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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

INTERSECTIONS

Symposium on youth work & music education

EVENT PROCEEDINGS 2014

EDITED BY EILEEN HOGAN AND NOREEN KEANE

HOSTED BY THE SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES, UCC
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, UCC AND
THE INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, MAYNOOTH

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ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES

Since its establishment in 1990, the School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork, has developed a national and international reputation for social science research which reflects the challenges and changes in contemporary Irish society in both European and global contexts. Over the past two decades, the School of Applied Social Studies has grown to become one of the largest Schools within UCC's College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, offering a wide variety of programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and Continuing Professional Development levels. Our mission statement defines the purpose of the School of Applied Social Studies:

> The School of Applied Social Studies provides an educational environment which promotes a culture of critical intellectual and practice enquiry in the social sciences, based upon participation, inclusion and diversity.

The development of research by staff and students is a key strategy to achieving this mission. As a School of *Applied* Social Studies, the School continues its strong commitment to promoting links between research and practice. It achieves this through: (i) the provision of practice-oriented research programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level and; (ii) public lectures, conferences and publications that promote understanding of research issues in the social professions.

The School has been a long-time provider of youth work professional education through the undergraduate Bachelor of Youth and Community Work programme, which has witnessed the graduation of a significant number of youth and community work practitioners since its establishment in 1995. In 2013, the School launched a new Masters in Youth Work with Community Arts and Sports Studies, which offers both postgraduate youth work professional education and continuing professional development opportunities for qualified youth workers in arts- and sports-oriented practices, with a further emphasis on developing youth work research skills. The School's staff members are involved in a broad range of research activities and this research project evidences our continuing commitment to developing research on youth work and community-based practice in Ireland and beyond.

For further information see http://www.ucc.ie/en/appsoc/.

1 INTRODUCTION

The 'Intersections: Youth Work and Music Education' Symposium took place on Friday, 27th June 2014 in University College Cork. This event, held in association with the Institute of Social Sciences in the 21st Century (ISS21), was made possible thanks to funding from UCC's Strategic Research Fund. The principle aim of this seed funding is to generate new research interests and this presented the ideal opportunity for developing collaborative relationships between youth work and music education lecturers, researchers and practitioners across the island of Ireland. This led to the formation of a new 'Intersections' research cluster, comprising representatives from four third-level institutions, each of which offers both youth work and music education undergraduate and/or postgraduate programmes, namely:

- University College Cork;
- National University of Ireland, Maynooth;
- Dundalk Institute of Technology; and,
- University of Ulster

This document presents some preliminary findings from primary research conducted through each of the participating institutions in their local areas. Data was also collected during the symposium, through engaging in small group discussions populated by the event's participants. The publication and dissemination of this document was included in the original Strategic Research Fund proposal. Its intended audience includes youth workers, music educators, community-based practitioners, policy-makers and academics who are motivated and enthused by the possibilities of music-oriented youth work in Ireland and beyond.

1.1 CONTEXT

Youth work in Ireland provides a range of vital supports and activities to young people in our communities. Both mainstream and targeted youth work projects offer exciting and innovative opportunities to young people across the island of Ireland, which are significant in providing education and participation in music-oriented activities in urban and rural areas.

Youth work is defined in Ireland in the Youth Work Act 2001 as:

> a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.

In the Northern Irish context, the current curriculum framework for youth work (NI) defines youth work along similar lines:

> Youth work is distinctively educational and involves constructive interventions with young people in non-formal settings. As an educational activity it is at its most effective when it is planned and delivered with clear objectives, and informed through continuous monitoring, evaluation and critical reflection on the processes and practices employed. (http://www.ycni.org/NSETS/NSETS-NatureYW.html)

In the past decade, the youth work sector has become increasingly professionalised (Jenkinson, 2013; Powell et al, 2010).[1] However, in recent years the youth sector has also been devastated by swingeing cuts, forcing reductions in staffing levels, resource allocation, and the delivery of services.[2] Paradoxically, the demand for youth work services has expanded, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as young people experience higher levels unemployment, have more leisure time but fewer resources, and are increasingly insecure, anxious and fearful about their futures (Jenkinson, 2013: 11). This document aims to open up discursive space on the value of youth work, with particular attention to the uses of music and, in doing so, to develop an evidence base for youth work practice which defends its importance in the lives of young people. It reclaims, against a politics of austerity, the capacity and potential of youth work for transformative engagement with young people, exploring music education-oriented activities as a case study.

