but we should have worked on that from the start.
- How did you feel singing someone else’s song? Well, I wouldn’t write my own. Because I’m just not that sort of person that, “I’m going to write down my feelings.” I’m not like that.
- Well, I think we could have practiced the whole lot a lot more. Like, the singing and the songs, they were really well-practiced, but the rest just wasn’t.
- The drama kept me busy on a day when I needed to be kept busy so I think, because that day was the worst day of the year for me, because I was doing drama I didn’t think of it, I didn’t focus on it, if that makes sense. So, at least I was kept busy from thinking about it. It’s the anniversary of my dad’s death and so it was something that, ‘cause my dad didn’t die very long ago, ‘cause that’s a really hard day for me to deal with, it was good to be kept busy that day. I think it may have helped me through, that I had something to focus on and not focus on, well the week leading up to it when we practiced, I wasn’t focusing so much on that, if that makes sense.
- I thought they were really thoughtful and I thought there was something behind it whereas some music is like “Oh, I’m in love, I’m in love, I’m in love”. I just don’t think that has anything behind it. There’s no depth behind. There’s no nothing behind it.
- Especially with Gillian and I walk in and she’s sitting there and I’m like, “What are you doing? You had a go.” That was a bit like well, “You had a go. You said
some really not nice things.” And she was ranting and raving out here about it too and all of a sudden she’s back here and it’s like, well, I thought it was really unnecessary. I thought, “If you’re having a stressful day, I don’t believe that you should take it out on other people.”

- So, I found, the crying not so much, I thought “Pansy”
- I think everyone supporting one another was good.
- I felt really bad. I was like, “I made her cry” and it wasn’t the first time that day. I didn’t mean to make her cry but we were in group and I said something to her and it was a topic where I asked her about it and she started crying and I was like, “Oh no”. I’m like, “I’m sorry. I didn’t bring it up to make you cry” and then you cried and I’m like, “Oh my god. I’m on a mission today.”

Past experience with drama and music

- I’ve always liked drama. Ever since I was little. I used to do my school musicals and everything. Always. The singing side of things, not so much.

Overall experience


Experienced Meaning Units

I’ve always liked drama

- I’ve always liked drama. Ever since I was little. I used to do my school musicals and everything. Always.

I didn’t want to sing

- I didn’t want to sing.
- I had to sing in front of a crowd of people who I live with.

I especially didn’t want to sing in front of the people I live with

- I had to sing in front of a crowd of people who I live with.

I was scared about what they might say

- Because it was “Oh God, now I’ve got to face everyone’s crap.”

The performance was scary

- So, how did you experience the performance? Scary.
- It didn’t do much for my mental anguish, did it?
- What did you think afterwards? Scary. Because it was “Oh God, now I’ve got to face everyone’s crap.”

I don’t think I performed or sung very well.
How do you think you went? Not well.
I even liked my song. I just didn’t like me singing it.
My unit are just being nice. Well, I live with a bunch of people, they’re namby-pambies (laughs). They’re the caring unit. “Oh that was good! You look nice today!” “What do you want?”

I don’t believe the people I live with when they tell me I did well because they’re either just being nice or want something from me.
- My unit are just being nice. Well, I live with a bunch of people, they’re namby-pambies (laughs). They’re the caring unit. “Oh that was good! You look nice today!” “What do you want?”

I wish you had have been more critical about how I sounded from the beginning so that I could focus more on making it sound less like mumble
- I don’t feel like I focused on what I needed to focus on, sort of thing. It was like, “Oh, that’s good” and it sounded like mumble to me (mumbles).
- But remember, we did right at the end work on articulation? Yep, but we should have worked on that from the start.

I didn’t write my own song because I’m not the sort of person who writes down their feelings
- How did you feel singing someone else’s song? Well, I wouldn’t write my own. Because I’m just not that sort of person that, “I’m going to write down my feelings.” I’m not like that.

I liked the depth and meaning behind the songs
- I thought they were really thoughtful and I thought there was something behind it whereas some music is like “Oh, I’m in love, I’m in love, I’m in love”. I just don’t think that has anything behind it. There’s no depth behind. There’s no nothing behind it.

We could have practiced the drama and dance elements a whole lot more
- Well, I think we could have practiced the whole lot a lot more. Like, the singing and the songs, they were really well-practiced, but the rest just wasn’t.

The program kept me busy from thinking about about the worst day of the year for me. It gave me something else to focus on, especially in the lead-up to the performance
- The drama kept me busy on a day when I needed to be kept busy so I think, because that day was the worst day of the year for me, because I was doing drama I didn’t think of it, I didn’t focus on it, if that makes sense. So, at least I was kept busy from thinking about it. It’s the anniversary of my dad’s death and so it was something that, ‘cause my dad didn’t die very long ago, ‘cause that’s a really hard day for me to deal with, it was good to be kept busy that day. I think it may have helped me through, that I had something to focus on and not focus on, well the week leading up to it when we practiced, I wasn’t focusing so much on that, if that makes sense.
It also gave me something to do


I thought it was really unnecessary that one woman in the group ranted and raved and said things that weren’t nice and then came back to the group. She’d had her go.

- Especially with Gillian and I walk in and she’s sitting there and I’m like, “What are you doing? You had a go.” That was a bit like well, “You had a go. You said some really not nice things.” And she was ranting and raving out here about it too and all of a sudden she’s back here and it’s like, well, I thought it was really unnecessary. I thought, “If you’re having a stressful day, I don’t believe that you should take it out on other people.”

When you cried I just thought, “Pansy” but I did feel like it was my fault

- So, I found, the crying not so much, I thought “Pansy”
- I felt really bad. I was like, “I made her cry” and it wasn’t the first time that day. I didn’t mean to make her cry but we were in group and I said something to her and it was a topic where I asked her about it and she started crying and I was like, “Oh no”. I’m like, “I’m sorry. I didn’t bring it up to make you cry” and then you cried and I’m like, “Oh my god. I’m on a mission today.”

I liked how we supported each other

- I think everyone supporting one another was good.
OVERALL, how would you describe the experience of when you started being involved with me in the sessions and then leading up to the performance?

Performance, nerve-racking, but that’s only because I have issues with performances and people. I’m actually loving the music class that you hold. I’m really loving it. Apparently at home I’m singing a lot more and playing a lot more and sitting at dinner and I don’t quite realize that I’ve got a pattern happening with my feet. So, it’s just brought me back to music that I love so much.

That’s excellent. One thing I noticed with you which surprised me was that you were making up rhythms. I was so impressed with that one in Gillian’s song where you’ve got the drum-kit happening and you came up with something that really complemented the drumbeat. I wouldn’t have been able to do that. So, that sort of stuff I think you should be/

/I just haven’t participated. I dropped out of music and art years ago, probably about six years ago and I keep wanting to go back and I kept seeing your classes but I hadn’t quite made it there yet. I think it’s more just fear of groups but actually coming in and participating in it and seeing your love of music I just wanted to learn more and more and more. I don’t know how I’d come up with anything though. I just listen and yeah.

It was very good. How did you find the process of you and me writing a song together? How was that for you?

I actually think it was a little rushed because everything was a bit chaotic but I haven’t done anything like that for ages so I think it was a really good thing to do.

Obviously, you’re a budding writer. How did you feel having your words lit up by music?

It can be a little vulnerable. You can feel a little naked and I think because we live in such a judgmental place, but it was good. Later on, just kicking back with a small group of friends, it’s actually good to see it all come together.

Imagine with the lyrics that are yours, if you didn’t have the music behind them, what do you think the music brings to your writings?

It completed it.

In what way?
I don’t know if you feel this way as well about music without words but it just sort of, you are your own worst enemy and biggest critic and I just think it took it to a different place.

What sort of place? (laughs)

A really good one (laughs). … See, you’re making me think today. I haven’t slept for two nights. … I think because I’m so used to writing essays and handing in homework it gets monotonous and it just took it to a different place. It’s sort of like being able to kick back a couple of years later and read something you’ve written. It’s like that. You’re not so closely attached to it. You still are, but you’re sharing it with other people.

You know how you said the process was rushed, if it weren’t rushed what would happen? I remember, this is what happened, many times I said “Try and write something” and you couldn’t because you needed to do it in your own time and I totally understand that. So, then what happened is you gave me a lot of writings and then I put the words together from those writings and then put music behind it. In a longer process and a less chaotic process, what would you hope would happen?

I think now that we’ve sort of done all of this and we’ve done all the performance and there’s been a song, I think I would have been able to write a lot more things and be able to regularly bring you in things each week and be able to do it like that, rather than “Quick, we need another song” kind of thing.

Yes. Is that because you’ve seen how it gets put together and how it works?

Yeah, that too. More of an understanding of where you come from with the music because I’ll look at a song and I’ll see clichés and the cadence is wrong and things like that. So, I can be a bit picky like that and not want to let go of it until it’s perfect. But I think we all had fun, even if it wasn’t exactly perfect, with the whole process.

I guess if we had have made it perfect we would have been performing it in 2010 or something (laughs).

At least, and I think you’d only have me left in the class (laughs).

So, what was your favourite song and why?

I think I like them all for different reasons. I don’t think I could pick a favourite and I think it’s more because the group sort of came together … after you cried (laughs). Yeah, I think everyone pulled together and that’s why I liked all the songs. I think I liked the first one because of the experience of learning where you come from and how you put the music together and all of that, and I wasn’t so picky on some of the words, and looking at it from a different perspective. What was the second song? I liked that one because I knew kind of what I was doing (laughs). No.
No, I liked that one because it was someone else’s experience and people have the most amazing stories. They really do, whether it be in here or out there, but I think in here you get more of a chance to sit and listen in here because life as you know it has stopped, which can be a good thing. What was the next one? Sarah’s? Yeah, I liked that one more because I’ve learnt a little bit more about her and I think I like that one more because she actually comes to class and booms it on out and it was good to see that, even though I was jokingly thinking, “Just don’t look in the mirror, then” ‘cause I don’t look in mirrors (laughing). Gillian’s I liked because finally, when we were allowed to play it, it had a wicked beat to it and everyone enjoyed playing that.

And the last song? Had that one already been written before you joined?

Yeah, I think I came in on the tail-end of that ‘cause I didn’t even know what it was about until quite close to the performance.

So, the process of writing your song, and the process of writing your djembe beats, so I’m talking about creative processes, how does that affect your wellbeing? You can say it in negative and positive ways.

I think the positive feedback I have had all around the place to the point of embarrassment, even to the point of the governor saying that on their day off they would come into the performance if I was in it. I think, I don’t know, it just makes me happy and everything’s OK. It’s grounding, I think, because I have depression and I tend to drop out of everything that I love and that’s what happened many moons ago and I think you can just go into a negative cycle where I guess things in life can bring you down and it’s good to have gone through things like that because you learn a lot but it’s like coming home in a way because you’re coming back to what you love.

OK. Let’s get onto the performance aspect of things. So this was much more nerve-racking for you, wasn’t it?

Yes, very. I’m just not good in big groups of people and I’ve gotten worse over the years.

So, what aspects of your wellbeing were affected by performance?

I recently lost 14 kilos due to stress, if that helps (laughing). It wasn’t just the performance, no. I learnt how not to vomit on stage.

(Laughing) You learnt how not to run away on stage.

Yes. That was a bit difficult. I was fiddling. What was the question?

How did the performance affect your wellbeing in both negative and positive ways?
The actual performance, it freaked me out.

So, do you think your wellbeing was affected negatively on the whole because of that?

Not on the whole, no, because I think I knew we were all up there together and it was just like having a class where we have fun, except for the vomiting issue but that’s my issue (laughs). It’s just who I am.

Yep. And how helpful was it having Majella with you?

Oh, that was really helpful. It didn’t really matter who it was. I just needed someone, anyone, otherwise I probably would have, nah I wouldn’t have bolted, because you cried (laughs). No, I just have a great fear of that. I don’t know what that is but it didn’t negatively affect me.

And so the positive ways were?

I actually did it. I saw something through for once. I’ve got a problem with not finishing things. I just go onto the next thing because it’s never perfect. And it was fun. It was.

It was very fun to have you two there, the little drummer girls.

We were going to put that backdrop over us. That was another plan. Japanese-style drumming out the back of the leisure centre with your back to the audience. That was another plan too. We were actually talking on stage when we weren’t meant to be and we both miss guitar as well. Both of us, and I know there are others in the group, we just want to learn anything we can, really, because we both wanted to go back to guitar and play drums and possibly piano and singing quietly, very quietly. Looking forward to next year.

We’ll get to talk about that next in the debrief. That’ll be good. You’ll get to talk about what you want to happen next year and all that sort of stuff. I was asking Majella, imagine if you had have kept doing your drumming and there had have been no performance. So, you just kept doing your workshops, have a break for Christmas, and then come back the next year. Would you have preferred that? How important was it to culminate in something like a performance?

I think if you’ve done the year, I don’t know if you’d say ‘important’. It’s hard because I’d only just joined drumming as well so I hadn’t been to that many classes and I think some people like performances and some don’t. I wouldn’t have minded just keeping on going with the classes because that’s what I really love.

Would you do another performance next year?

If you cry (laughs).
(Laughing) That’s awful.

As long as it wasn’t early in the year, I wouldn’t say no. But I’m not dancing (laughs).

Did you feel well rehearsed enough?

Yeah. I think it would have been better had I been to more classes and known a bit more of what I was doing with instruments because even though I’ve got my own guitar I haven’t played it for so long. I think I would have been personally more confident had I been in the classes for longer, but other than that, it was fine.

OK. How did you find putting those drumming patterns you’d learnt to the songs that we had?

I think as we were rehearsing I’d try to listen to the different instruments and try to fit something in somewhere. I’m not very confident at doing that but I think if we do more classes I think I’d get more confident with how it actually sounds and what sounds good. What fits and what doesn’t. What complements and what doesn’t. I just haven’t played enough to be confident in that yet, which is why I’d always ask you. “Does that sound stupid or is that all right?”

You did very well. I was very impressed. How important is it to you to feel that you have a voice, that you’re being heard?

I’m OK with not having a voice because too many people over the years have spoken for me … It was still cool, though.

It was, wasn’t it? In talking about not wanting to have a voice, you actually had a voice. That’s the irony.

Yeah. In a way I’ve sort of got to let all of that go too. People can speak for me and do what they want, as they do, as long as they don’t come too close to my actual life.

That’s a good attitude.

I don’t care what people say, what they print, what they want to make, what they produce. It’s not that I don’t care, I do, but as long as they don’t come too close then really it shouldn’t affect me because that’s their thing too. That’s how I see it. That’s their thing and they need to do that for their own reasons and that’s fine. But don’t come near my bubble world.

That’s totally understandable. And so is it true that one day the little dark star might want to be heard?

Yeah, possibly.
Did that come about from this experience?

Yeah, it did and I swear if one more governor or, we have R&As because on long-term we have them every six months or every year, whenever they find us and I had one of those in amongst this and it is embarrassing. It truly is. They sit you there in the middle of the circle and talk about how wonderful you are and how well you’re going and how happy you seem and yada yada yada and I have copped that from everywhere. I got a dirty urine which we’re not allowed to have and you get kicked out of the C units where I live but they didn’t kick me out. I had to pay a massive fine but they didn’t kick me out because they didn’t want me going backwards because they think that I’m going forwards. Normally I would have been kicked out straight away, so saving grace.

Would you attribute some of that to this process, or a little bit or a lot?

I’d say a lot of it. I actually get out of bed. That’s big in my world. That’s huge. Even if I haven’t slept. I’ve only slept for a couple of hours the last two nights but yep, up the first thing.

That’s very good. So, how does music in general help your wellbeing in the context of the prison?

I can’t live without music. I’ve got music on 24/7. If I’m not asleep I’ve got a walkman in.

Why? What does it provide for you in here?

Sanity. Sanity. I don’t really know why I love music. I just do. It’s always been that way. And, because where I grew up we weren’t allowed to play music or do art, as soon as I came here, I did because no-one can get to you here. It is, it’s sanity. It’s a safe haven. It’s something I’ve always loved. I don’t know why?

What voices did you contribute to the performance. So, when I say voices/

/We’re not talking schizophrenia (laughs).

No. What parts of Matilda was in the show?

The scared part … I don’t know … The part that loves coffee.

What about your song?

See, the parts of those writings are about my friend who passed away and that was a bit hard at first but as I learnt what the performance was about and the other songs it sort of changed context a bit which was good. I don’t know what parts. It was just me. I don’t have parts, I’m just me. Oh, I’ve got my day person and my night person but apart from that … I’m a little more manic at night.
OK. Is there anything else you’d like to say about the process?

Probably. I’m really good at night. If I took this away and wrote answers. To thank you for bringing me back to music. You’re not allowed to go anywhere now. You have to come in and teach for the next five years at least.

Do you know I’ve been doing it for five years and it’s taken you five years to come here.

Seriously? You have not!

Yep, this is the end of my fifth year.

Really? Because after every play that they did, when the artistic director comes in, I used to go and hassle her for music.

I know, you hassled me.

In the kitchen. I did too.

But it never got off the ground because what you wanted seemed to be a different thing to what the theatre company could provide.

Just music.

Exactly, like music tuition. Can you see how this process can’t be that?

Yeah, yeah. But in a way I think this process, I think the classes that you teach are better than sitting down having one-to-one tuition.

Why is that?

I think you learn more, sitting in the class, and with other people. Which is big for me. Because people bounce off each other or someone will know something or get the hang of something. You just bounce off each other. I prefer your classes than if we were to sit down one-to-one.

That’s an interesting insight. (Laughing) For the tape, Matilda is rolling her eyes.

(Laughing) I still don’t like people or groups though. Contradictions. But if I ever sing, that’s not ever in the group though.
Structural Meaning Units

Experience of the group

- I think the classes that you teach are better than sitting down having one-to-one tuition. I think you learn more, sitting in the class, and with other people, which is big for me. Because people bounce off each other or someone will know something or get the hang of something. You just bounce off each other. I prefer your classes than if we were to sit down one-to-one.
- (Laughing) I still don’t like people or groups though. Contradictions.
- But if I ever sing, that’s not ever in the group though.

Experience of the performance

- Performance, nerve-racking, but that’s only because I have issues with performances and people.
- The actual performance, it freaked me out.
- I think I knew we were all up there together and it was just like having a class where we have fun, except for the vomiting issue but that’s my issue (laughs).
- It didn’t really matter who it was. I just needed someone
- I just have a great fear of that. I don’t know what that is but it didn’t negatively affect me.
- We were going to put that backdrop over us. That was another plan. Japanese-style drumming out the back of the leisure centre with your back to the audience. That was another plan too.
- I think some people like performances and some don’t. I wouldn’t have minded just keeping on going with the classes because that’s what I really love.
- I learnt how not to vomit on stage.

Experience of the process

- I actually get out of bed. That’s big in my world. That’s huge. Even if I haven’t slept.
- I’m actually loving the music class that you hold. I’m really loving it
- I actually think it was a little rushed because everything was a bit chaotic.
- Actually coming in and participating in it and seeing your love of music I just wanted to learn more and more and more
- Later on, just kicking back with a small group of friends, it’s actually good to see it all come together
- You are your own worst enemy and biggest critic
- But I think we all had fun, even if it wasn’t exactly perfect, with the whole process.
- I think some people like performances and some don’t. I wouldn’t have minded just keeping on going with the classes because that’s what I really love.
- I think it would have been better had I been to more classes and known a bit more of what I was doing with instruments because even though I’ve got my own guitar I haven’t played it for so long. I think I would have been personally more confident had I been in the classes for longer
- I swear if one more governor or, we have R&As because on long-term we have them every six months or every year, whenever they find us and I had one of
those in amongst this and it is embarrassing. It truly is. They sit you there in the middle of the circle and talk about how wonderful you are and how well you’re going and how happy you seem and yada yada yada and I have copped that from everywhere. I got a dirty urine which we’re not allowed to have and you get kicked out of the C units where I live but they didn’t kick me out. I had to pay a massive fine but they didn’t kick me out because they didn’t want me going backwards because they think that I’m going forwards. Normally I would have been kicked out straight away, so saving grace.

**Experiences because of the process**

- Apparently at home I’m singing a lot more and playing a lot more and sitting at dinner and I don’t quite realize that I’ve got a pattern happening with my feet.
- So, it’s just brought me back to music that I love so much.
- I think now that we’ve sort of done all of this and we’ve done all the performance and there’s been a song, I think I would have been able to write a lot more things and be able to regularly bring you in things each week and be able to do it like that, rather than “Quick, we need another song” kind of thing.
- It’s grounding, I think, because I have depression and I tend to drop out of everything that I love and that’s what happened many moons ago and I think you can just go into a negative cycle where I guess things in life can bring you down and it’s good to have gone through things like that because you learn a lot but it’s like coming home in a way because you’re coming back to what you love.
- Thank you for bringing me back to music.
- I actually did it. I saw something through for once. I’ve got a problem with not finishing things. I just go onto the next thing because it’s never perfect.
- We both miss guitar as well. Both of us, and I know there are others in the group, we just want to learn anything we can, really, because we both wanted to go back to guitar and play drums and possibly piano and singing quietly, very quietly.
- I’m OK with not having a voice because too many people over the years have spoken for me … It was still cool, though.
- In a way I’ve sort of got to let all of that go too. People can speak for me and do what they want, as they do, as long as they don’t come too close to my actual life. I don’t care what people say, what they print, what they want to make, what they produce. It’s not that I don’t care, I do, but as long as they don’t come too close then really it shouldn’t affect me because that’s their thing too. That’s how I see it. That’s their thing and they need to do that for their own reasons and that’s fine. But don’t come near my bubble world.

**Experiences before the process**

- I just haven’t participated.
- I dropped out of music and art years ago, probably about six years ago.
- I keep wanting to go back and I kept seeing your classes but I hadn’t quite made it there yet. I think it’s more just fear of groups.
- I haven’t done anything like that for ages so I think it was a really good thing to do.
- I’m just not good in big groups of people and I’ve gotten worse over the years.
- I’ve got a problem with not finishing things. I just go onto the next thing because it’s never perfect.
I can’t live without music. I’ve got music on 24/7. If I’m not asleep I’ve got a walkman in. I don’t really know why I love music. I just do. It’s always been that way. And, because where I grew up we weren’t allowed to play music or do art, as soon as I came here, I did because no-one can get to you here. It is, it’s sanity. It’s a safe haven. It’s something I’ve always loved.

Experience of group collaboration

- I don’t know how I’d come up with anything though. I just listen.
- I think as we were rehearsing I’d try to listen to the different instruments and try to fit something in somewhere. I’m not very confident at doing that but I think if we do more classes I think I’d get more confident with how it actually sounds and what sounds good. What fits and what doesn’t. What complements and what doesn’t. I just haven’t played enough to be confident in that yet, which is why I’d always ask you. “Does that sound stupid or is that all right?”

Experience of song-writing

- It can be a little vulnerable.
- You can feel a little naked because we live in such a judgmental place
- It was good
- I just think it took it to a different place.
- I think because I’m so used to writing essays and handing in homework it gets monotonous and it just took it to a different place.
- It’s sort of like being able to kick back a couple of years later and read something you’ve written. It’s like that. You’re not so closely attached to it. You still are, but you’re sharing it with other people.
- I think now that we’ve sort of done all of this and we’ve done all the performance and there’s been a song, I think I would have been able to write a lot more things and be able to regularly bring you in things each week and be able to do it like that, rather than “Quick, we need another song” kind of thing.
- I’ll look at a song and I’ll see clichés and the cadence is wrong and things like that. So, I can be a bit picky like that and not want to let go of it until it’s perfect.
- I think I liked the first one because of the experience of learning where you come from and how you put the music together and all of that, and I wasn’t so picky on some of the words, and looking at it from a different perspective.
- See, the parts of those writings are about my friend who passed away and that was a bit hard at first but as I learnt what the performance was about and the other songs it sort of changed context a bit which was good.

Experience of the songs

- I think it’s more because the group sort of came together. I think everyone pulled together and that’s why I liked all the songs.
- I liked that one because I knew kind of what I was doing. No, I liked that one because it was someone else’s experience and people have the most amazing stories. They really do, whether it be in here or out there, but I think in here you get more of a chance to sit and listen in here because life as you know it has stopped, which can be a good thing.
• I liked that one more because I’ve learnt a little bit more about her and I think I like that one more because she actually comes to class and booms it on out and it was good to see that.
• It had a wicked beat to it and everyone enjoyed playing that.

Experience after the performance

I think the positive feedback I have had all around the place to the point of embarrassment, even to the point of the governor saying that on their day off they would come into the performance if I was in it. It just makes me happy and everything’s OK.

Experienced Meaning Units

I prefer learning music in a group because you learn more
• I think the classes that you teach are better than sitting down having one-to-one tuition. I think you learn more, sitting in the class, and with other people, which is big for me. Because people bounce off each other or someone will know something or get the hang of something. You just bounce off each other. I prefer your classes than if we were to sit down one-to-one.

But I still don’t like people or groups
• (Laughing) I still don’t like people or groups though. Contradictions.

I’ll never sing in the group
• But if I ever sing, that’s not ever in the group though.

Performing isn’t for everyone
• I think some people like performances and some don’t.

I would have preferred it if there were no performance because it’s the classes that I really love
• I wouldn’t have minded just keeping on going with the classes because that’s what I really love.
• I’m actually loving the music class that you hold. I’m really loving it.

The performance was nerve-racking. It freaked me out.
• Performance, nerve-racking, but that’s only because I have issues with performances and people.
• The actual performance, it freaked me out.
• I just have a great fear of that.

The governor even came in on his day off to watch me
• Even to the point of the governor saying that on their day off they would come into the performance if I was in it.

But it was OK because we were all up there together
• I think I knew we were all up there together and it was just like having a class where we have fun, except for the vomiting issue but that’s my issue (laughs).
• It didn’t negatively affect me.

And I had a friend with me
• It didn’t really matter who it was. I just needed someone

We just wanted to hide
• We were going to put that backdrop over us. That was another plan. Japanese-style drumming out the back of the leisure centre with your back to the audience. That was another plan too.
• I think some people like performances and some don’t. I wouldn’t have minded just keeping on going with the classes because that’s what I really love.

I coped
• I learnt how not to vomit on stage.
• I actually did it.

I actually get out of bed now
• I actually get out of bed. That’s big in my world. That’s huge. Even if I haven’t slept.

My experience of writing a song was a little rushed
• I actually think it was a little rushed because everything was a bit chaotic.
• I think now that we’ve sort of done all of this and we’ve done all the performance and there’s been a song, I think I would have been able to write a lot more things and be able to regularly bring you in things each week and be able to do it like that, rather than “Quick, we need another song” kind of thing.

Everything was a bit chaotic
• I actually think it was a little rushed because everything was a bit chaotic.

I want to learn more and more, musically
• Actually coming in and participating in it and seeing your love of music I just wanted to learn more and more and more
• We both miss guitar as well. Both of us, and I know there are others in the group, we just want to learn anything we can, really, because we both wanted to go back to guitar and play drums and possibly piano and singing quietly, very quietly.

I enjoyed seeing it all come together, especially when my friends were around to see it
• Later on, just kicking back with a small group of friends, it’s actually good to see it all come together

I can be self-critical and a bit of a perfectionist when it comes to writing
• You are your own worst enemy and biggest critic
• I’ll look at a song and I’ll see clichés and the cadence is wrong and things like that. So, I can be a bit picky like that and not want to let go of it until it’s perfect
• I just go onto the next thing because it’s never perfect.

It stops me from finishing things
• I just go onto the next thing because it’s never perfect.
• But I think we all had fun, even if it wasn’t exactly perfect, with the whole process.

I would have been more confident musically if I’d been to more classes
• I think it would have been better had I been to more classes and known a bit more of what I was doing with instruments because even though I’ve got my own guitar I haven’t played it for so long. I think I would have been personally more confident had I been in the classes for longer
• I’m not very confident at doing that but I think if we do more classes I think I’d get more confident with how it actually sounds and what sounds good. I’m not
very confident at doing that but I think if we do more classes I think I’d get more confident with how it actually sounds and what sounds good. What fits and what doesn’t. What complements and what doesn’t. I just haven’t played enough to be confident in that yet, which is why I’d always ask you. “Does that sound stupid or is that all right?”

In amongst this process, so many people in charge of me noticed how well I was going

- I swear if one more governor or, we have R&As because on long-term we have them every six months or every year, whenever they find us and I had one of those in amongst this and it is embarrassing. It truly is. They sit you there in the middle of the circle and talk about how wonderful you are and how well you’re going and how happy you seem and yada yada yada and I have copped that that from everywhere.

They think I’m moving forwards so they were more lenient on me when I got a dirty urine

- I got a dirty urine which we’re not allowed to have and you get kicked out of the C units where I live but they didn’t kick me out. I had to pay a massive fine but they didn’t kick me out because they didn’t want me going backwards because they think that I’m going forwards. Normally I would have been kicked out straight away, so saving grace.

I’ve had positive feedback all around the place which makes me happy

- I think the positive feedback I have had all around the place to the point of embarrassment, even to the point of the governor saying that on their day off they would come into the performance if I was in it. It just makes me happy and everything’s OK.

Apparently I’m much more musical at home now

- Apparently at home I’m singing a lot more and playing a lot more and sitting at dinner and I don’t quite realize that I’ve got a pattern happening with my feet. It’s like coming home, in a way. It’s brought me back to what I love – music!

- So, it’s just brought me back to music that I love so much.

- I have depression and I tend to drop out of everything that I love and that’s what happened many moons ago and I think you can just go into a negative cycle where I guess things in life can bring you down and it’s good to have gone through things like that because you learn a lot but it’s like coming home in a way because you’re coming back to what you love.

- Thank you for bringing me back to music.

Many moons ago I dropped out of everything I love

- I have depression and I tend to drop out of everything that I love and that’s what happened many moons ago and I think you can just go into a negative cycle where I guess things in life can bring you down and it’s good to have gone through things like that because you learn a lot but it’s like coming home in a way because you’re coming back to what you love.

- Even though I’ve got my own guitar I haven’t played it for so long.

- I just haven’t participated.

- I dropped out of music and art years ago, probably about six years ago
I haven’t done anything like that for ages so I think it was a really good thing to do.

My fear of groups and people kept me from coming back to music
- I keep wanting to go back and I kept seeing your classes but I hadn’t quite made it there yet. I think it’s more just fear of groups.
- I’m just not good in big groups of people and I’ve gotten worse over the years.

Now that I understand the process I think I would be able to write more and bring it in more regularly
- I think now that we’ve sort of done all of this and we’ve done all the performance and there’s been a song, I think I would have been able to write a lot more things and be able to regularly bring you in things each week and be able to do it like that, rather than “Quick, we need another song” kind of thing.

I saw something through for once
- I actually did it. I saw something through for once. I’ve got a problem with not finishing things. I just go onto the next thing because it’s never perfect.

I’ve got to let go of my fear of being heard, as long as people don’t come too near my bubble world
- I’m OK with not having a voice because too many people over the years have spoken for me … It was still cool, though.
- In a way I’ve sort of got to let all of that go too. People can speak for me and do what they want, as they do, as long as they don’t come too close to my actual life. I don’t care what people say, what they print, what they want to make, what they produce. It’s not that I don’t care, I do, but as long as they don’t come too close then really it shouldn’t affect me because that’s their thing too. That’s how I see it. That’s their thing and they need to do that for their own reasons and that’s fine. But don’t come near my bubble world.

Music is something I’ve always loved. I’ve been able to play it more in here.
- I can’t live without music. I’ve got music on 24/7. If I’m not asleep I’ve got a walkman in. I don’t really know why I love music. I just do. It’s always been that way. And, because where I grew up we weren’t allowed to play music or do art, as soon as I came here, I did because no-one can get to you here. It is, it’s sanity. It’s a safe haven. It’s something I’ve always loved.

I listened to the different instruments to fit something in somewhere
- I don’t know how I’d come up with anything though. I just listen.
- I think as we were rehearsing I’d try to listen to the different instruments and try to fit something in somewhere.

You can feel vulnerable writing songs in such a judgemental place
- It can be a little vulnerable.
- You can feel a little naked because we live in such a judgmental place

Putting music to my words took them to a different place, gave them a different context
- I just think it took it to a different place.
- I think because I’m so used to writing essays and handing in homework it gets monotonous and it just took it to a different place.
- See, the parts of those writings are about my friend who passed away and that was a bit hard at first but as I learnt what the performance was about and the other songs it sort of changed context a bit which was good.
Gave me a different perspective
- Looking at it from a different perspective.

I wasn’t so attached to them because I was sharing them with others
- It’s sort of like being able to kick back a couple of years later and read something you’ve written. It’s like that. You’re not so closely attached to it. You still are, but you’re sharing it with other people.
- See, the parts of those writings are about my friend who passed away and that was a bit hard at first but as I learnt what the performance was about and the other songs it sort of changed context a bit which was good.

I learnt not to be so picky with my words
- I wasn’t so picky on some of the words, and looking at it from a different perspective.
- I think I liked the first one because of the experience of learning where you come from and how you put the music together and all of that.

I liked the songs because everyone pulled together
- I think it’s more because the group sort of came together. I think everyone pulled together and that’s why I liked all the songs.

I liked the songs when I knew what I was doing
- I liked that one because I knew kind of what I was doing.

I also liked learning more about other people’s experiences through the songs
- I liked that one because it was someone else’s experience and people have the most amazing stories. They really do, whether it be in here or out there, but I think in here you get more of a chance to sit and listen in here because life as you know it has stopped, which can be a good thing.
- I liked that one more because I’ve learnt a little bit more about her.

I liked how one of the women boomed her song out
- I like that one more because she actually comes to class and booms it on out and it was good to see that.

I liked the wicked beat in one of the songs
- It had a wicked beat to it and everyone enjoyed playing that.
OK. So my first question is how would you describe the process overall when you began to be involved up until the performance?

OK, involved in your program, or the whole program.

In the sessions we had together.

All right. How I felt?

How would you describe it? How you felt?

I felt nervous about it. I was anxious. I have counseling with *** from Karaniche and we talked about that performance and she said she thought I looked really happy but in fact I think it’s a very positive thing but, for me, I felt like I was doing it for the group, not for me because at my age, even though I wanted to be, you know, I could look at people and say, “Geez. It would be good to be like that,” at this stage, I’m 43, I don’t think it’s an issue that I need to change who I am, and I’m shy and I’m self-conscious and it was bloody difficult and, even though I enjoyed it and, you know what, I enjoyed seeing it all come together as a group thing but on a personal level I wouldn’t want to ever do it again, be on stage, be performing, because it takes too much from me personally. Did I answer that question?

Yeah, totally. You did, really strongly. So, I’ve been looking at how music programs like this can improve your wellbeing but obviously they can detract from it as well because of that performance element.

Yeah, because the pressure’s on. Although, to be confronted with things like those issues, self-conscious and shy and stuff is probably a good thing, can be a good thing, but depending on who you’ve got helping you through. You know, I could be someone who wasn’t in counseling, for instance, or who wasn’t articulate and thought “I feel strongly about who I am and why I can’t do these things anymore” even though if it had have been 15 years ago and I had the opportunity to be part of something like that, things could have taken a whole different road. But now I think that I’ve got this many years to do this many things and for my wellbeing, being a performer, like having to perform is not one of the things that is going to make me get by in life, I think.

Yep. Are you saying it was good that you had counseling because it helped you through?

Yeah, it was good that I could talk about that and how I felt about it because it made me feel shithouse (laughs).

Oh, that’s awful. Describe the shithouse.
It was that I wasn’t that person. I am not those people and I’m sorry that I’m not because if I was more like that, more assertive and confident, my life could be better or I could have had different experiences and been able to do different things.

And so obviously you loved coming to drumming because there wasn’t the performance element. And am I putting words in your mouth to say that you would have loved it if it had have kept going the way it was?

No, no. I’m glad I was a part of your group and I’m glad that I did that. I didn’t overcome my fears but I followed it through to the end and didn’t dropped out because I probably would have regretted letting you guys down and it was a good thing and we were brave, even though I didn’t do much.

You were. Up on stage you looked fine.

It was funny. Yeah, it was funny. In hindsight it’s funny. And it was good. It was great to see it all come together.

Personally, did you get anything out of the group experience?

No, not really. I get as much satisfaction doing other things and following, like the garden for instance, because you can see something at the end of that, following that through I get as much satisfaction. As a group, I think for the wellbeing of the group, it’s satisfying that, you know, but on a personal level, not really.

Cool. And so, imagine if drumming had have kept going the way it was and there was never any culmination. You kept doing your drumming class and you would learn new skills. Every time you’d learn new beats and then Christmas would come and the drumming teacher would say see you later and come back three weeks later and the whole thing would go again. Would you prefer that? Is it better for your wellbeing?

I don’t think it’s better for my wellbeing, really, even though it was an anxious time and stuff. Well, maybe it would be because then I wouldn’t have the anxiety and not being sure whether you’re going to do it or you’re not and then making this decision that I’m not doing it, don’t hassle me and thinking, shit, I have to go through it again and now I’m committed and I can’t pull out again because other people are relying on me. So, probably better for my wellbeing, for my wellbeing, not for everybody else’s.

Yes, now the artistic director has said something that really made me stop and think. She said, “If I hadn’t had people to push me when I was younger I would never have learnt through challenge.” You pushed yourself to do that and obviously we nudged you a little bit as well. Do you feel like that you did get something out of that challenge? What I’m hearing loud and clear is that it wasn’t a challenge you needed to have because you’re not wanting to become that sort of a person. But even so, you did challenge yourself? So, did you did come out with something from that?
Yeah, I’m happy that I did it and I had a good time and yes, like I said, I think to follow through on that commitment, whether I really wanted to be there or not. I used to suffer really bad anxiety and since being in jail there’s no drugs and alcohol and stuff and that for me creates a sense of I’m not doing the right thing and everything falls to pieces and I don’t have any clear picture on what I should be doing, what I could be doing ‘cause it muddles up your ideas. So, I think again, following it through, even though I didn’t really want to, was a good thing because it’s the hard yards and you can relate that to other things because sometimes you might not want to do things because for whatever reason. So yeah, it’s a good thing.