[1] This trend has been driven in part by the establishment of the North-South Education and Training Standards for Youth Work committee (NSETS), which is responsible for the professional accreditation of youth work academic courses on the island of Ireland.

[2] In relation to music education specifically, these cuts have been partially offset by increased funding streams through Music Generation, Ireland's National Music Education Programme (http://www.musicgeneration.ie/). A number of interview and symposium participants were employed as part-time music tutors through Music Generation. However, they and their locations have not been identified in the research, in the interests of anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, Music Generation tends to be more formalised, which raises some intersting questions about how this funding shift impacts upon informal musical learning in youth work contexts.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND PROCESSES

From the outset of the project, the primary goal was to develop a space and an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to consider and reflect on the importance of youth participation in music education and music-making. Prior to the event, representatives from each institution engaged in primary research interviews with representatives from local youth work organisations (n=6), whose programmes included music-oriented projects. Since this was an exploratory study/scoping exercise, these interviews were unstructured and shaped by a grounded theory approach to understanding and interpreting intersections between youth work and music education practices. Some of this 'raw' data was presented in brief during the symposium as a method of stimulating debate.

Although this goal was placed within a youth work context, symposium participants came from a wide variety of professional and community-based backgrounds, using different approaches and with various experiences of working with young people. Underpinning the motivations of all participants, however, was an interest in and a desire to engage young people through the medium of music-making. Participants also welcomed the opportunity to share their expertise and to develop new links with others in the local community and beyond. The aim of this preliminary research is to chart links between youth work practice and music education and, in doing so, to consider how mutual exchange might benefit our practices and, in turn, our capacity to engage with young people through music-making processes.

In tune with this principle of mutual and collaborative learning, the event was organised using a participatory format, which included a mix of presentations and smaller discussion group sessions. On registering for the event, participants were required to indicate their informed, voluntary consent to being documented in the research process. Once this was confirmed, the discussion groups were audio-recorded, the data was transcribed, and any identifying information was removed. Members of the research team and staff members from the School of Applied Social Studies facilitated the discussion groups. Three groups comprising six to eight members were held in the morning, and two groups were held in the afternoon. Although two broad themes were proposed – namely, 'Youth work and music education: Current practice and its challenges' and 'Future intersections: youth work and music education developmental strategies' – the facilitators were encouraged to allow conversation to develop naturally. The first group discussions (Groups A, B and C) included

more data on participants' own practices and personal experiences, shared in the process of getting to know each other, whereas the second set (Groups D and E) tended to develop upon various issues/debates that had arisen during the symposium. This proceedings document is informed by data from the individual interviews and the group discussions, and uses anonymous quotations where appropriate.

Participants reconvened at the end of the day and were treated to a music performance by a number of young people from the Gurranebraher Arts Project, Youth Work Ireland, Cork. This was facilitated by their music tutors, Rory McGovern and Ophelia McCabe. The young people spoke with participants about their musical journeys and offered some personal reflections on the meaning of music-making in their lives, which brought our interesting day to a close in a most appropriate way.

This document provides a synthesis of key research themes that emerged through individual and group interviews with practitioners and symposium participants. Its contribution is to open up discursive spaces for considering the interrelationship of music-oriented youth work and music education. The document explores the practical and experiential resources that are mobilised in engaging with young people through music-making and examines some of the thinking that underpins this work. Although music is commonly used as a tool for engagement, there is little existing literature in the Irish and Northern Irish contexts on music-making practices with young people from an explicit youth work perspective. Youth work services have suffered significant cuts in the context of economic crisis, despite increasing demand from young people, their families and their communities, which has intensified in a period of socio-economic turbulence. This adds further urgency to documenting the value of youth work practice in contemporary life. The focus on young people's musical participation from a practitioner perspective opens an interesting aperture into the world(s) of youth work. It offers a lens through which to discern some of the current challenges facing youth work, and reveals some of the epistemological, ideological and practical questions being asked of/within youth work practice in the 21st century.