OK. Is there anything that I could have done, or the theatre company could have done, more of to help you in the process? Because I do feel like I can’t be there as much as I could in other situations because I’m having to think about other things. I remember a lot of times where I probably left you posted, actually, with your drumbeats because I was having to focus on something else.

No, I think you did the best you could under the circumstances ‘cause you weren’t the drumming teacher. You only took on drums at the last minute. No, I think we did our little bit and I think both Matilda and I were happy with that. I certainly wouldn’t have wanted any more of a part than that.

What attracted you to drums in the first place?

What did attract me to the drums? I don’t know. Maybe the leisure centre staff said so first and then the drumming teacher was quite dynamic and it was different and it was bringing something in from outside that was a bit more like-minded, I suppose, with things that I liked rather than the constant drugs, the alcohol, this crappy environment, same old, same old. And that’s why I’ve done mostly everything that I do here, the groups. Everything I do I do to stay in touch with something a bit different from what I am in touch with in here and it’s something I probably would never have done on the outside but I’ve had the opportunity to do, not that I ever wanted to play the drums either. It was good, but I reckon I was a bit like, I’d done a year of the drums and I don’t know if I would have even continued with that unless something new and maybe subconsciously we do need to have some thing at the end of it.

(Laughing) Oh my goodness. I’m glad I got that down on tape.

I won’t be here for anymore so it doesn’t matter, so it’s OK. You know what I mean?

Yep, I do. So, what do you reckon was the role of music in all this? Like, you know how we’ve got the drama and the lighting and the costumes and the staging? This year was a different year because I was coming in more regularly and the drama just happened in the end but in general, for you as one of the musicians up there, what do you reckon the music brings to it?
Well, from what I saw, the people who were playing their instruments were really excited about that, like the flute with Sarah, and Matilda and I like the drums a lot. The music is a good thing. What can I say about the music? Something that people can feel that they’re good at and that they’ve done before. It might even be a bit of a mask, I suppose, to notice that musicians sort of hide behind their instruments a bit, don’t they?

Yes, they certainly do (laughs).

Yeah, and it’s good. It’s good to not have to get up and do something that you’re not completely comfortable with all the time, which is what drama is about, I’ve found. For a healing activity it’s, yeah I’m not an actor or a dancer or anything like that and it sort of puts you on the spot a bit because then if you say you’re not going to do it, it makes it worse potentially. You may as well just do it in the first place (laughs).

(Laughing) I did let you off the hook though, remember?

You did. It was great. You did it very well and didn’t hassle us and that was a good experience because the pressure wasn’t on to do something we weren’t comfortable in doing, in the end.

Did you understand what I was saying when I kept telling you that your energy was really good to have in the group? You were saying it didn’t matter if you were there or not, but it actually really did. I don’t know if you noticed but when you’re not there, you can notice. Definitely. You’ve got a very containing, calm, even though you say that you’re very anxious.

I have been but I have been very calm lately.

Well, I thought that that brought/

/Well, I’m glad. But I am very calm and that’s what I said before and didn’t finish it, but I am becoming calm and that situation where I could have been extremely anxious I wasn’t as anxious, which is a good thing. So, what makes me anxious? Not a lot lately. I’m really happy about that.

Yeah, that’s great and that comment you made about “In the end, it doesn’t really matter” was great.

Yeah, otherwise we’d always be bloody anxious and some of those girls, I probably don’t get as anxious as Gillian would or maybe even Sarah, she was shaking. But I might have years ago, but now not much worries me because I’m safe. I’m safe from the things that really scare me.

And was that a safe experience?
Yeah, you guys made us feel safe. And we all had those anxiety issues, we were all scared and what were we scared of? ‘Cause I knew the women weren’t going to boo us and laugh. I know that people enjoy that experience and they love the theatre company. From my experience people love these performances and a lot of girls who’ve been here a long time have been in them and you guys are really popular. So, I knew we wouldn’t be joked about.

So, what were your anxieties stemming from?

I don’t know. I like to be seen a certain way and I don’t mean to be seen that way but I am very stiff and conservative and don’t like all the attention, unfortunately, but I’ve got to accept that too. That’s how I’m getting lately. If I was to change and become something else or something better or something that’s going to be better for me, it would be a good thing but I’m not going to make a big deal out of it and push myself in that direction.

Yep. You’ve got to be gentle with yourself.

Yeah, that’s right. Did I answer that question?

Yep, totally. You’ve been studying drumbeats all year and really cool African beats and then putting it to pop music/

/It was great. It was great, sounded great.

Yeah, I think it lifted Jane’s song amazingly.

Yeah. I loved that song at the end. I loved that song. The drums were good and it all fit in well from what I could hear. Jane is very good because she sort of led us other times with the guitar and it’s like “That fits into that” and it’s a bit exciting, you know? So, I liked that.

Did you have a favourite song?

That song with the drums and I liked Gillian’s little song too because it was uplifting and I thought it was well written. Did you?

Yeah, totally. I was very sad when it looked like it wasn’t going to be in there (laughs).

She gets really pissed off. Yeah. It was good that she came back.

Yeah. Did you feel well-rehearsed enough?

Yeah, we tried really hard. I think so. It came together well, as things do, in the end.

Is there anything else you wanted to say about the experience?
That it was a good experience. Maybe I don’t exactly recognize it for what it is right now but whatever it was it was good for all of us and I’m glad that I was part of it, even though I’m not completely sure why. It was a good thing.

Structural Meaning Units

Experiences associated with the performance

- I felt nervous about it.
- I was anxious.
- I have counseling with *** from Karaniche and we talked about that performance and she said she thought I looked really happy
- I felt like I was doing it for the group, not for me because at my age, even though I wanted to be, you know, I could look at people and say, “Geez. It would be good to be like that,” at this stage, I’m 43, I don’t think it’s an issue that I need to change who I am
- I’m shy and I’m self-conscious
- It was bloody difficult
- I enjoyed seeing it all come together as a group thing
- On a personal level I wouldn’t want to ever do it again, be on stage, be performing, because it takes too much from me personally.
- The pressure’s on.
- To be confronted with things like those issues, self-conscious and shy and stuff is probably a good thing, can be a good thing, but depending on who you’ve got helping you through.
- I could be someone who wasn’t in counseling, for instance, or who wasn’t articulate and thought “I feel strongly about who I am and why I can’t do these things anymore”
- If it had have been 15 years ago and I had the opportunity to be part of something like that, things could have taken a whole different road.
- But now I think that I’ve got this many years to do this many things and for my wellbeing, being a performer, like having to perform is not one of the things that is going to make me get by in life, I think.
- It was good that I could talk about that and how I felt about it because it made me feel shithouse (laughs).
- It was that I wasn’t that person. I am not those people
- I’m sorry that I’m not because if I was more like that, more assertive and confident, my life could be better or I could have had different experiences and been able to do different things.
- In hindsight it’s funny.
- I don’t think it’s better for my wellbeing, really, even though it was an anxious time and stuff.
- Well, maybe it would be because then I wouldn’t have the anxiety and not being sure whether you’re going to do it or you’re not and then making this decision
that I’m not doing it, don’t hassle me and thinking, shit, I have to go through it again and now I’m committed and I can’t pull out again because other people are relying on me. So, probably better for my wellbeing, for my wellbeing, not for everybody else’s.

- So, I think again, following it through, even though I didn’t really want to, was a good thing because it’s the hard yards and you can relate that to other things because sometimes you might not want to do things because for whatever reason. So yeah, it’s a good thing.
- I’d done a year of the drums and I don’t know if I would have even continued with that unless something new and maybe subconsciously we do need to have some thing at the end of it.
- It’s good to not have to get up and do something that you’re not completely comfortable with all the time, which is what drama is about, I’ve found.
- I have been very calm lately. I am becoming calm and that situation where I could have been extremely anxious I wasn’t as anxious, which is a good thing. So, what makes me anxious? Not a lot lately. I’m really happy about that.
- Some of those girls, I probably don’t get as anxious as Gillian would or maybe even Sarah, she was shaking. But I might have years ago, but now not much worries me because I’m safe. I’m safe from the things that really scare me.
- You guys made us feel safe.
- And we all had those anxiety issues, we were all scared and what were we scared of? ‘Cause I knew the women weren’t going to boo us and laugh. I know that people enjoy that experience and they love the theatre company. From my experience people love these performances and a lot of girls who’ve been here a long time have been in them and you guys are really popular. So, I knew we wouldn’t be joked about.

**Experience overall**

- I’m glad I was a part of your group
- I’m glad that I did that.
- I’m happy that I did it and I had a good time and yes, like I said, I think to follow through on that commitment, whether I really wanted to be there or not.
- I didn’t overcome my fears
- I followed it through to the end and didn’t drop out because I probably would have regretted letting you guys down
- We were brave
- I didn’t do much.
- It was great to see it all come together.
- So, I think again, following it through, even though I didn’t really want to, was a good thing because it’s the hard yards and you can relate that to other things because sometimes you might not want to do things because for whatever reason. So yeah, it’s a good thing.
- Everything I do I do to stay in touch with something a bit different from what I am in touch with in here
• If I was to change and become something else or something better or something that’s going to be better for me, it would be a good thing but I’m not going to make a big deal out of it and push myself in that direction.
• It was a good experience.
• Maybe I don’t exactly recognize it for what it is right now
• Whatever it was it was good for all of us
• I’m glad that I was part of it
• I’m not completely sure why.
• It was a good thing.

Experience of the process
• I’m not an actor or a dancer or anything like that and it sort of puts you on the spot a bit because then if you say you’re not going to do it, it makes it worse potentially. You may as well just do it in the first place (laughs).
• *(Laughing)* I did let you off the hook though, remember? You did it very well and didn’t hassle us and that was a good experience because the pressure wasn’t on to do something we weren’t comfortable in doing, in the end.
• It came together well, as things do, in the end.

Experience of the group
• *Personally, did you get anything out of the group experience?* No, not really. I get as much satisfaction doing other things and following, like the garden for instance, because you can see something at the end of that, following that through I get as much satisfaction.
• As a group, I think for the wellbeing of the group, it’s satisfying that, you know, but on a personal level, not really.
• Well, from what I saw, the people who were playing their instruments were really excited about that, like the flute with Sarah, and Matilda and I like the drums a lot.
• The drums were good and it all fit in well from what I could hear. Jane is very good because she sort of led us other times with the guitar and it’s like “That fits into that” and it’s a bit exciting, you know? So, I liked that.
• It was good that she came back.
• We tried really hard.

Past experiences that influenced this experience
• I used to suffer really bad anxiety and since being in jail there’s no drugs and alcohol and stuff and that for me creates a sense of I’m not doing the right thing and everything falls to pieces and I don’t have any clear picture on what I should be doing, what I could be doing ‘cause it muddles up your ideas.
• I like to be seen a certain way and I don’t mean to be seen that way but I am very stiff and conservative and don’t like all the attention, unfortunately, but I’ve got to accept that too. That’s how I’m getting lately.

Experience of music
• The music is a good thing
• Something that people can feel that they’re good at and that they’ve done before.
• It might even be a bit of a mask, I suppose, to notice that musicians sort of hide behind their instruments a bit, don’t they?
Experience of the songs

- I loved that song at the end. I loved that song. The drums were good and it all fit in well from what I could hear. Jane is very good because she sort of led us other times with the guitar and it’s like “That fits into that” and it’s a bit exciting, you know? So, I liked that.
- I liked Gillian’s little song too because it was uplifting and I thought it was well written.

Experienced Meaning Units

I used to suffer bad anxiety, which is heightened here in prison because there’s no drugs or alcohol

- I used to suffer really bad anxiety and since being in jail there’s no drugs and alcohol and stuff and that for me creates a sense of I’m not doing the right thing and everything falls to pieces and I don’t have any clear picture on what I should be doing, what I could be doing ‘cause it muddles up your ideas.

I do these programs to stay in touch with the outside

- Everything I do I do to stay in touch with something a bit different from what I am in touch with in here

Working towards a performance was difficult and confronting. It made me feel shithouse.

- It was bloody difficult
- To be confronted with things like those issues, self-conscious and shy
- It made me feel shithouse (laughs).

I felt nervous and anxious about the idea of performing

- I felt nervous about it.
- I was anxious.
- The pressure’s on.
- And we all had those anxiety issues, we were all scared

My counselor thought it was good for me

- I have counseling with *** from Karaniche and we talked about that performance and she said she thought I looked really happy

But I felt like I was doing it for the group, not for me

- I felt like I was doing it for the group, not for me
- I have to go through it again and now I’m committed and I can’t pull out again because other people are relying on me.
- I followed it through to the end and didn’t drop out because I probably would have regretted letting you guys down

I didn’t feel like I could try it out and then leave the group

- I’m not an actor or a dancer or anything like that and it sort of puts you on the spot a bit because then if you say you’re not going to do it, it makes it worse potentially. You may as well just do it in the first place (laughs).

Even though you didn’t hassle me
• (Laughing) I did let you off the hook though, remember? You did it very well and didn’t hassle us and that was a good experience because the pressure wasn’t on to do something we weren’t comfortable in doing, in the end.

I didn’t get much personal satisfaction from the group experience
• Personally, did you get anything out of the group experience? No, not really. I get as much satisfaction doing other things and following, like the garden for instance, because you can see something at the end of that, following that through I get as much satisfaction.
• As a group, I think for the wellbeing of the group, it’s satisfying that, you know, but on a personal level, not really.

We were brave and worked hard
• We were brave
• We tried really hard.

And I enjoyed playing the drums and fitting my part in with the others
• Well, from what I saw, the people who were playing their instruments were really excited about that, like the flute with Sarah, and Matilda and I like the drums a lot.
• The drums were good and it all fit in well from what I could hear. Jane is very good because she sort of led us other times with the guitar and it’s like “That fits into that” and it’s a bit exciting, you know? So, I liked that.

I used to wish I could be someone who wasn’t shy and self-conscious
• I wanted to be, you know, I could look at people and say, “Geez. It would be good to be like that”
• I’m shy and I’m self-conscious
• If it had have been 15 years ago and I had the opportunity to be part of something like that, things could have taken a whole different road.

Things may have been different
• If it had have been 15 years ago and I had the opportunity to be part of something like that, things could have taken a whole different road.
• I’m sorry that I’m not because if I was more like that, more assertive and confident, my life could be better or I could have had different experiences and been able to do different things.

It can be good to confront those issues if you have someone to help you through
• To be confronted with things like those issues, self-conscious and shy and stuff is probably a good thing, can be a good thing, but depending on who you’ve got helping you through.
• I could be someone who wasn’t in counseling, for instance, or who wasn’t articulate and thought “I feel strongly about who I am and why I can’t do these things anymore”
• It was good that I could talk about that and how I felt about it because it made me feel shithouse (laughs).
• If I was to change and become something else or something better or something that’s going to be better for me, it would be a good thing

But it’s also good not to constantly be stepping outside of your comfort zone, which is what drama is about
It’s good to not have to get up and do something that you’re not completely comfortable with all the time, which is what drama is about, I’ve found.

I’m not an actor or a dancer or anything like that and it sort of puts you on the spot a bit because then if you say you’re not going to do it, it makes it worse potentially. You may as well just do it in the first place (laughs).

If I was to change and become something else or something better or something that’s going to be better for me, it would be a good thing but I’m not going to make a big deal out of it and push myself in that direction.

At my age I don’t need to push myself to change who I am or become comfortable with performing

At this stage, I’m 43, I don’t think it’s an issue that I need to change who I am

But now I think that I’ve got this many years to do this many things and for my wellbeing, being a performer, like having to perform is not one of the things that is going to make me get by in life, I think.

It was that I wasn’t that person. I am not those people.

If I was to change and become something else or something better or something that’s going to be better for me, it would be a good thing but I’m not going to make a big deal out of it and push myself in that direction.

I like to be seen a certain way and I don’t mean to be seen that way but I am very stiff and conservative and don’t like all the attention, unfortunately, but I’ve got to accept that too. That’s how I’m getting lately.

It’s not important in my life

Having to perform is not one of the things that is going to make me get by in life, I think.

I wouldn’t ever do it again because it’s too challenging personally

On a personal level I wouldn’t want to ever do it again, be on stage, be performing, because it takes too much from me personally.

It’s good to not have to get up and do something that you’re not completely comfortable with all the time, which is what drama is about, I’ve found.

I didn’t overcome my fears

I’m not sure if it would have been better without the performance

I don’t think it’s better for my wellbeing, really, even though it was an anxious time and stuff.

I’d done a year of the drums and I don’t know if I would have even continued with that unless something new and maybe subconsciously we do need to have some thing at the end of it.

It probably would have been better for me, but not for the group

Well, maybe it would be because then I wouldn’t have the anxiety and not being sure whether you’re going to do it or you’re not and then making this decision that I’m not doing it, don’t hassle me and thinking, shit, I have to go through it again and now I’m committed and I can’t pull out again because other people are relying on me. So, probably better for my wellbeing, for my wellbeing, not for everybody else’s

I enjoyed seeing it all come together

I enjoyed seeing it all come together as a group thing
It was great to see it all come together.
It came together well, as things do, in the end.

And I’m glad I followed it through, for the group and because that’s important in other areas of life

So, I think again, following it through, even though I didn’t really want to, was a good thing because it’s the hard yards and you can relate that to other things because sometimes you might not want to do things because for whatever reason. So yeah, it’s a good thing.

I think to follow through on that commitment, whether I really wanted to be there or not.

I followed it through to the end and didn’t drop out because I probably would have regretted letting you guys down

I’m really happy that I wasn’t as anxious as I could have been

I have been very calm lately. I am becoming calm and that situation where I could have been extremely anxious I wasn’t as anxious, which is a good thing. So, what makes me anxious? Not a lot lately. I’m really happy about that.

Some of those girls, I probably don’t get as anxious as Gillian would or maybe even Sarah, she was shaking. But I might have years ago, but now not much worries me because I’m safe. I’m safe from the things that really scare me.

You guys and the prison made me feel safe

You guys made us feel safe.

Now not much worries me because I’m safe. I’m safe from the things that really scare me.

I knew that the other women weren’t going to boo us or laugh

And we all had those anxiety issues, we were all scared and what were we scared of? ‘Cause I knew the women weren’t going to boo us and laugh. I know that people enjoy that experience and they love the theatre company. From my experience people love these performances and a lot of girls who’ve been here a long time have been in them and you guys are really popular. So, I knew we wouldn’t be joked about.

I’m glad I was part of it

I’m glad I was a part of your group
I’m glad that I did that.
I’m glad that I was part of it
I’m happy that I did it and I had a good time

It was good for me

It was a good experience.
It was a good thing.
Whatever it was it was good for all of us

Even though I’m not sure why yet

Maybe I don’t exactly recognize it for what it is right now. I’m not completely sure why.
Appendix 7 - Phenomenological Analyses of the Researcher’s Session Notes

Session Notes

1 October, 2007
The session today had fantastic energy – 9 women plus one of the actors and myself. We began with massages and physical warm-ups, then some breathing, alphabet, scales, resonance-work on “My name is …” using chest, belly, head and nasal, then blending all four. Then we sang “Om”, then talked about the performance and the theme of “Moving forward the hard way” and planets/stars/gravitational pulls, which had emerged from previous sessions. The women cottoned onto this straight away – L even went to the library next door and got a book out for us to read up on the significance of all the planets. L’s resourcefulness really surprised me as she’s been giving me bad vibes ever since I caught her stealing from the art and crat stuff last week. I was more assertive than usual about not signing her movement slip unless she stayed, and that’s obviously put her out! Oh well, interestingly, I don’t care! Then we did creative writing on the planet that we most resonated with. One of the actors kept all these writings in order to do more research and feed them back to the women next week. She’s also going to buy them some writing journals. I hope she has time and that she does come in next week. I’m so used to having to go in alone because at the last minute the artists have to be elsewhere for a performance or a rehearsal. I helped C write because she felt stuck, so I talked to her about why she resonated with the paranoia and torment associated with Pluto. She answered briefly and soon tired of the subject. She has the attention span of a flea but is a great goofy fun energy in the group (“Goofy” is why she chose Pluto). One of the actors and I closed the session by performing two songs from past shows to give them an idea of what could happen – stimulate ideas. Many of the women wanted copies of the songs. We then sang as a group “Fragile” and “Hallelujah”, then stood in a circle holding hands and thanking each other and talking about the next session.

8 October, 2007
The session today was predominantly drama. M, L, J, Gillian and B attended. One of the actors brought in some cute journals for the women to write in, some glittery pens, and some information about the planets. It was such an occasion for them, you’d have thought it was Christmas. It was quite sad really, that they obviously feel like they have nothing, so special gifts like these distinguish them from the others and provide them with something they couldn’t normally get. I reckon L only attended because I had mentioned “We have gifts” just as she was deciding whether to attend or not. We began with a massage and a quick physical warm-up, then we brainstormed about Saturn. Themes such as rebellion, being pulled in different directions, and feeling powerless came up. Then in two groups we did ‘balances’ on specific phrases that emerged, such as “caught between heaven and hell”. We got the women to say words while they were doing the balances and then noted these down. Then each woman was given a concept to write on until the next time. We have lots of general concepts to work with, but nothing personal or specific. At this stage of the creative process I reckon the actor and I need to keep shaping the emerging material to feed back to the women (sort of}
like a gift!). It’s more directive, but I reckon you need it to keep the ball rolling. Also bringing in other gifts like biscuits might help motivation.
Also, with myself, I need to be less hasty to pull together the material too soon. It’s like a total non-enjoyment of that early phase where ideas are flowing but you still have no idea what the actual songs or scenes will say. This is the part where you need to trust the process (even though there’s an impending performance and you have nothing to perform yet!) and let things cogitate, ruminate, fester, grow before trying to pin it down. Play!

October 11, 2007

Today was a very frustrating session. Firstly, when I got to the leisure centre Matilda told me that no-one was around because the screws had brought the dogs in and were ramping some of the cells and locking some women out of their cells as a result. This would have caused a bit of panic and unsettledness and the last thing I could imagine would be wanting to come and do music or drumming. So, for the first hour, no-one turned up. Secondly, on talking to a leisure centre staff-member before the session, she said that from their end there will be no performance in December because they’re just too busy with other things. This really frustrated me because we have been working up to an ‘imaginary’ performance for so long; if it was postponed much longer I reckon the women just wouldn’t believe that something would happen. So, I called the artistic director who was busy in another workshop and she was going to try calling the regional manager of the prison, but I don’t feel very confident about her ability to communicate back clearly to me. So, I left feeling pretty powerless on that one. We’ll just have to see what happens.

Today’s session was normally reserved for drumming with another theatre company artist, but she has left the company and I am going to start doing her sessions, with a little bit of music as well so that M can participate since she can’t do Monday’s session due to compulsory ‘cog skills’. But they decided, even before the session began, that they would prefer to do guitar today, so they went and got their guitars from their cells. No-one wanted to do a warm-up (energy was very flat and unmotivated) so we sat in a circle and I showed them my efforts at creating conversations from our last session into a poem/song. They said that it was ‘grouse’. Then I got Jane to play her song she’d written about “Moving on the hard way” and asked her how she would introduce this song in a performance/theatre context in order to give the audience more of an idea about the story behind her song, especially because the lyrics are so general/abstract and not easily understood. This is Jane though. She has said before that she doesn’t like talking, and that’s why she loves music, and you can tell in her lyrics that she doesn’t like to divulge anything that will give her away, so every phrase is a little ambiguous or abstract. Jane said she’d write something down, and I took that to mean that she didn’t feel comfortable talking about it in the group context so I let it go. Then, we tried putting some drum rhythms previously taught by the drumming
artist to the song. The verses were in 4/4 and the chorus was in 6/8, so it was difficult but sounded very cool once the women had re-learnt those beats and knew where to change from one to the other. During this part of the session, I was teaching Majella a simple 4/4 beat which she was finding hard to get. I stopped teaching her after a while because I didn’t want to draw attention to her mistakes and suggested that she just do something really basic, but the other women began to teach her instead. They didn’t get impatient or snitty, which I had feared would happen. Then Ml asked if Jane could play another song so we sat around listening to her and applauded at the end. This tends to happen a lot when Ml is around, and I’m wary about making the sessions “The Jane Show” so I tried to steer it back towards the impending performance. I suggested we try putting the poem/lyrics resulting from last session’s conversations to music. I asked M if she felt up to singing the words to her own melody, while Majella, Jane and Matilda played guitar (and Ml played bass on a guitar). She said she’d give it a go, so first Jane came up with a riff and taught a simpler version to the others as well as a bass line to Ml. Then once they had that established M tried singing over the top. She said she either wanted to sing angrily or blues, and commented that the words didn’t really suit ‘angry’ so she’d do blues instead. She did really well, creating a melody. Every now and then I would make suggestions as to where she could go or what could happen next. M asked me not to leave her posted in the singing, so I sang with her but tried not to direct the melody. We recorded it so we wouldn’t forget it (I got C to be sound engineer), and everyone thought it sounded great. As we began to listen back to the recording, M said that she had to go. I realized she was shy about listening to herself and she really didn’t want to. But with some persuasion from the other women, she listened and said, “Wow, is that me?!” She commented that she’d never heard herself sing before and didn’t think it sounded like her but seemed quite happy with how it sounded. Jane’s eyes lit up when she realized I’d brought in a mini-disc recorder and she asked if she could record some of her songs and listen back to them after everyone had gone. This we did, and she also commented that she’d never heard herself sing before and that she sounded better than she had imagined. When I asked her in what way she sounded better, she said “less croaky” and cited recently giving up smoking as a possible reason why. Both Matilda and Majella agreed to come on Monday as well, and said that they’d really enjoyed it even though they were scared about coming at the start. During the session, Majella was really clear about what she wouldn’t do and what she wanted to do, and I didn’t push her, but her energy for the process was fantastic.

So, I guess that a lot of positive things happened in the session, but it was frustrating because I didn’t get to do any proper ‘data collection’ recording of voices. I also think that when I mentioned the voice recording this session it frightened a lot of them away from wanting to participate in the study. That old fear of singing thing.

At the end, I explained the study to Jane since I had already mentioned it to the group and she said she’d be happy to be part of it just before asking me if I could bring in some APRA forms for copyrighting her songs. It made me think about how so many interactions in the prison are about what people can get out of it. I wonder if sometimes the women participate because they think they may be able to get things like guitar strings, capo, etc. (These things have been asked for). But then I think about this research and realize that I’m asking something of them for my own benefit. It’s a bit of tit for tat, in a way. But I don’t feel comfortable with that, so I need to let go of the research.
outcomes; if they happen, then great, but if not, then that’s life. Within the creative process, I also feel that I’m being a little Nazi, trying to force the creative process rather than let it happen. Not enough play, too much pushing shit up hill. It just feels though that nothing will happen unless it’s forced, in that lusterless environment.

October 15, 2007

Before the session today, I told the artistic director that I felt I was being too directive in the prison and writing things from bare threads and she assured me that it’s what you have to do in order to get anything happening. She said that democratic ways are lovely but nothing would ever happen if we worked that way; so she encouraged me to keep doing what I was doing but always consulting the group for changes, and said that the women would begin to feel ownership when they changed words according to how they would say it and over time as they practiced it and changed it to suit themselves. Ownership came up first thing in the prison when I had a quick conversation with Jane who had asked me for some copyright forms at the end of the last session. I showed her a book I had on the music business and explained to her that copyright was automatically protected in Australia. I then asked her if she was worried about ownership with anything she contributed to the upcoming performance. She replied, “Not really” but just to reassure her I explained that she owned her songs. She was sharing them with the rest of the group but they would always be hers and no-one would try to make money from them. She seemed happy with that explanation.

The session began with Jane, Matilda, B and E. Matilda was very shy about coming, so I urged her to come and said that she didn’t have to do anything she didn’t want to do (which is contrary to what the theatre company normally does – everyone has to participate). She also didn’t have Majella with her because she was having a bad day. If Majella had been there, Matilda would have felt more confident, but she came anyway and started to learn the bass to the songs we were writing. She picked it up very quickly. B came back with some writing on what one of the actors had asked her to write about. It was very cliché, impersonal and simplistic but she seemed very proud of her efforts. She said she was writing it for Jesus. The four women and one of the actors and I began a massage and a quick warm-up. During the warm-up, C, N and Gillian came. C was in and out trying to get others involved and so a new woman called Spark came later and another woman’s name who escapes me. They were in and out too, and much later L turned up. She’d been sunbaking. (Shows her level of commitment!). After physical and vocal warm-ups, we learnt the half of the song that M and the group had begun last session. We then tried to write some more but people’s ideas were clashing eg. N was using abstract astronomical ideas with words like ‘trajectory’ that C didn’t understand and didn’t want included in the song. Also, B made a comment to shy little Matilda that her eyes looked like she was on amphetamines. Matilda went so bright red and the other women gently told B off. I think this may have taken its toll because a little later B left. She said she wasn’t coping and she wasn’t meaning to be rude but she needed to go. It wasn’t a dramatic exit; we checked that she was OK and she said yes, didn’t seem emotional, but was very clear that she needed to leave. I aborted the attempt to finish the song after a while, but at the end of the session Gillian offered to take it home and add to it because she had a few ideas. I think that ‘divide in order to conquer’ might be the next
strategy because, as a big group, there is no cohesion (the group is always different every session) and people are rightly not opening up in front of each other. They all went for a ciggie break but N stayed back. She was really enjoying the creative process but was aware that it was too difficult with so many people in the mix. She is going home way before the performance but she wrote a beautiful poem that she wants to be included in the performance as a monologue. It’s about her breast-cancer scare, and has been written cleverly using the themes and metaphors that have already emerged. I asked her to help me with some ideas I had for an opening, so we wrote that as a voice-over. When the others came back from their break, we got Gillian to read it while I played music underneath. Then we worked on getting Jane to give some context for her song. She wanted to do it as a dialogue, so we recorded a conversation between her and C that would help to lead in. Jane definitely doesn’t want to divulge anything personal, as it’s still highly symbolic and unclear but we’ll hopefully get there with some more scripting and devising-work. Next session I told Gillian that we would work together to write a song of her own, and she was very happy with that idea. After that, most of the women left and Jane stayed behind to listen to her recordings again. I asked her what she thought of them and she said that she wants her voice to sound stronger. I then got her to do the recording for the research unaccompanied and she listened back to that and said that her voice sounded sweeter than she wanted. She wanted an edge to her voice. She also asked me what I thought of her voice and so I told her that I thought it was fantastic but that if she wanted to be professional (which is what she says) she would need to do a little work on getting more variety in her voice. She agreed, but I also said that everyone has different opinions and she shouldn’t just listen to me. On the way home, I was thinking about what I thought about her voice and I came to the conclusion that I just don’t hear any emotion in Jane’s voice, she is so controlled; and as a result it doesn’t really move me. It’s very technically in tune and stylized, but I need more! It would be interesting to see if her voice was more emotional once she’d left the prison environment where you do have to keep things under control. On my way out, I was chatting to Matilda and explaining the difference between the theatre company and the music program that used to run at the prison. I asked if she was interested in song-writing. She explained that she is a high-profile prisoner and that people write stories and movies about her and as a result she doesn’t want to tell her story; she wants to ‘hide in the shadows’. I told her that it would be fabulous if she wrote something about that (hiding in the shadows), but that I understood if she didn’t want to. She offered to bring some of her writings next session. The actor said afterwards that she felt like she was just there to babysit; so I said to her that she should take on more of a role. I asked her if she wanted to take on more of the writing and she said more of the drama with those who were interested, which would make my group much smaller but hopefully more open. “Conquer and divide!” just to get a little more openness at this stage.

October 18, 2007

As I entered the leisure centre today, a leisure-centre staff member remarked, “How’s that – Matilda has been told she can’t participate in the group because she doesn’t want to perform!” After a little questioning, I discovered that there had been a misunderstanding.
somewhere along the line last session when the actor had said that everyone has to participate. Anyway, I talked to Matilda and cleared it all up. She said that she really didn’t enjoy Monday’s session because she doesn’t like groups and she just wants to play music. I explained to her that next Monday we would split up the group into two: music and drama and she seemed happy to try it again. Then I also clarified with her that, because I’m not the drumming teacher, I couldn’t continue the drumming as she had, but I was happy to incorporate what I could into the session. She also said that she was fine with that, and that Majella would be too. Then, Matilda shared with me some of her writing, which was amazing. She is very prolific, although she hasn’t written for about 18 months. She said that when she’s depressed she stops everything and gets lost in her head. She said that she would never share her writing with the artistic director because it would get printed. She told me how people had taken writing she had done when she was 10 years old and had sold it to a magazine. She also said that she had sent a lot of her writing out of the prison for fear that her cell would get ramped and writings stolen by the screws and sold to the media. I told her that her writings would be shared with others in the context of the program but to a small audience and that she wouldn’t have to acknowledge that it was hers if she didn’t want to. She said that she would be happy to acknowledge that she had written something with me. We looked for possible pieces that would fit into her idea expressed last session of hiding in the shadows but decided instead to write something new. I asked her if she would try to write something in this session, but she said that things usually come to her at 3am in the morning and that she prefers to write alone. She promised that she would write something entitled ‘Shadowland’ before Monday. Then Gillian came in she talked to me about possible ideas for her own song. I wrote down everything that she said and after her I had tried to form it into some lyrics, I attempted to enlist Matilda’s help. She made some small suggestions but seemed reluctant to help too much. At the end of the session she explained to me that she prefers to write alone, not in a group situation. After working with Gillian and deciding that we would both go away and write something on her ideas I called up the rest of the group. Only Jane and Ml came. B said she didn’t feel like it today. Majella came about 15 minutes before the end. We worked on the half-song started last Thursday and wrote another two verses so that the song could be considered complete. Ml and Gillian were offering the most in this, but still it was like pulling teeth! We practiced the song with Ml on bass, Jane and Matilda and Majella on guitar, me and Gillian on vocals. Then, we practiced Jane’s song with Matilda on djembe, Majella on guitar and Ml on bass. Ml is now saying that she probably will be here for the performance but she doesn’t want to write a song. She’s interested in doing dance/movement as her contribution. She was saying that she stopped coming because she was getting a little bored. In a different vein, Gillian said how much she loved today’s session. She said, “It’s really got me going” and told me after the others had left that she hadn’t enjoyed Monday’s session in terms of the group. I really feel that it’s a big problem at the moment, no group cohesion and no group stability. I think that it has a lot to do with the creative process and that the women aren’t so interested in writing the songs/play but more interested in rehearsing and performing. Maybe the creative process isn’t such a good thing after all! I can now understand why the theatre company artists generally get writings from women and then work them into art, script or song themselves, because group creation isn’t really working at the moment.
October 22, 2007

Today, as I entered the gatehouse, two theatre company artists were exiting, saying that the leisure centre is closed because both leisure-centre staff members called in sick. I kept thinking of ways we could still go in, because R needed to do his research re: the theatre company funding, and I really wanted to keep the ball rolling. I suggested other venues but due to the renovations the guard at the gatehouse kept saying ‘sorry, no can do’. I kept persisting and eventually she called the programs manager who said that we could go in to the leisure centre and they would provide a guard for us. On the way there, the guard was saying that the vibes are very flat. She attributed to the wind and sun on the weekend. L came in first. She was still cold to me, and so I said straight out: “What’s going on, you’ve been grumpy with me for a few weeks now?” and she said that it was just that she wasn’t enjoying the group. I didn’t believe her because she was still showing no warmth to me but I let it go. Then B came in and as we were waiting for the others to straggle in, she got edgy and wanted to go. She said that she wasn’t really feeling like it, and I said that she said that last session. She then said that she wasn’t enjoying it, that it wasn’t the program for her. My sense is that this difficult devising process is too unstructured for her; it certainly feels chaotic to me. I urged her to try and persist and that it would begin to come together, so she stayed for about an hour and joined me and Gillian in learning her new song. But before that, MI and Jane entered and shortly after, C. R nabbed these three for his evaluation so I worked with Gillian and B. I gave Gillian a copy of the song I had written for her based on our conversation on Thursday and asked what she thought. I assured her that she was free to change anything or say she didn’t like it, but she seemed really happy with it and said that the words summed her up quite well. We spent about 20 minutes learning it and then I recorded her voice for the research. She chose to sing The Rose because I had the lyrics to it. Afterwards, she listened back to it and said that it sounded really good. She said that she had never heard her voice recorded before. She also said that she was feeling emotional after singing that song because she had learned it as a child on the piano. I talked to her about that and also asked if she was happy for her and I to share her new song with the rest of the group. She said yes and then we joined the others. I announced that we now had three songs for the performance and that we should practice them all. Majella had turned up by then but had also said that Matilda wouldn’t be coming today. She would be there on Thursday though. Jane started teaching MI a bass line to her song but with her back to the others so that they were very closed off to the rest of the group. I taught C a simple beat on the djembe that she would be able to play to Jane’s song and I taught Majella the chords to it on guitar. Majella wanted to practice on her own before she would play with the group so she went out of the room. Meanwhile Jane and MI ended up fighting because MI felt that Jane was expecting her to be a professional musician when she wasn’t. They stormed out for a cigarette and C was left there on her own. She looked very vacant and said absolutely nothing, even though I tried to laugh it off with her. Time was running out quickly so after a quick cigarette break I tried to get everyone to play to Jane’s song. Majella felt that she didn’t know it well enough so didn’t play; and C tried but couldn’t quite get the beat. It all fell apart but no-one seemed too worried – I just laughed it off and said that we obviously need to practice a lot, so I’ll be seeing them all on Thursday. To finish the session I suggested we show the group Gillian’s new song. As we got up to play it

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everyone began to pack up, so I waited and then introduced the song, reminded them how vulnerable people feel when they share their songs and asked them to be good audience members. We sang the song, but during it the guard came in to tell us we had to go now. The group clapped at the end of the song and Ml said it was very catchy, but I could tell Gillian was a little raw. After everyone had left, I walked out with Gillian and checked that she was OK. She said, “Oh yeah, it’s just those nasty comments”. I didn’t know what she was talking about, but the actor just emphasized how brave she was being and how she was saying something that a lot of others couldn’t say, that she was giving voice to others. With that, we said goodbye. On the way back to the gatehouse I was talking with the actor about how fractious it all felt and how people weren’t enjoying the group. She had talked to the women while I was working with Gillian and they were saying that it’s just hard when there hasn’t been much written yet. I said to the actor that by the sounds of it, the women weren’t into the devising/creative process. They just wanted something to practice. She agreed fervently. So, I guess for the next few weeks we just have to keep keeping on, feeding back lots of ideas, dialogues and songs until it shapes into something. I also want to do some group-building exercises in case the whole group finally decide to come at the same time. I think it’s much needed.

October 25, 2007

Today’s session was fabulous. It began in a similar vein to usual. I set up the microphone, bass, djembe and guitars. People were late because they were having coffee, waking up, finishing their jobs etc. Two new girls, S and T, wanted to join, so I explained the performance and the process leading up to it and where we were at. S said she would be really interested in singing and playing the drums and T is more interested in the drama. I explained that there wasn’t much going on in terms of drama at the moment but she said she was happy to come along. Matilda and Majella eventually turned up with their guitars. Matilda hadn’t written anything yet about ‘Shadowlands’ because she said she’d had a chaotic week. Majella started showing Matilda the chords to Jane’s song. C came in full of beans. She said it was her medication and she really was delightful; a handful but delightful, ‘full’, which is better than offering nothing at all! She was telling us how she had only been at school til grade 6 and then she moved so many times to so many schools and she always felt dumb so she just ended up hitting one of the kids and having to go to another school. She said she really regretted not having her VCE. She also said that she likes to sing but she can’t because she sings through her nose. I started to say that we could work on it, and she said “That’s your and my mish, isn’t it Luce?” so she was really enthusiastic to get better at singing. I began a vocal warm-up with the two new girls and C while Majella and Matilda learnt Jane’s song. Then we came back together as a group and tried to all learn Jane’s song without her. I taught Majella and Matilda the strumming pattern, which was quite complex for their level, but they got it in the end. Meanwhile T and S said that they were leaving and shortly after C did too. Before she left I asked her if she had any writing that she wanted to contribute and she said she had just written a song the other day but it rhymes and she didn’t think songs could rhyme. I assured her they could and so she said she would bring the writing back after muster. I didn’t believe her but let her go anyway. Then Jane came in, so I asked her to continue working with Majella and Matilda while I worked with Gillian who had just come in. We looked
through her writings to find something that could contribute to an introduction to her song. She writes a lot about love in a simple and direct way. She had written how love cures everything and we talked about that for a little, then we found something that would help to introduce her song. I checked with her that the words to her song were still OK and suggested that we could put these writings into a song instead but she was happy for it to continue the way it was because she said it summed up what she was saying well. She started talking to Majella in a very open way about her past and how she had started reading heaps and had even started getting into the bible. Majella was really supportively listening. Then we all came back together and began to rehearse the three songs that we have so far. Spark turned up at this point because she has group therapy until then. The songs are quite complex and we didn’t have much time to spend on them so they’re not sounding too crash hot yet, but everyone seemed to enjoy singing into the microphone and being part of the group. The evaluator came in at this point and later commented to me how everyone was beaming. Meanwhile C had come back with her writing and immediately began joining in on the songs and singing into the microphone. This was so different to how she was when she first came to my sessions. She never wanted to sing and so I used to try and get her to rap instead. She was very proud of her writing but also unsure if it was good enough. She said that she had never written a song before but now she had started she was going to write another one for her foster family. She wanted reassurance that I wouldn’t put her up on stage if she wasn’t up to scratch, which I did reassure her about. She also said that she didn’t really want to share it with everyone. She said that she wants the words done in a style similar to Nickleback. I suggested that maybe Jane could help her work on it. C suggested that we both have a go separately and she would choose which she liked best. She’s good like this as earlier, whe and I were forming the melody to the Moving Forward song, she knew what she wanted part of the melody to sound like and was directing us that way using describing words such as ‘louder’ and ‘build up’. Her change really added something to the song!

After practising the songs, we had to finish so I gathered everyone into a circle and asked if everyone could be on time next time and stay until the end. C said, “I’m there! I’m there yesterday! I love music!” and everyone else assured me they would be there too. They helped pack up all the instruments and then after everyone had gone I photocopied C’s writings for her so that she could give them to friends and Jane to work on as a song. As we left I told her that she had made my day with her energy and her contribution with a song. She said that she wrote it “off her own bat” and that she’d never done anything off her own bat before. I thanked her again as she walked away and she yelled out, “You’re a treasure, Luce!” And that is why I came away feeling that the session had been a good one. I think mainly because I hadn’t dragged this piece of creativity out of someone, it had been offered freely and generously. Also, with persistence I think the group finally did something together and enjoyed it. Before Monday I am going to type up chord charts to all the songs in order to help Majella and Matilda and I might try some more scripting so that they feel like we’re getting somewhere. And I’ll buy some colourful display folders to put it all in. That should help bring some more energy into that place!

October 29, 2007
Another fantastic session today. It began like any other: two people at the start, chasing others who were late, people missing for good reasons … C and Gillian were both at court so they couldn’t be there. I really wanted to work with C on her song, so that was a shame, and I had also written a sketch to her song which I wanted to see what she thought. A new girl, Sarah, arrived early and she very shyly asked if she could be involved. She said she loved singing so while we were waiting for the others to arrive, I played Stand By Me (her request) on the piano while she sang. She had a really strong bluesy voice. I told her about my research and she was really interested so we recorded her singing the song unaccompanied. Meanwhile, the actor worked with Matilda to basically crack the whip and get something written re: hiding in the shadows. Matilda sketched out some ideas and words that sounded fantastic but she said she wasn’t happy with it yet and that she would work on it some more. I told her I was sorry to put the pressure on but she really only had a few more days to complete it, otherwise it may be too late. She said that if she doesn’t get a chance, we could work with what she wrote today. Eventually the group all arrived. I didn’t call L because she hasn’t been turning up lately, so the group was Majella, Matilda, Sarah, Jane and Spark. To begin with, I handed around the scripts and chord charts I had written and printed out. We began by reading the script without the songs. I appointed Sarah as the ‘narrator’ and the other women had a go at reading the script of the other characters. Sarah read her part fantastically straight away; she knew just the right nuance to put in. We all had a laugh at a ‘Uranus’ joke I had put in (for C’s character because she said she loves being goofy). Then we practiced the three songs that have been completed so far. We started with the group song and taught the newies the melody. Jane had a go at solos on the electric guitar. Majella and Matilda seemed to be confident in the end at playing their guitars for this song. Then we practiced Jane’s song. She asked for some back-up vocals on a certain phrase repeated in the chorus, so I worked out a harmony and taught Sarah, Spark and the actor. Jane said it sent shivers down her spine, and she really looked like she was enjoying herself as we practiced. (Earlier she had told me that she wasn’t so great at the moment because her and Ml aren’t doing too well and Ml is going home anyday now). I gave Jane a CD of her songs she’d recorded on my minidisc a few weeks earlier because she’d kept requesting it. She said thanks and made a joke about how she’d enjoy listening to her own voice. I laughed and said how it’s important for aspiring musicians to listen to themselves in order to be more objective about their sound etc. Sarah told Jane that she really liked her song. Then we practiced Gillian’s song without her there. Jane said that she really loved this song and had already learnt the whole thing on guitar and had worked out a rhythm. After a smoke break, we practiced it a few times and then I asked Majella if she’d like to try bass guitar. I quickly taught her the simple bass line and she gave it a go. Then we went through the script again, this time adding the songs in. It seemed to work really well.

During the session I asked Spark what she would like to do in this project and she said that she’d like to do the drama, as she can’t sing. I actually heard her sing quite well as we were practising the songs and I told her so, but she kept maintaining that she couldn’t. I asked her why so many people are afraid of singing and she quipped, “For the good of the rest of society, that’s why!” I kept checking in with Majella and Matilda to see if they were feeling OK about the songs, and generally they were. There were a few chords that, at the end of the session, I wrote out for them because the didn’t know them. At the end
of the session, we gathered in a circle and I thanked everyone. As I was writing out the chords for Matilda, Jane packed up all the guitars etc. She’s such an integral part of the group and she’s so helpful even when things in her life are not going so well eg Ml. We still need to work out a sketch for the Moving Forward song, which I think will be the end song. Sarah said that she would like to sing this song, but I think it may be better for the group to sing, especially since it’s the finale. I suggested that we write a song together but she said that she’s never done it before and she wouldn’t know how. I tried to explain as she was leaving how we can write it together but I don’t think she really understood. I will try again to explain on Thursday to see if she is interested. It feels as though the unsettling first part of the devising process may be over. People seem to be more reliable, more on board, and we have a clear idea of where we are heading as well as lots to practice. After the session I sat in on a meeting between the actor, the artistic director and leisure centre staff re: the prison show and how it will work with audience numbers etc. The artistic director started talking about possible costumes and ways of using the space theatrically. It feels like it’s all fitting into place! On Thursday I would like to work out with the women a way of introducing the final song, also work with Matilda on her lyrics, work with C to write the music to her song, and work with Sarah on an original song if she’s interested. I think that’s a bit too much to hope for, but we’ll see!

November 1, 2007

Today felt like hard work again, but there were still some good moments. I arrived early, and while waiting for the girls to arrive I spoke to a staff member at the leisure centre. She was saying how she’d fed back to Sarah how great we thought she was and she hadn’t realized. I was uncertain whether to call up L because she hasn’t been turning up lately and because she’s always so grumpy with me. The staff member said that this time in prison, L has been awful to everyone so that made me feel better. I decided not to call her up. I set up all the instruments and piano in the gym. First, Sarah came. Even before she’d entered the room she was calling out to me that the thought of this session had made her so happy. Then she saw my flute that I had brought in for her to play, and her eyes lit up! But before she played it she said, “I’ve got something to show you” and brought out some writing she’d done. She was very shy about it and said she’d never written anything like this before. Her written words were lovely and sincere and I suggested that if we could grab some time one-on-one we could easily form them into a song. C and M and S followed shortly. They told me that Majella wasn’t coming anymore because she’s got too much on her mind, so S was going to take her place on guitar. C also informed me that she wasn’t going to be there for the performance anymore because she was getting out a few days beforehand. M apologized for not turning up the last two sessions, saying she’d just been having an awful time. S began playing guitar while Sarah improvised some very good flute-playing over it. Everyone said how lovely it sounded. I asked S if she were interested in learning bass to some of the songs, and she said yes, so I taught her the bass riff to Gillian’s song while we waited for the others to turn up. Matilda arrived and said she had some writing too. I said we’d go through it after the session and she went to have a smoke and a coffee. Jane arrived and Matilda came back and we finally began the session. We began by practising the finale song, which
originally was M’s song, so that she could hear how it sounded and try singing it. She was very reluctant to sing into the microphone, so I suggested that C and Sarah join her. S played a simple bass line, Jane played electric while Matilda and I played rhythm. Then we rehearsed Jane’s song and really started to orchestrate/arrange it. The flute sounded fantastic in it, played by Sarah, and Jane seemed really pleased. MI came in to say hello and helped make some arrangement suggestions. We decided to begin with just flute and acoustic, then the djembes (played by M and Matilda) came in and, after the first chorus, the acoustic dropped out for a flute/djembe solo where the thought is that we might do a movement piece. We decided to finish the song with unaccompanied vocal harmonies. These decisions were mainly made by Jane, with some suggestions by me. We tried out a few things until everyone seemed really happy with the arrangement. Then, it was smoke-break time. During this break, Matilda showed me more of her writing. She said she had tried to write something to the emerging astronomy theme but couldn’t and that she’d also tried to write something about a good friend of hers who had died recently from cancer but wasn’t ready to. Instead, she took me through some of her old writing and showed me phrases that she really liked. She suggested that I form them into lyrics because she’d never written lyrics before herself. She said that she always writes poetry or prose, not lyrics. She said, “Are you happy now?” and I vehemently reassured her and said, “Good, at least someone around here is happy.” From this I thought that I may have put too much pressure on her last session when I said that she would make me very happy if she arrived with something she had written. It felt like I had coerced it from her and that she had done it in order to try and make me happy.

After the break and even though Gillian hadn’t turned up AGAIN, we rehearsed her song. Spark turned up, saying she’d come straight away after group. She’d even brought her script with her! We then went through the script. C had earlier read the script that I had written off my own bat to introduce her song because she hadn’t been there for me to get her real story. She said that the script wasn’t true and that she didn’t want to read it. She said that, because she wasn’t going to be there for the performance, she’d prefer it if we didn’t use her song anymore. I said that that was totally fine.

After we’d been through the entire unfinished script plus the songs once more (Sarah ‘went off’ vocally to the finale song, improvising vocally – everyone laughed but said it was great), we closed the session. Everyone helped pack up the instruments. Sarah thanked me again for bringing in the flute. She said, “You don’t know how much it means to me. I haven’t played it for four years”. I said that I’d thought she’d done very well. I asked Spark to think about what she’d like to contribute to the performance. Then I quickly recorded M’s singing for the research before she had to go and see her lawyer. S and I asked the leisure-centre staff if she could borrow the bass to practice the songs but the staff said she’d need to clear it with her unit supervisor first.

I really felt like a music-teacher this session, with a bunch of naughty, loud students. I envied the visual artist her quiet, calm visual art session next door. I really wonder what the point of all this is. Do the women get anything really valuable from these music sessions. Many of them seem to enjoy it but … I guess this research will hopefully answer that for me.

November 5, 2007
I still don’t feel that anything is going to come together. Today, four women turned up – at the start of the session, at least. They were Jane, Sarah, S and Spark. B also wanted to come, even though she hadn’t been for ages and had told me she wanted to go to art instead. She stayed for one song and then left again. Matilda didn’t want to come because as part of her job she had to look after a new-born kitten, and she was smitten! Gillian was at court again. We also had to cut the session short because of rehearsals for the play being performed outside, so we just practiced the three songs. After trying Jane’s song first, I decided we needed to do a warm-up, even though the women had said they just wanted to get into the songs. This was because it sounded so flat, lacking in energy. So we did a physical and vocal warm-up, with massages. S loved that aspect of it, saying she’ll have to come to music just for the massages. S was picking up the bass lines I taught her quite well. She also wanted to have a try at the djembe for Jane’s song, so I taught her the complicated rhythms for that. The songs aren’t up to performance standard yet; I hope they get there soon. One of the actors and Spark were playing the eggs; quite out of rhythm; everyone was laughing about the eggs, even the egg-players! Sarah was not happy with her flute-playing today; she said that B’s presence was very intimidating (they’re from the same unit, and Sarah felt that she had only wanted to turn up to hear if Sarah was as good as everyone was saying). Before B had turned up, Sarah was saying she wanted the group’s help on her original song, but once B was there she said she didn’t want to do it today. I suggested that we just have a quick look at it once everyone had gone. Before Spark left, I asked her again what she wanted to contribute. She said that she was interested in doing some movement pieces. I asked her if she would be interested in singing Matilda’s song as it needed a light, timid voice and surprisingly she was interested. I played it for her and she loved it. She was very embarrassed about giving it a go, but she tried, and I think that with practice it might work. So we’ll try in full on Thursday. After that, I worked with Sarah. I suggested we write a blues song to suit her strong voice and gave her an example. But she was very clear about what she wanted, she had even written a melody already to her words. It was quite a ‘theatrical’ song, and all I had to do was work out the chords underlying the melody. Sarah was saying that she didn’t want to do this song in the performance because it was so personal; that she would try and write something else for the performance. The actor and I talked to her about how generous and courageous it would be to share the song she’d already written and she agreed. It seems she just wants gentle nudging here and there. She also still wants to work on the song, she doesn’t feel that it’s complete yet. So, on Thursday I need to work with Spark to learn Matilda’s song, and with Sarah to complete her song. Then, we have enough for the performance I think, and we can start focusing on the theatre side of things. The CEO of the theatre company has assured me she will help with that aspect of things.

The group is certainly not cohesive yet. Although, I think Sarah and Jane may become leaders in different ways, especially now that ML is gone. Here’s hoping!

November 8, 2007

Today felt like a fairly good session. While we waited for the others to come (which wasn’t too late) Sarah and I continued to work on her song. It’s starting to sound great; she has a really strong, interesting vocal quality and is very sure of what her musical
visions are. She is still saying that she’s not happy with it; it’s too sad. I said that as long as it’s honest, then it’s a good song. We still need to work on it on Monday to finish it. Basically, I was just working out the chords to her already formed melody. Sarah said she was much happier today with the melodies that were coming out of her and the chords I was playing. As we moved from the art room to the gym, S was already in there, walking on the treadmill while she waited. She helped get all the amps and instruments. M came in late and apologized. She said that she had wanted to be Mars in that first session when we came up with the astronomy theme and that just because she’d been absent for a while, it didn’t mean we could give her part to someone else. Last session, I must have got someone else to play Mars, not remembering that M had wanted to be Mars. I jokingly assured her that she could be Mars and we had a laugh about it. The choreographer came in to help organize some movement to the songs. Even though no-one really wanted to give it a go, it was so good for me to have her there as extra support. For instance, we did a full physical and vocal warm-up today, and without the choreographer there participating I think the others would have not really given it a go. As it was, S was asking why we were doing this. I explained that it was for the group to focus their energies; and I reckon it worked. The first song we practiced was Jane’s and it sounded fantastic. We had Matilda and Majella (who was back but not sure if she wanted to stay) on djembes, and they had the beat down perfectly. Sarah was on flute, Jane on guitar and microphone (which was a good quality one that sounded great), as well as KA (new to the group), M and S on harmonies/back-up. Everyone reckoned it sounded awesome. The choreographer and I then coerced M and KA into giving some movement a go (I told them that they wouldn’t have to do it in the performance; it was just to try it). While they practiced that, most of the others went for a smoke break. I asked Matilda if she wanted to work on her song, as she had said at the start of the session that she wanted to change something. Majella listened to it and said that she liked it. She seemed uncomfortable, possibly because she felt she shouldn’t be there (her words). I reassured her that she was welcome and a lovely energy for the group, but I also said that I didn’t want to push her into anything and that it was up to her. She mentioned that it was the performance that was causing the problem. She said how in the drumming group all they did was play and learn without a performance outcome, and that’s what she preferred. I said that I understood but explained my position that as part of the theatre company the group needed a performance as something to work towards. I told her I was nervous about the performance too, and emphasized to both of them that it’s a gift to the group; that their participation is a gift to others; just like I’d written in the note to Matilda. She said how much she loves that note and has read it many times. Majella said she understood, but she’s still not sure if she wants to do it. They both said that they want to play the djembes for now, instead of guitar, which I said was fine (I think it’s easier for them). In the end, all Matilda wanted to change in her song was ‘I am carving my heart into the shape of a wishbone’ because she felt that it didn’t fit in the song; it was about something different. When everyone came back from the break I showed the group her song. I told the musos the key and the chords (they were simple) and Jane immediately began playing electric guitar and Sarah tried some things on the flute. M and Jane both told Matilda that they liked the song; Jane asked Matilda what she wanted her to play on the guitar but Matilda said that she didn’t really have a musical idea of how she wanted the song to sound. I just wanted to introduce the song to the group today so, after Jane
wrote some quick bass tab for S to try, we played through it once more and then went back to Jane’s song so that we could see the movement that the choreographer, M and KA had come up with. It was quite contemporary and, in my opinion, looked great, but M and KA said that they didn’t want to do it again. Towards the end of the session S suggested it would make the women feel awkward and that they would prefer something more hip-hop. S said that she would watch Dancing with the Stars with Jane tonight and try to work something out. S and Jane had practiced the songs two nights ago and S seemed much surer of herself today, both musically and verbally! We then practiced Moving Forward, which was also sounding great. M still didn’t want to sing into the microphone, but by the end and with some gently nudging from Jane, she gave it a go. We practiced it a few times for her, and Majella and Matilda added a new drum beat that Matilda had said was a favourite from her drum sessions. M was really reluctant to sing into the microphone, and I jokingly said, “why is everyone so scared in here!” and Majella replied “Because it’s prison”, and Spark elaborated on that at the end by saying that one worries about what all the bitches in here will say about them. Majella and Matilda have both reminded me on other occasions that “We’re weird” or “We’re fragile in here”. I think that I would like to try and remember much better that these women have crazy lives and fragile selves and that sometimes I expect too much from them. But maybe that’s the only way their higher selves have a chance to come out, to shine …. I don’t know. All I know is that there is more fear surrounding singing and moving and performing in the prison than I’ve ever experienced on the outside. I want to be more understanding to the reasons why, rather than frustrated by them. At the end of the session, we read through the script which I had basically written off the top of my head. I asked everyone for their input, corrections etc. and reminded them that they would have to perform it. They didn’t have any suggestions, so we finished the session in a circle. After we packed up I spent some time with Spark teaching her Matilda’s song. I think she’ll definitely get there because she is in pitch and has a perfectly light, girly voice for the song. She said, “Wait ‘til I tell my Mum that I’m singing” and I informed her that this year families aren’t allowed to watch because of the renovations. She said, “That’s the only reason why I was doing it; so my Mum could see me; she hasn’t seen me in almost a year!” I said that it was a bugger and explained that next year will be back to normal. She still seemed happy to still be part of it. During this, C came running in and wanted to speak to me. She said that she had extra charges laid and that she would probably be still here for the performance. She said that she wanted to write a different song because she didn’t like her old one, and that she still wanted to be part of it. She asked who was in the group and I told her every name. She seemed OK with that and left. Speaking to the choreographer after, she said she could sense what I was up against with the group. She also said that the songs sounded really good, that she liked the theme, and that I had done an amazing job on my own to get all that happening. That made me feel much better. I think in general that I am feeling very anxious, having bad dreams about the prison. I feel that, due to the different nature of this year, I have carried this whole thing so far on my own because everyone else is focused on the performances on the outside. I’m worried that the women aren’t getting the same input as every year even though they still have to go through the scariest performance (to their peers in the prison). I’m worried that we will show them up … But today allayed my fears a little …
November 12, 2007

Today was a hard session, especially on the back of my earlier rehearsal for the outside performance, where I had openly expressed my frustration at someone’s fear at singing a certain part of the song. I think I was feeling pre-menstrual and sensitive anyway, but that weighed on my mind as I went into the prison and didn’t bode well. I was also 20 minutes late due to the morning’s rehearsal and Sarah had been waiting a while and was wondering if I was coming. When I got there, leisure-centre staff informed me that Mia had been slotted and wouldn’t probably be involved in the performance. Everyone turned up relatively quickly, but while we waited, Sarah and I finished working on her song. She was very clear and directive about what she wanted kept in etc. I think it sounds great, and she has a really strong, interesting voice. While we did this, I gave Gillian the script and asked her to read it to see if she felt comfortable with it. She said that the song had been changed (it hadn’t been changed) and was saying quite heatedly that she didn’t want to perform. I told her that we could change the song and script to anything she felt comfortable with, but she didn’t seem pleased. When the others arrived (Jane, S, KA, Majella, Matilda, Lucinda, Spark) after going to canteen etc, we did a warm-up which involved massages, a mirroring game and ‘Bang’. Gillian wasn’t concentrating, and although the others were being friendly to her, she said, “I’m leaving” and couldn’t be persuaded to stay. I think she must have been feeling really funny about coming since she’d been away so long – she was trying to say that she never heard the calls even though we searched for her in industries, her unit, everywhere. The rest of the group began to practice Jane’s song. It’s definitely getting there, everyone just needs to be more confident and assured of their parts. S was saying that the group really didn’t feel like doing it today, that she’d rather be in the pool. I asked her to bear with me and we’d finish as soon as we got through the five songs. Jane really needed to go to canteen but waited until a break before she went. I really appreciate her commitment. Anyway, then we practiced Moving Forward which sounds OK but needs something more. Now that we have Lucinda, we may get her on the dun duns to help lift the rhythm, but Matilda and Majella thought that their beat didn’t sound good with the song. So, before next session, I’m going to try and find a beat that will work. S said that she was bored with the bass and went off for a swim! After a smoke break, we practiced Matilda’s song, with Spark very shyly on the mic. She really didn’t want to sing into it and so we couldn’t really hear her. But the song is starting to come together, nevertheless. S came to the window all wet and bedraggled and I asked her to come in to practice Gillian’s song, which I know she likes the riff to. Even though she was dripping, she came in and stayed until the end of the session. We began to practice Gillian’s song, and Spark said something bitchy toward me (I think about being late, which I didn’t realize was a joke) and as we were playing the song I began to feel really upset, like I was forcing people to do something they didn’t want to do. Unfortunately, I couldn’t hold back my tears as I was asking Matilda to play a rhythm. Sarah, who was standing next to me, and Jane and Lucinda gave me hugs and asked me if I was OK. I explained to the group that I was feeling stressed about the performance and that I was feeling like people didn’t want to do it and that I was forcing them to. They all reassured me that we’d get there and that they wanted to be there. It was quite amazing after that; they all sang and worked really well and hard together. Not that I want to make that a habit, but somehow they all pulled together. They were even
suggesting that they rehearse on Thursday even though I wont be there! Lastly, Sarah and I showed the group her song. I reminded the others how scary it is to show your original work to others, and they were really supportive after. Afterwards, we changed the key from Eb to E so that it was easier for the others. Jane asked Sarah what she wanted her to play on the guitar and S said that Jane could teach her a bass line at home. I asked Jane if that was OK, saying that I felt I was lumping her with a lot of work, but S and Jane both said it was fine, that it gave them something to do. We finished the session, but Sarah and Spark stayed back because they wanted to practice. First, we practiced Sarah’s song and I taught Spark a harmony which she got really easily. Sarah said she loved the harmony. Then Sarah left so that Spark could practice singing into the mic. Before she went, she told me how much she looks forward to the sessions and that I’ve taught her how to be around the other women. Spark then began to practice more and more loudly into the mic. It began to sound really good, and she seemed more and more happy with it. She started telling me about her son and her mother. To finish, we recorded her singing the song and played it back to her. During the recording, she went back to her laughing, shy self and listening back to it, she only liked two of the lines, the rest sounded like crap, she said. But she didn’t seem too perturbed either way; she’s rather a fun, caustic creature …

November 19, 2007

Today, the artistic director came in with me, which made me feel very relieved. I arrived first and got the women called up. Sarah was at court and most of the others were being urined. So for the first half hour it was Spark and Matilda. Slowly but surely the others trickled in. We eventually had Lucinda, Spark, Matilda, Majella, Gillian, Gillian’s friend, (L), Jane, and S flitting in and out from the swimming pool and back. It was a stinking hot day, and the artistic director said afterwards, that it wasn’t a bad session considering the heat. The artistic director had bought mint slices (I keep forgetting about that important part) and Jane noticed them and pointed them out to the others. We all shared them before getting into the music. We began by showing the artistic director what we had done with songs and bad script! This was the first time Gillian had read her part, and she seemed very uncomfortable with it, even though it came from her own writing. It was four weeks later, and people can change what they want to say very quickly over that time. I said this, and Gillian explained how she’d been too stressed about her court-case to come for the last few weeks but that she was back on track. Whereas I would have accepted that and moved on, the artistic director asked her about her court case and her sentencing. Gillian totally opened up and told the group all about it. L excused herself and Gillian said that all her talk about her case probably sent L packing, as she was in for a serious charge and had only been here two weeks. We got back to work, and when it was Spark’s turn to sing, she suggested we should all do warm-ups, so we did massages, stretches and a short vocal warm-up including the alphabet, sirens and ‘Om’. During these warm-ups, Majella started talking about how her knees used to be really bad until she came to prison and was given some medication that helped them. The artistic director joked and said, “See? There’s two good things about prison!” Jane asked what the second thing was. Majella said that the other good thing is that “we’re all straight in here” (pointing to the others in the group). The artistic director agreed but said that it’s a pity that you have to come to prison for that. She suggested that small communities, without
razor wire, would be a better way to go. Majella agreed but said there is nothing like that. After stretches, we continued on from where we left off. Spark didn’t want to sing into the mic, but Jane encouraged her to because otherwise we wouldn’t hear, so she did. Even though Sarah wasn’t here, we played through her song with Jane on guitar and Lucinda on drums. I taught the others a harmony in the chorus. We did the end song as well, which wasn’t sounding too crash hot. By that time, S had flitted off to the pool so there was no bass line, and Jane was at Canteen … During the session, S said that she was feeling worried about the performance. The artistic director said that she understood, but emphasized how you need to go outside your comfort zone in order to reap good things. I also said to S that others were mentioning to me that they were scared, and she hadn’t realized this before. This little talk didn’t stop her from escaping to the pool after smoke break. The artistic director began to flesh out the storyline more, trying to sort out characters and a plot. Afterwards, I asked her what she thought I should do on Thursday and she suggested to work on the songs much more, and that when the actors came in they would work very quickly to get something happening drama-wise. She also said how hard it was that, until Lucinda had joined the group, there was no-one who had been through the process before, so that none of them could trust that the performance would be a good experience and no-one understood the commitment necessary for such a process. Interestingly to me, she also said that Jane is a bit stuck in the fantasy of being a rock star and that it controls the way the creation evolves. I just saw that as a clash between drama and music, where the artistic director saw Jane’s interest and ambition in music as diverging from the path that drama treads. It’s interesting, music definitely has to play second fiddle in a theatre company like this one!

Driving home, I was thinking how strange the culture is at the prison; it’s like going to a foreign country. I was cringing at the thought that my middle-class ways were so entrenched that I couldn’t properly connect to women in the context of the prison. But I have before, and I do when they’re not in prison too, but very often I feel like I do when it’s my first time in a foreign country and I don’t understand the language or the customs …

November 22, 2007

Today was meant to be more of a drama session, but the artistic director arrived very late so it was more rehearsal of the songs. I got there half an hour earlier to call the women as the artists needed to leave early today due to performances at the outside theatre. All the women arrived quickly. S said that I was going to kill here because she was going for bail on the Friday before the performance and she would probably get it. This means no bass guitar. I told her it was a good thing for her, and that we would manage. She said that she still wants to come right up until when she leaves, and that she needs to spend some time with me to learn the parts properly. I apologized that I hadn’t been able to give her much of my time, and told her that on Monday, which is our first full day rehearsal, I would make some time to spend with her. While we were waiting for the leisure centre to open, Majella and I were talking about the prison environment. She was saying that sure, it was awful, but her life was so bad on the outside that it’s been really good for her in here. She has a good counselor who she loves, and has participated in many programs that she’s found helpful. I asked her if it would entice her to come back and she emphatically said
no, because it was awful in here even though all her needs were met. I asked Spark if she felt the same, and she said she agreed for the first time she was in, but the second time (this time, for the same charges) was a joke. We went into the leisure centre and the women helped set up all the instruments in the gym. It felt like everyone was on board for the first time! We did a big warm-up, with the choreographer running a physical warm-up, me doing breath-work and singing warm-up, including harmonies from the songs. Then we began to rehearse Jane’s song. Soon, we split into two groups. The choreographer took Lucinda, Spark and Gillian to put some movement to it, while Matilda, Majella, Jane, Sarah and S stayed to practice the song. We really worked on the djembe parts, plus the beginning and the ending and it sounded fantastic. We then put it together with the dancers. Next, we did Gillian’s song and she practiced singing into the mic. It was sounding great, and everyone was commenting how much they loved this song. Spark, who has a sharp wit, was saying that it reminded her of the Mad About You movie and the choreographer and Lucinda were coming up with funny dance moves to it. Gillian started getting really angry, muttering that she didn’t want to do it anymore, that they were all her words (she hadn’t copied them from Mad About You) and the women from the jail wouldn’t understand her sentiments about loving yourself because most of them didn’t know how to. Lucinda tried to talk rationally to her about how the women always love the performances but she wasn’t listening. The artistic director stepped in and reinforced what Lucinda was saying but Gillian kept muttering to herself and then left for a cigarette. One of the actors went and talked to her and she returned after a while, when we were practising Sarah’s song, which was sounding excellent with Lucinda’s drumbeat and the group harmonies. When Gillian came back she was really supportive of Sarah’s song, saying it sounded great. Throughout this session, the artistic director had been speaking to the song-writers, trying to get a bead on how their song might fit into the overall story which she was beginning to write. It’s interesting, because this time the songs aren’t very theatrical; they’re more musicianly. I reckon this has occurred because the drama creation hasn’t been occurring at the same time as the music and that, therefore, the women and I have been able to write more purely without thinking about the drama side of things. Because there’s hardly any time before the performance, the drama aspect will be largely carried by the actors. I think the women will be fine with this, as they seem to be there more for their interest in music. The artists had to leave after this, so we circled up and one of the actors gave a little pep talk. Then, Spark, Jane and Matilda stayed to practice the shadow song, which was also sounding great. They packed up the instruments while Lucinda and I worked on the Moving Forward song, which she’s going to sing. She picked it up very quickly. I thanked her for all that she had said to Gillian and mentioned how good it was to have someone in the group who was familiar with the theatre company performances and so was able to trust. She remembered how during her first time with the theatre company she was very nervous but how afterwards she felt much more confident in herself and around the prison.

November 26, 2007

Today was a doozy of a session. Firstly, the artistic director asked me to go in late to the prison so that I could do some recording for another outside project. This really annoyed me, as I thought that once the outside show had finished we’d be able to focus all our

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attention on the prison show. I had also finished this other project weeks ago, and now, at this late stage, the artistic director wanted my voice to be heard more in order to lift the song. So she and I didn’t get into the prison until 11:30am. Leisure-centre staff had called me earlier that morning wondering where we were, because the women turned up at 9:30 am (because that’s the time the leisure-centre staff had told them we would be there) whereas we thought it was for 10 am. So, it really wasn’t a good example for the women in commitment and reliability, and I was feeling very grumpy and powerless about it. Two of the actors got in at 10 and did some warm-ups with the women, and since the artistic director and I still hadn’t arrived they tried to go through the songs without me. When we finally got there, the women teased us about being late and gave us a few disapproving looks. The artistic director took full responsibility, which was nice. We sat in a circle and the artistic director talked about how she’d begun to think that we should focus more on making a music/performance art piece, rather than a play, at this late stage; sort of more like a concert, with little introductions and skits into the songs. She asked how everyone was feeling. One of the actors mentioned that she had spoken with Gillian that morning and that Gillian no longer wanted to be a part of it and that she wanted her song pulled from the performance and that she was very adamant about it. Some of the women, especially Sarah, were quite upset by this news. Jane asked me if the music to the words was mine (which technically it was) and suggested that we write new words to it. The artistic director suggested that we needed to talk to Gillian to ask if we could still use the song, lyrics and all. While most of us practiced Jane’s song, the artistic director, the actors and Spark went out to work on an introduction into the Shadowlands song. During that time she spoke to Gillian, who was apparently very hostile and unreasonable. The artistic director suggested that, since she had no prior relationship with Gillian, in hindsight it was wrong for her to try and speak with her and that it should be me. So, after the girls went out for lunch I called Gillian up. She was very angry straight away, saying that this had better be good. I began by saying I understood that she didn’t want to be part of it anymore but that the women really loved her song and would it be all right to keep it in the performance. She flat out refused and said that it was her song. I argued that it wasn’t about her, it was about the group, and that at this late stage it was a difficult thing for the group to come back from. She said she didn’t care. Then I tried the tack that, though the sentiment was hers, I had actually formed the lyrics from a conversation we’d had that I had written down, and that the lyrics were really more of a collaboration than entirely hers. She got extremely angry at this point and said that now she knew what we were really about, that we took people’s material for our own gain, and then she stormed out. Half and hour later she was back, wanting to speak with leisure-centre staff. One of the actors tried to ask her why she was so upset, but she kept refusing to speak with any of us. We told her that we had decided to put different lyrics to the music (which is a hard task, since lyrics usually come before the music). She abused us a little more and then stormed out again. Later, Sarah told us that she had heard from a woman who lived with Gillian that she was threatening to get her solicitor involved. The artistic director didn’t seem too fazed by this, and neither was I. Leisure-centre staff told us that Gillian was proving difficult to many people who worked with her and that she obviously wasn’t well. After lunch, we practiced all the other songs and changed the instrumentation for the moving forward song since the artistic director hadn’t liked the electric guitar. I put Jane back on power chords on the guitar (on the proviso that she could play the electric
guitar in the Shadowlands song) and I played her electric guitar bit on the piano. The artistic director said it sounded much better, but I think she has a different aesthetic that isn’t really shared by the other women. While the women were on a smoke break, Spark stayed back to go over the introduction that they had worked out. She sang her song with just me on piano, and both the artistic director and one of the actors said that they preferred it just with the piano as it was more gentle. I agreed on this aesthetic, but had already made a pact with Jane that she could play the electric guitar in it. Jane quickly realized that they were suggesting just piano, and told them of our pact. I reassured the artistic director and one of the actors that we’d make it sound gentle even with the electric guitar. During the afternoon, I had asked Lucinda if she wanted to add any of her own songs to the performance. She said that all hers were quite different from the ones we had, but I encouraged her. She played me one about an abusive relationship she’d been in, and another one about her son. They were both very raw, but beautiful in their honesty. I suggested that the one about her son may be a good one and asked her if she thought it would be too emotional. She thought that she’d be fine to perform it. Later, in the group, the artistic director was asking about the possibility of more songs. I suggested Lucinda’s song and so she played it to the group. I was really disappointed to see two women ducking out during the song. After the song, we clapped and the artistic director said it was beautiful. But she thought it would be too sad for the audience, especially around Christmas time when everyone would be missing their loved ones. Lucinda began to cry and I hugged her and reassured her that the artistic director wasn’t saying she didn’t like the song. Lucinda said she’d been feeling pretty emotional lately and quickly started making jokes again. Later, the artistic director told me that her main concern was that it didn’t sound nearly as good as the other ones and that we’d be setting her up to fail. I thought that with practice, it could have sounded equally as good, and said this, but there still was the problem of ‘bringing the audience down’. After Lucinda cheered up, the artistic director suggested that Lucinda try and put words to the music of Gillian’s song. She said something immediately poetic and appropriate, and I played the music underneath while trying to fit those words into the melody. From there, Lucinda kept coming up with words, some very funny. The artistic director suggested that she go down the path of looking at horoscopes and making up a funny ditty. Since it was time to finish up, I asked Jane if she would help Lucinda with her task, by playing her the riff and the melody since Lucinda didn’t know it so well. Jane was happy to do that. We then packed up and stood in a circle and the artistic director gave a little pep talk and we finished.

November 29, 2007

Today was a very interesting session. My own headspace was much more relaxed, as I had given up thinking that the performance would involve drama/theatre (the artistic director has been far too busy) and that we could just do a music performance, where the women introduce their songs as they would if they were rock stars. Up until this point I had been feeling extremely anxious because the drama side of things just wasn’t happening. I hadn’t wanted the music to usurp the drama, and I was under the impression that the artistic director would come in and do the drama-side of things as she usually does (albeit, much later in the process this time). Usually in the theatre company, drama
underpins everything and it is very closely intertwined with the music. This time, if it does happen, it will be just to introduce the overall theme and give context to the songs. Also, the actors will carry most of it because it’s too late to be giving the women large parts to learn. So, I’m feeling much more relaxed about it and remembering that the whole point of this is the process. And man, this has been an interesting process!

This morning Sarah arrived first and while we were setting up the instruments she was saying how people had been bitching behind her back. She was saying that she’s not used to living with so many women; she only had brothers, and she doesn’t understand this environment. Shortly, Lucinda came to the window and told me that Gillian wanted to come back. I was surprised and expressed my concern to her, saying that I thought that Gillian was too fragile at the moment and may upset the group again. Lucinda said she’d had a talk to her and that also Lucinda hadn’t been able to write new words to the song. I said that I knew it would be a hard ask and Lucinda said that normally she could do it; it’s just that she hasn’t been in a great headspace lately. I asked one of the actor’s advice and she said that we’d need to talk to Gillian before she came back to the group. Jane, S and Matilda came next, and we began a physical and vocal warm-up. As we were warming up, the actor asked the rest of the group how they felt about Gillian coming back. Both S and Jane believed that she would leave again, but they were happy to give her one more chance. I could see Lucinda and Gillian at the door to the leisure centre, so I sent the actor out to speak with her. Soon they all came back, with Majella in tow too! Lucinda said she’d been rallying the troops and the actor announced that both Gillian and Majella had committed to being part of it until after the performance. Lucinda had to go again to a medical appointment and the energy was a little fractious (one of the actors had just turned up too) so I sent everyone out for a quick ciggie break. The actor and I stayed to talk to Gillian. I welcomed Gillian back and said that it was great to have her, but that she would have to be very strong in her belief that her song was well-liked by the other women and that, if we put a dance to it, we weren’t picking on the sentiment of her song. She said that she would be strong enough and then started talking about her court case and how she just felt so let down by the police and everyone else. She also had had a run in with a nun at the prison, where she felt let down by her too. Then she moved to what happened on Monday, saying that others had told her to pull out of it and to take her song with her, and that now those people weren’t even talking to her or sitting next to her at lunch. She was saying that she shouldn’t have listened to them, that she should have listened to herself. She was getting very worked up at this point, so I gave her a hug and one of the actors took her out for a smoke. When she came back in she apologized for everything really sincerely and said she felt very good to be back. Majella also came in before the others got back from their break, and apologized too. I told her how I totally understood her fear of performing and that the group would understand if she didn’t want to do it anymore. She said that she wanted to do it for Matilda who had supported her in things before. She also said that it was much more personal than a fear of performance. She said that she didn’t feel comfortable in group situations – she’d come from a small family and saw herself in a different way to the way that the other women saw her. She said she had issues, and I mentioned how I often had to remind myself that in the prison women were often grappling with huge issues. We began by rehearsing Gillian’s song. I suggested that, for today, we would imagine that Monday’s performance was going to be like a concert and that everyone had to introduce their song. I gave Gillian an example,
and then she tried. She said that she wrote this song at a time when she’d learnt how important it was to love yourself. We tried a few ways of lengthening her song (it’s a bit short and sweet) and settled on repeating the second verse and chorus; although, now on second thoughts I think we should leave it as it was, because it becomes a little too repetitive. I’m going to suggest it tomorrow, but I’ll have to do it very carefully considering Gillian’s fragility. While we were beginning to move onto the next song, Gillian was over at Lucinda on the drumkit, trying to direct her to drum more strongly in parts. I jumped in there, because Lucinda is also fragile at the moment, and said that it sounded good the way it was and we’d work more on it tomorrow. During our practice of her song, Matilda tried adding a djembe beat that sounded fantastic as it complemented the drum beat rather than confusing it. Sarah’s song is sounding really good, especially with Lucinda’s drumming. Spark’s song is also sounding good but I suggested that I may have to support Spark with the singing because she was still so self-conscious and quiet on the mic. She said that that would be very helpful. The moving forward song still needed lots of practice; it’s not sounding as good as the others. I think it’s Jane’s harmonic arrangement; it’s a bit difficult to work out the over-riding key as, in the verse it’s in D major but in the chorus it’s in E minor. Anyway, it was sounding quite good by the time the artistic director arrived with all the sound equipment. We had another smoke break, then practiced Jane’s song (which is sounding excellent; everyone seemed to know their parts really well). Earlier, I had suggested that, at the end of the performance, we try to get the audience involved by singing a song that most people were likely to know. We could provide lyrics on their seats. Jane suggested Flame Trees and could already play it on guitar. I’d heard Lucinda introduce the moving forward song earlier and saw her potential for getting the audience involved as she was extremely playful and engaging. I improvised with her a little thing to say in relation to the ‘star’ theme and then slowly move into getting the women to echo what she sings. She did it really well and also suggested that if they word up the women in their units to participate, it should work. She also said she definitely felt brave enough to do it. To finish the session, we sang through Flame Trees and a few other songs that could be potential audience-participation songs.

November 30, 2007

Today was a long day. For the first two hours before lunch we fluffed around sorting out lighting for the stage and it was extremely scattered. One of the actors had brought in bread and cheeses and meats and fresh avocado and tomatoes, so the women were very excited as they couldn’t get a lot of those things normally in prison. The women had lunch together while the artistic director, me, the choreographer and one of the actors went in and out trying to sort out props, costumes, backdrops, things we needed to bring in etc. My heart was sinking because we still didn’t have any play to speak of, and the energy was so scattered I thought that nothing would really be achieved today. But after lunch we had the most focused, long-sustained session I’ve had in a long time. I told the artistic director not to be too worried about coming in at the last minute and directing people with the theatre aspect; she had seemed a little worried about this earlier. She had brought in some script for an opening which she imagined Lucinda could try and then most of the rest of the script would be carried by two of the actors. While the women were on small smoke breaks, the actors would improvise script that would help lead into
the songs and tell the story of moving on the hard way within the theme of astronomy. The artistic director would write it down, and then get the women to work out ways of introducing their song within this context. The process worked really well and really quickly. Over the course of about three hours, we had the entire play written, except for the lead-in to Gillian’s song, and the movements to the songs also rehearsed and devised by the choreographer. Everyone just jumped in with the movement, and musicians added parts where once there were none eg. Sarah put flute to the Shadowland song and Matilda and Majella put drums in the Awake song. The ending came about beautifully. I suggested that after one little scene the women who sang a song each should come up with a line that harks back to their song but puts something out to the universe for the future. I really felt that the women gave something honest and personal in this part, which made me think about how music in the form of songs can be so containing and safe that it can be easy to hide or hint at personal truth. This is where I think the drama side of things in terms of the theatre company really can get the personal, transformational honest thing happening, because it’s the ritual of putting something out there in its naked truth, words not dressed up by music.

I was very alert today when the choreographer started putting dance moves to Gillian’s song. The moves were very mo-town because of the musical style and I was worried that Gillian would think we were making fun of her song again. This time she just laughed hysterically, and we kept reinforcing that it was a fun, celebratory part of the play. She seemed fine with it but I’m still worried about potential ramifications tomorrow or Sunday. We’ll have to see on that one. Sarah was also being very supportive of her; helping her to sing and talking her through the process, so hopefully between all of us we can prevent any more outbursts. Lucinda was very happy that she’d been given the opening part; she said “I have a part now!” She also very humorously improvised the last bit again a few times during the session, with the actors playing with her. We had a go at the Flame Trees song and the Good Riddance song; I’m not sure which one we’ll use yet, but I can’t believe we even have an ending already! The only thing we still need to work out is the lead-in to Gillian’s song.

The only other aspect I noted today was that Sarah started pulling the energy to her self by asking repeatedly to the group if her flute-playing sounded OK. Everyone kept reassuring her, but I felt that this would wear thin if not kept in check, so I went out to speak with her when she was on a smoke break. She said that she just didn’t want to let the girls down. I told her that her flute-playing was fine (which it certainly is) and that it’s not “The flute show”. I emphasized that the flute is a supportive role and that even if she makes a mistake it will be fine. The other women said stuff too; Jane reminded her that nothing matters (words in her song) and Matilda started making funny jokes about her own playing. Majella remained for the entire day today, even though I said she could go when she wasn’t needed. She said that she wanted to watch, which surprised me, but she was great to have around. Majella and Matilda have requested that I bring in some chimes and a triangle. I think they’re getting a little bored on the djembes!

We finished in a circle, thanking everyone and holding hands. It was a very productive session! Afterwards, we spoke with the regional manager of prisons about bringing in some glass kaleidoscopes as presents for the women, but they will most likely be too much of a security risk, so we’re going to have to think of something else most probably.
We also sorted out what other things we needed to bring in as we would need approval for them first. Everything takes so long in the prison!!

December 1, 2007

Today was a full-day rehearsal, however I didn’t come in until after the shared lunch as I was buying costumes (bright pyjama bottoms and tops), props, and sound gear. The artistic director, the actors and the choreographer came in earlier; the artistic director said that it had been scattered but that they had achieved some good things. I could see exactly what had been achieved, because in the afternoon we did a run-through on the stage with the sound equipment set up. Spark was so much stronger in her lines, although she still needs to be louder in her song. And everyone knew their lines well, and where they were to enter and exit. Before the run-through, I handed out the costumes; everyone was pretty excited and it was great to see them in colour and in something other than their blues. Some tops needed to be changed as they were too small. During the run-through, we laboured over small details, such as how would Jane use the hand-held while playing guitar, how would Spark enter as the dark star in her cape … Everyone was extremely patient during this time. The actors are struggling with their lines because they have so many to remember and because they have other shows that they need to memorise as well at the moment and because they are so tired (we’ve all been working pretty much for an entire month without a full day off). They’re going to use clipboards with script in order to help them (it’s fitting, as they are scientists). During the Shadowland song, because Spark is so quiet, we had to tell Jane to turn her electric guitar right down. She was a bit pissed off with this and thought that Spark should just sing louder. Afterwards I talked to her and said that it was important to hear the words and that you could still hear the guitar really well. During the run-through, the dances needed to be worked on, and people need to learn the final song off by heart. Hopefully that will happen tomorrow! The levels in the songs will need to be tweaked by me during the performance, as some women are very loud in the mic and others are soft, and instruments need to be turned up and down. I’m going to have to write it all in the script so I remember. Sarah has asked me to polish my flute for the performance, so I need to do that and type up the audience participation song. Gillian seemed very happy during the rehearsal, and was fine taking direction in regards to singing into the mic and delivering her lines. Lucinda did very well and helped us set up the sound and the instruments. Majella and Matilda hung in there very patiently. Basically, everyone did extremely well! At the end of the session, one of the actors and I were looking at the stage with the back-drop and the lighting. It’s amazing how a bit of lighting, costume, staging and backdrop can really honour and lift what’s being offered on stage. Jane joined us and said it looks great and she’s so excited, she can’t wait. Two days to go!

December 2, 2007

Today began at 12:30. I brought in my piano and other things, so was 15 minutes late getting through the gatehouse. One of the actors had come early to learn her lines. Earlier that morning I had called to remind her that it was Sarah’s birthday and could she buy a cake. The women were flitting around, playing instruments or looking at the artwork that
had been put up. Spark had to go to a visit with her son, and she didn’t come back until the last hour. We began with a physical warm-up and a vocal warm-up, which I felt was still pretty scattered; not much focused energy as a group. Then we practiced the last song many times, trying to learn the words off by heart. Yesterday I had asked Jane if she would like to do the solo in the middle, and she suggested that we share it. We tried it today, but she shook her head afterwards and said that it didn’t sound as good. I also asked D, who normally helps with lighting and props, if she would do sound levels. I went through it with her and marked the P.A. so she knew what channel to alter when needed. We then went through Jane’s song. The artistic director turned up with bigger t-shirts for those who needed them. We went back to the ending and practiced the lead-ins to the final song; then we practiced the opening with Lucinda. We had quite a long break for food, which one of the actors had brought in, and afterwards sang happy birthday and gave the cake to Sarah. During this time, I was speaking to Gillian and she apologized again for what had happened last week. I told her not to worry, that it was forgotten. She said that she used to hold grudges but now she’s learnt you’ve just got to get on with it. She seemed in good form today, although I’m worried she may forget her line or her entry if nervous tomorrow. Sarah seems to be reminding her when she needs and supporting her whenever she can. Lucinda wanted to work with me on her drum part to Gillian’s song, so during the break we did this. She was having a little trouble with the off-beats and wasn’t sure whether to play the cymbal or the high-hats, so I advised her to keep it as simple as possible. Spark also wanted to practice her song, as she was worried that she was mumbling the lyrics. We worked a little on articulation, but will need to do more tomorrow morning. We stumbled through one run-through and it was well-time to finish. It was a rather scattered session overall. In hindsight, I could have cracked the whip much more, but when the artistic director arrived I went back to my old role of having fun rather than directing. I think the artistic director was trying to get me to keep the directing role, since I know the women better, but I only realized this in hindsight. When the artistic director, one of the actors, the choreographer and I were walking out, I asked the artistic director if she was OK with the end part to the performance, where we try to get the audience involved in a little singalong. The theatre company has never done anything like that before, and it is a little lackadaisical. The artistic director said that it worried her because it wasn’t a high standard. Lucinda often couldn’t pitch the notes. She suggested that I sing with her, but I’m a little reluctant to do that because I feel like it is a part where we can relax about aesthetic standards. I do see, however, that the artistic director never opts for the patronizing “That’s lovely” way. She really works to make things be the best that they can be. Maybe tomorrow I will try singing with Lucinda and see how it goes. The artistic director also suggested that we only need one song and that she prefers the Greenday one. I just worry that Lucinda will be put out by not getting to sing Flame Trees, but we’ll put it to a vote tomorrow and see how it goes.

**December 3, 2007**

Well, today was the performance and don’t I feel exhausted! We all arrived at 9 in the morning and pottered around until the women arrived. It was hard to get them all there at once, as they had to do things such as special spends, jobs, urines etc. Spark and I practised her song a few times while we were waiting for others to arrive, and she was
sounding so much better, but she still seemed very worried and didn’t believe it sounded fine. I asked D to tell her what she thought, but Spark still wouldn’t believe her. We ran through the beginning and end, and then went for a run-through. We had a break for smokes, tea/coffee etc. and then had two more run-throughs before we had to stop because women were coming in to see the artwork. In the final run-through, Gillian wasn’t where she was supposed to be and we were calling out for her. She looked like a storm was brewing, so I checked in with her afterwards and warned the artistic director that she was showing similar signs to a week ago when she erupted. Gillian was angry with Sarah for some reason; she said that all she asked was for her to help her, not take over the show. I’m not exactly sure what she was referring to, and I knew that placating her or entering into it would most probably make her more involved with it, so I tried to change the topic to whether she was nervous. She said she was feeling OK. Afterwards, I checked with the artistic director, and she said that we just needed to lay low with it and that Gillian would calm down. Sarah had registered that something was going on but she seemed to know just to lay low too. We all had lunch, smokes, got costumes on, and gathered the women together again. We did a physical warm-up, vocal warm-up and articulation. Then we gathered in a circle in the gym. We thanked the women for all their hard work and gave out some body shop gifts and some kaleidoscopes (which we had to take back and put in their property as they were a security risk!) The artistic director reminded the group to own what they were doing and asked each individual what they were hoping for in the performance. We did a group good luck ritual and then left to take our places. While the audience was entering, I played some music on the piano. The artistic director made a little speech that talked about how this performance was different to usual, how it sprouted from the music and the women’s original songs. She also honoured the women who had contributed to the performance but who weren’t here (M, KA, S and C). Then the lights went down, and we began. It felt like a bit of a blur; I can’t remember any real specifics except that Sarah’s and Jane’s songs got loud applause and that the performance ran very smoothly. No hiccups that I could see. Afterwards, we started packing up and debriefing a little. Jane said that she’d had fun, and that her friends had said the performance was too short. Sarah and Gillian seemed really happy. Majella and Matilda asked if we could go back to normal music sessions now, and seemed happy and relieved. Lucinda seemed a little flat, and I asked her if she was all right. We talked about how funny it was to work up to something for so long and then have it over so quickly. Spark seemed OK but still not happy with her performance. I think she did extremely well and is just being overly pedantic. Afterwards, I was feeling quite flat myself; really tired and emotional and questioning whether it’s all really worth the energy etc. Hopefully on Friday, I’ll find out! (when I interview the women).

I was nervous about how the CEO of the theatre company would react to the singalong at the end. I thought it was a success; the audience sang along and clapped and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. It wasn’t, however, the usual polished performance common to the plays performed by the theatre company. The CEO of the theatre company’s reaction seemed a little uncomfortable during this part of the performance but afterwards she said it was fine. I just can’t shake the feeling that I, as a musician, cannot put on the type of performances that they put on. Music by itself is not as strong as when partnered with theatre and all that goes with it (lights, stage, props, costumes etc). I think I’m just
feeling flat, which is common after processes like this, and I shouldn’t really think too much at this stage!

December 5, 2007

Today all the women gathered together for a debrief of the performance. We bought in chocolate biscuits and juice and sat around talking. This session was the first time I felt I got to know the women more personally and the others may have felt the same. Jane was asking Sarah about her life before prison while Spark told us more about her family. Gillian seemed disgruntled about something that was happening that day with other women in the prison (I couldn’t make out what it was) and left earlier than the others. Lucinda came briefly but was busy moving to a different unit. Matilda ran around getting us water and plates and seemed happy while Majella spoke earnestly with the other women about their experiences in the performance and outside of it. It’s amazing the space that opens up when performance isn’t breathing down your throat! We asked the women what they would like to do next year and basically checked to see that they were feeling OK after the performance, which they all seemed to be! The rest is in the interviews that take place tomorrow…

Key Statements Organised into Structural Meaning Units

Experience within the team of theatre company artists

In hindsight, I could have cracked the whip much more, but when the artistic director arrived I went back to my old role of having fun rather than directing. I think the artistic director was trying to get me to keep the directing role, since I know the women better, but I only realized this in hindsight.

I hope she has time and that she does come in next week. I’m so used to having to go in alone because at the last minute the artists have to be elsewhere for a performance or a rehearsal.

I don’t feel very confident about her ability to communicate back clearly to me. So, I left feeling pretty powerless on that one. We’ll just have to see what happens.

Even though no-one really wanted to give it a go, it was so good for me to have her there as extra support. For instance, we did a full physical and vocal warm-up today, and without the choreographer there participating I think the others would have not really given it a go.

I think in general that I am feeling very anxious, having bad dreams about the prison. I feel that, due to the different nature of this year, I have carried this whole thing so far on my own because everyone else is focused on the performances on the outside. I’m worried that the women aren’t getting the same input as every year even though they still
have to go through the scariest performance (to their peers in the prison). I’m worried that we will show them up … But today allayed my fears a little …

Today was a hard session, especially on the back of my earlier rehearsal for the outside performance, where I had openly expressed my frustration at someone’s fear at singing a certain part of the song. I think I was feeling pre-menstrual and sensitive anyway, but that weighed on my mind as I went into the prison and didn’t bode well.

Today, the artistic director came in with me, which made me feel very relieved.

This really annoyed me, as I thought that once the outside show had finished we’d be able to focus all our attention on the prison show … So, it really wasn’t a good example for the women in commitment and reliability, and I was feeling very grumpy and powerless about it.

**Experience of music in relation to other art-forms within the theatre company**

I envied the visual artist her quiet, calm visual art session next door.

Interestingly to me, she also said that Jane is a bit stuck in the fantasy of being a rock star and that it controls the way the creation evolves. I just saw that as a clash between drama and music, where the artistic director saw Jane’s interest and ambition in music as diverging from the path that drama treads. It’s interesting, music definitely has to play second fiddle in a theatre company like this one!

It’s interesting, because this time the songs aren’t very theatrical; they’re more musiciany. I reckon this has occurred because the drama creation hasn’t been occurring at the same time as the music and that therefore the women and I have been able to write more purely without thinking about the drama side of things.

My own headspace was much more relaxed, as I had given up thinking that the performance would involve drama/theatre (the artistic director has been far too busy) and that we could just do a music performance, where the women introduce their songs as they would if they were rock stars. Up until this point I had been feeling extremely anxious because the drama side of things just wasn’t happening. I hadn’t wanted the music to usurp the drama, and I was under the impression that the artistic director would come in and do the drama-side of things as she usually does (albeit, much later in the process this time). Usually in the theatre company, drama underpins everything and it is very closely intertwined with the music. This time, if it does happen, it will be just to introduce the overall theme and give context to the songs.

I really felt that the women gave something honest and personal in this part, which made me think about how music in the form of songs can be so containing and safe that it can be easy to hide or hint at personal truth. This is where I think the drama side of things in terms of the theatre company really can get the personal, transformational honest thing
happening, because it’s the ritual of putting something out there in its naked truth, words not dressed up by music.

At the end of the session, one of the actors and I were looking at the stage with the backdrop and the lighting. It’s amazing how a bit of lighting, costume, staging and backdrop can really honour and lift what’s being offered on stage.

I just can’t shake the feeling that I, as a musician, cannot put on the type of performances that they put on. Music by itself is not as strong as when partnered with theatre and all that goes with it (lights, stage, props, costumes etc).

Experience of the creative process

At this stage of the creative process I reckon the actor and I need to keep shaping the emerging material to feed back to the women (sort of like a gift!). It’s more directive, but I reckon you need it to keep the ball rolling.

I need to be less hasty to pull together the material too soon. It’s like a total non-enjoyment of that early phase where ideas are flowing but you still have no idea what the actual songs or scenes will say. This is the part where you need to trust the process (even though there’s an impending performance and you have nothing to perform yet!) and let things cogitate, ruminate, fester, grow before trying to pin it down. Play!

Within the creative process, I also feel that I’m being a little Nazi, trying to force the creative process rather than let it happen. Not enough play, too much pushing shit up hill.

Before the session today, I told the artistic director that I felt I was being too directive in the prison and writing things from bare threads and she assured me that it’s what you have to do in order to get anything happening. She said that democratic ways are lovely but nothing would ever happen if we worked that way; so she encouraged me to keep doing what I was doing but always consulting the group for changes, and said that the women would begin to feel ownership when they changed words according to how they would say it and over time as they practiced it and changed it to suit themselves.

I really feel that it’s a big problem at the moment, no group cohesion and no group stability. I think that it has a lot to do with the creative process and that the women aren’t so interested in writing the songs/play but more interested in rehearsing and performing. Maybe the creative process isn’t such a good thing after all! I can now understand why the theatre company artists generally get writings from women and then work them into art, script or song themselves, because group creation isn’t really working at the moment.

My sense is that this difficult devising process is too unstructured for her; it certainly feels chaotic to me.

I think mainly because I hadn’t dragged this piece of creativity out of someone, it had been offered freely and generously.
It feels as though the unsettling first part of the devising process may be over.

It feels like it’s all fitting into place!

From this I thought that I may have put too much pressure on her last session when I said that she would make me very happy if she arrived with something she had written. It felt like I had coerced it from her and that she had done it in order to try and make me happy.

I still don’t feel that anything is going to come together.

My heart was sinking because we still didn’t have any play to speak of.

I’m feeling much more relaxed about it and remembering that the whole point of this is the process. And man, this has been an interesting process!

**Experience of the group of women**

Do the women get anything really valuable from these music sessions? Many of them seem to enjoy it but …

As we were playing the song I began to feel really upset, like I was forcing people to do something they didn’t want to do. Unfortunately, I couldn’t hold back my tears as I was asking Matilda to play a rhythm. Sarah, who was standing next to me, and Jane and Lucinda gave me hugs and asked me if I was OK. I explained to the group that I was feeling stressed about the performance and that I was feeling like people didn’t want to do it and that I was forcing them to.

It was quite amazing after that; they all sang and worked really well and hard together. Not that I want to make that a habit, but somehow they all pulled together. They were even suggesting that they rehearse on Thursday even though I won’t be there!

I think that I would like to try and remember much better that these women have crazy lives and fragile selves and that sometimes I expect too much from them. But maybe that’s the only way their higher selves have a chance to come out, to shine … I don’t know. All I know is that there is more fear surrounding singing and moving and performing in the prison than I’ve ever experienced on the outside. I want to be more understanding to the reasons why, rather than frustrated by them.

I was cringing at the thought that my middle-class ways were so entrenched that I couldn’t properly connect to women in the context of the prison. But I have before, and I do when they’re not in prison too, but very often I feel like I do when it’s my first time in a foreign country and I don’t understand the language or the customs

I really felt like a music-teacher this session, with a bunch of naughty, loud students.

**Experience relating to aesthetics**
I’m a little reluctant to do that because I feel like it is a part where we can relax about aesthetic standards. I do see, however, that the artistic director never opts for the patronizing “That’s lovely” way. She really works to make things be the best that they can be.

I was nervous about how the CEO of the theatre company would react to the singalong at the end. I thought it was a success; the audience sang along and clapped and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. It wasn’t, however, the usual polished performance common to the plays performed by the theatre company.

Experience of the prison

This really frustrated me because we have been working up to an ‘imaginary’ performance for so long; if it was postponed much longer I reckon the women just wouldn’t believe that something would happen.

It just feels though that nothing will happen unless it’s forced, in that lusterless environment.

Driving home, I was thinking how strange the culture is at the prison; it’s like going to a foreign country.

Experience of the performance
Well, today was the performance and don’t I feel exhausted!

Afterwards, I was feeling quite flat myself; really tired and emotional and questioning whether it’s all really worth the energy etc.

I think I’m just feeling flat, which is common after processes like this, and I shouldn’t really think too much at this stage!

This session was the first time I felt I got to know the women more personally and the others may have felt the same. Jane was asking Sarah about her life before prison while Spark told us more about her family. Gillian seemed disgruntled about something that was happening that day with other women in the prison (I couldn’t make out what it was) and left earlier than the others. Lucinda came briefly but was busy moving to a different unit. Matilda ran around getting us water and plates and seemed happy while Majella spoke earnestly with the other women about their experiences in the performance and outside of it. It’s amazing the space that opens up when performance isn’t breathing down your throat!
Experienced Meaning Units

Even though I’ve been doing this for five years now, I still couldn’t trust the process this year.

I still don’t feel that anything is going to come together.

I particularly found it hard to trust that we wouldn’t get stuck in the initial creative phase.

My heart was sinking because we still didn’t have any play to speak of.

I need to be less hasty to pull together the material too soon. It’s like a total non-enjoyment of that early phase where ideas are flowing but you still have no idea what the actual songs or scenes will say. This is the part where you need to trust the process (even though there’s an impending performance and you have nothing to perform yet!) and let things cogitate, ruminate, fester, grow before trying to pin it down. Play!

I felt that I was dragging creativity out of people and forcing the process in order to create the show.

It just feels though that nothing will happen unless it’s forced, in that lusterless environment.

At this stage of the creative process I reckon the actor and I need to keep shaping the emerging material to feed back to the women (sort of like a gift!). It’s more directive, but I reckon you need it to keep the ball rolling.

Within the creative process, I also feel that I’m being a little Nazi, trying to force the creative process rather than let it happen. Not enough play, too much pushing shit up hill.

Before the session today, I told the artistic director that I felt I was being too directive in the prison and writing things from bare threads and she assured me that it’s what you have to do in order to get anything happening. She said that democratic ways are lovely but nothing would ever happen if we worked that way; so she encouraged me to keep doing what I was doing but always consulting the group for changes, and said that the women would begin to feel ownership when they changed words according to how they would say it and over time as they practiced it and changed it to suit themselves.

From this I thought that I may have put too much pressure on her last session when I said that she would make me very happy if she arrived with something she had written. It felt like I had coerced it from her and that she had done it in order to try and make me happy.

even though there were some moments when women offered their creative material freely and generously
I think mainly because I hadn’t dragged this piece of creativity out of someone, it had been offered freely and generously.

It was a relief when that phase was over

It feels as though the unsettling first part of the devising process may be over.

I’m feeling much more relaxed about it and remembering that the whole point of this is the process. And man, this has been an interesting process!

Directing the process was a new and unfamiliar experience for me

In hindsight, I could have cracked the whip much more, but when the artistic director arrived I went back to my old role of having fun rather than directing.

As a musician belonging to a theatre company, leading the sessions alone made me feel anxious

I hope she has time and that she does come in next week. I’m so used to having to go in alone because at the last minute the artists have to be elsewhere for a performance or a rehearsal.

I think in general that I am feeling very anxious, having bad dreams about the prison. I feel that, due to the different nature of this year, I have carried this whole thing so far on my own because everyone else is focused on the performances on the outside. I’m worried that the women aren’t getting the same input as every year even though they still have to go through the scariest performance (to their peers in the prison). I’m worried that we will show them up … But today allayed my fears a little …

and so I felt supported and relieved when working with my colleagues

Even though no-one really wanted to give it a go, it was so good for me to have her there as extra support. For instance, we did a full physical and vocal warm-up today, and without the choreographer there participating I think the others would have not really given it a go.

Today, the artistic director came in with me, which made me feel very relieved.

Creating something as a group was loud, chaotic and challenging

I really felt like a music-teacher this session, with a bunch of naughty, loud students.

I envied the visual artist her quiet, calm visual art session next door.

Developing cohesion in the group was problematic
I really feel that it’s a big problem at the moment, no group cohesion and no group stability. I think that it has a lot to do with the creative process and that the women aren’t so interested in writing the songs/play but more interested in rehearsing and performing. Maybe the creative process isn’t such a good thing after all! I can now understand why the theatre company artists generally get writings from women and then work them into art, script or song themselves, because group creation isn’t really working at the moment.

However, it did come together in the end

It feels like it’s all fitting into place!

It was quite amazing after that; they all sang and worked really well and hard together.

I felt particularly vulnerable leading into the session in which I cried

Today was a hard session, especially on the back of my earlier rehearsal for the outside performance, where I had openly expressed my frustration at someone’s fear at singing a certain part of the song. I think I was feeling pre-menstrual and sensitive anyway, but that weighed on my mind as I went into the prison and didn’t bode well.

As we were playing the song I began to feel really upset, like I was forcing people to do something they didn’t want to do. Unfortunately, I couldn’t hold back my tears as I was asking Matilda to play a rhythm. Sarah, who was standing next to me, and Jane and Lucinda gave me hugs and asked me if I was OK. I explained to the group that I was feeling stressed about the performance and that I was feeling like people didn’t want to do it and that I was forcing them to.

Although it wasn’t an ideal reaction for me to have, I felt that the group really pulled together after that

It was quite amazing after that; they all sang and worked really well and hard together. Not that I want to make that a habit, but somehow they all pulled together. They were even suggesting that they rehearse on Thursday even though I won’t be there!

Initially I thought that the music would weave the drama together, as it usually does

I hadn’t wanted the music to usurp the drama, and I was under the impression that the artistic director would come in and do the drama-side of things as she usually does (albeit, much later in the process this time). Usually in the theatre company, drama underpins everything and it is very closely intertwined with the music. This time, if it does happen, it will be just to introduce the overall theme and give context to the songs.

I felt more and more anxious as the drama failed to be a presence

Up until this point I had been feeling extremely anxious because the drama side of things just wasn’t happening.
But I relaxed once I let go of that idea

My own headspace was much more relaxed, as I had given up thinking that the performance would involve drama/theatre (the artistic director has been far too busy) and that we could just do a music performance, where the women introduce their songs as they would if they were rock stars.

It was interesting to see the different outcomes when music leads such a process even though ultimately the story still dominated

Interestingly to me, she also said that Jane is a bit stuck in the fantasy of being a rock star and that it controls the way the creation evolves. I just saw that as a clash between drama and music, where the artistic director saw Jane’s interest and ambition in music as diverging from the path that drama treads. It’s interesting, music definitely has to play second fiddle in a theatre company like this one!

It’s interesting, because this time the songs aren’t very theatrical; they’re more musicianly. I reckon this has occurred because the drama creation hasn’t been occurring at the same time as the music and that therefore the women and I have been able to write more purely without thinking about the drama side of things.

I saw how the naked word in drama can expose a person’s truth more honestly than lyrics dressed up by music

I really felt that the women gave something honest and personal in this part, which made me think about how music in the form of songs can be so containing and safe that it can be easy to hide or hint at personal truth. This is where I think the drama side of things in terms of the theatre company really can get the personal, transformational honest thing happening, because it’s the ritual of putting something out there in its naked truth, words not dressed up by music.

And how all the elements of theatre can make music a more powerful medium

At the end of the session, one of the actors and I were looking at the stage with the backdrop and the lighting. It’s amazing how a bit of lighting, costume, staging and backdrop can really honour and lift what’s being offered on stage.

I just can’t shake the feeling that I, as a musician, cannot put on the type of performances that they put on. Music by itself is not as strong as when partnered with theatre and all that goes with it (lights, stage, props, costumes etc).

I often felt frustrated and powerless within the prison system
This really frustrated me because we have been working up to an ‘imaginary’ performance for so long; if it was postponed much longer I reckon the women just wouldn’t believe that something would happen.

I don’t feel very confident about her ability to communicate back clearly to me. So, I left feeling pretty powerless on that one. We’ll just have to see what happens.

And when other company projects conflicted with the prison program

This really annoyed me, as I thought that once the outside show had finished we’d be able to focus all our attention on the prison show … So, it really wasn’t a good example for the women in commitment and reliability, and I was feeling very grumpy and powerless about it.

The prison sometimes felt like a foreign country whose inhabitants I couldn’t communicate with or understand

Driving home, I was thinking how strange the culture is at the prison; it’s like going to a foreign country.

I was cringing at the thought that my middle-class ways were so entrenched that I couldn’t properly connect to women in the context of the prison. But I have before, and I do when they’re not in prison too, but very often I feel like I do when it’s my first time in a foreign country and I don’t understand the language or the customs

I oscillated between feelings of frustration and a desire to be more compassionate towards the huge levels of fear and fragility I encountered in some of the women

I think that I would like to try and remember much better that these women have crazy lives and fragile selves and that sometimes I expect too much from them. But maybe that’s the only way their higher selves have a chance to come out, to shine …. I don’t know. All I know is that there is more fear surrounding singing and moving and performing in the prison than I’ve ever experienced on the outside. I want to be more understanding to the reasons why, rather than frustrated by them.

At times I felt the tension between wanting to maintain high aesthetic standards and allowing people to express themselves

I’m a little reluctant to do that because I feel like it is a part where we can relax about aesthetic standards. I do see, however, that the artistic director never opts for the patronizing “That’s lovely” way. She really works to make things be the best that they can be.

I was nervous about how the CEO of the theatre company would react to the singalong at the end. I thought it was a success; the audience sang along and clapped and everyone
seemed to enjoy themselves. It wasn’t, however, the usual polished performance common to the plays performed by the theatre company.

I also wondered whether the challenges were worth the effort, particularly after the performance when I was feeling exhausted.

Do the women get anything really valuable from these music sessions? Many of them seem to enjoy it but …

Well, today was the performance and don’t I feel exhausted!

Afterwards, I was feeling quite flat myself; really tired and emotional and questioning whether it’s all really worth the energy etc.

I think I’m just feeling flat, which is common after processes like this, and I shouldn’t really think too much at this stage!

However, once I wasn’t focused on working towards a performance I felt I could relax and get to know the women.

This session was the first time I felt I got to know the women more personally and the others may have felt the same. Jane was asking Sarah about her life before prison while Spark told us more about her family. Gillian seemed disgruntled about something that was happening that day with other women in the prison (I couldn’t make out what it was) and left earlier than the others. Lucinda came briefly but was busy moving to a different unit. Matilda ran around getting us water and plates and seemed happy while Majella spoke earnestly with the other women about their experiences in the performance and outside of it. It’s amazing the space that opens up when performance isn’t breathing down your throat!
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