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Professor Alastair Christie and the staff in the School of Applied Social Studies for their ongoing support, and in particular, to members of the Bachelor in Youth and Community Work and the Masters in Youth Work with Community Arts and Sports Studies programme teams. Thanks to the support of Professor Fred Powell, School of Applied Social Studies, UCC, and Dr Mel Mercier, Department of Music, UCC, who welcomed participants and opened up the symposium as a significant, discursive space through their insightful opening remarks. Thanks also to the speakers, Dr Douglas Lonie (Youth Music UK), Pat Leahy (School of Applied Social Studies, UCC) and Wayne McSweeney (East Cork Music Project) for sharing their experiences and expertise. Thanks to our institutional partners, Dr Tony Morgan (University of Ulster), Dr Daithí Kearney (Dundalk Institute of Technology), and Professor Maurice Devlin (National University of Ireland, Maynooth) for leading the research in their respective institutions and local communities. Thanks also to Dr Paul Burgess, Micheál Ó hAodáin, and Cindy O'Shea, School of Applied Social Studies, for their skilful group facilitation during the event and also for their on-going, supportive collegiality (and Pat Leahy deserves a second mention here!). Thanks to Rory McGovern, Ophelia McCabe and the young people from the Gurranebraher Arts Project, Youth Work Ireland, Cork, for performing music for us at the symposium; your contribution shaped a powerfully emotive atmosphere as the event drew to a close. Many thanks to Barry English at Double Marvellous Design for developing the Intersections logo and website and for his constantly reassuring professionalism.

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Eileen Hogan and Noreen Keane

School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork.

2 RESEARCH THEMES

The following sections document the key research themes that emerged through the discussions within individual interviews and group discussions. It presents this data as preliminary findings, with the aim of documenting current practices and concerns, and stimulating future reflection, discussion and research on intersections between youth work and music education. Having transcribed the data, the analysis evinced a number of interesting questions and tensions in relation to: resources; the meanings of 'quality' with respect to formal, informal and non-formal learning; access, participation and process; youth work principles and values; the increasingly familiar but highly contentious language of youth work 'outputs' and 'outcomes'; and, musical taste and its relationship to cultural politics.

In reflecting on the significance of music-making and music education in youth work, we consider the data with respect to seven themes:

1. Music as a tool for building relationships
2. Models of youth work
3. Formal, informal and non-formal learning
4. Youth participation
5. Taste and cultural politics
6. Resources
7. Evidencing the value of music-oriented youth work

There is considerable overlap between the research themes outlined below. Questions about the youth workers' role(s), models of youth work practice, forms of learning, youth participation, resources, cultural politics, and evidencing impact are deeply interrelated. Therefore, although we have organised the data thematically with the aim of disentangling complex ideas into a more pristine presentation, we do so on the understanding that the themes' boundaries are often fuzzy and indistinct.

Throughout the report, we have chosen to prioritise the research participants' voices. Both the individual interviews and the symposium discussions were vibrant and productive, and this document hopes to capture in part their richness. This foregrounding of practitioners' experiences aims to represent the values underpinning youth work practice from the grassroots perspective of youth workers and music educators, who operate at the 'coalface' of

youth services delivery. Recent policy changes in youth work have tended to ignore these voices; this report seeks to redress the silencing of youth workers and associated practitioners.

2.1 MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth work is enacted through the voluntary participation of young people and this is identified as a 'core feature' (Devlin, 2009: 100). This has particular implications for developing approaches and processes that capture young people's attention, so that they feel committed to participating.

> *Obviously youth work has to follow the interests of the young people. If you want to engage young people on a voluntary basis it has to be through a medium that they have an interest in and a passion for.* (Participant 1)

> *If the first thing that they get when they come in here is something that isn't someone asking them five million questions about who they are or where they're from and all these type of things, they'll feel more comfortable in it. When they're ready to come to us and have a chat and find out more about what's going on, that's grand. That's exactly where you want to meet them, you know*. (Participant 3)

A central process in youth work is building relationships of trust and mutual respect with young people and music was identified as a medium through which these relationships could be gradually developed. Music-making was therefore perceived by participants as a key activity through which to engage young people and to engage *with* young people through the development of voluntary interpersonal relationships. As one participant put it:

> *Youth workers have the opportunity of engaging young people who can then engage in music who can then decide what part of music that they like to do. So there is a good coming together of the two worlds.* (Group E)

The specific capacities of music as a tool for engaging with young people were highlighted in various ways. For example:

> *Kids are really engaged and excited by [DJing and technology], and it was just such an excellent way to connect with them instantly and work towards developing relationships with them in a youth work sense. It really helped to open doors working with young people, because, I mean, looking at youth culture, music permeates all the way through. You're looking at fashion, identity, what they think, what's new and what's happening. Music kind of flows, meanders its way through all that. And I suppose I was able to talk to young people about what they were interested in and bounce things back and forth. So they were sussing me out and music was really a way in with young people.* (Participant 2)

Music's unique qualities for attracting young people were variously articulated but, fundamentally, these were embedded within discourses of non-formal or informal learning. This contrasts with traditional models of music education, which tend to be more formal in approach. An interesting associative tension emerged in relation to what is perceived as 'quality' in youth work and music education; whereas the former focuses on young people's well-being, the latter focuses on their musical skills development. Participants suggested that the types of music projects they delivered were 'beyond' music education, in the sense that they were more focused upon young people's personal and social development. Participants highlighted the different approaches taken through youth work, which tended to position the development of the young person more centrally.

> *But what we do is so much more than music lessons.* (Group B)

> *I suppose what would make us different is we're more than just music education. We're more about the development of young people. Not that the development won't happen incidentally from taking part in music, but it would be a deliberate kind of causal pathway that we set out to try and develop young people through music.* (Participant 2)

However, participants were also keen to stress the musical talents that many young people brought with them *to* the projects, but felt facilitated to expand on their talents in a safe environment that has good facilities.

> *Amazing talent comes through the door, you wouldn't believe it, like. And it's not like I taught them to be these amazing [musicians], it's that they came here because they knew… I suppose…we've always focused on having a safe space here, where we never allow any bad vibes. If there's anything going on, then we'll sort it out. So that*

> *helps because people always feel very safe here and comfortable. And then, because we have recording facilities, some people will come up here because they want to record.* (Participant 6)

It was also suggested that it is not necessarily that music is distinctively interesting as a tool for engagement, but that young people are more likely to engage through music because of a predisposition towards music. Therefore, young people who might never get involved in youth work otherwise, are drawn to the projects because of their musical interests.

> *Most people who come here have a genuine 'grá'[3] for music, especially the teenagers. The younger ones come sometimes because their parents want the to or because the youth worker has decided that it would be good for them. But the teenagers come for the love of it. So the reason that they are here is that they want to engage in music. Some of them want to just enjoy it, some come to 'hang out' and then some* really *want to learn… There's a real mixture of motivations. And there's a mix of motivations from my perspective too, so that complicates things!* [Laughs] (Participant 6)

2.2 MODELS OF YOUTH WORK

The Costello Report (1984: 115) defines the purpose of youth work as follows:

> Youth work must empower young people and enable them to emerge from the enveloping state of dependence… Young people must know, feel and believe that they have some control over their situations in the sense of having ability to influence intentionally what happens to them and their community. The ability of young people to assess alternative and choose the most appropriate one in any given situation is central to our views of Social Education.

This definition is significant in emphasising the social and political contexts of young people's lives and articulates a vision for youth work that advocates a critical dimension to practice and its potential for advancing youth participation and youth empowerment (Jenkinson 2013: 14).

[3] The Irish term 'grá' translates as 'love'.

However, *how* youth work is practised varies across different models and approaches. The models of youth work evidenced in the data are discussed with reference to Hurley and Treacy's (1993) useful framework, which examines different processes of learning in youth work and their implications for youth work practice from a sociological perspective. The authors identify four models of youth work, namely, the Character-Building Model, the Personal Development Model, the Critical Social Education Model, and the Radical Social Change Model.

2.2.1 THE CHARACTER-BUILDING MODEL

The character-building model of youth work 'recognises that young people need to have their energy and drive directed in a constructive fashion' (Hurley & Treacy, 1993:15). One participant described the uses of music as a means of regulating behaviour, and in this respect, its value was identified in relation to a more functionalist perspective:

> *[I]t works really well in the drop-in sense to have young people creating this environment where it's theirs and they come in and they hang out. So often you don't start dealing with young people's behaviour. It regulates itself because young people have set the context already for what the environment is about. It self-regulates. So you're not blowing whistles and trying to cull things left, right and centre.* (Group A)

In this sense, young people's shaping of their own musical environment reinforces shared values and behaviours, thereby bringing about social order (Hurley and Treacy 1993: 8-9). Involvement in music-making was also perceived as a positive force for changing social perceptions of young people, since it disentangles societal attitudes from a more problematising conceptualisation of 'youth'.

> *[Music-making enables young people] to participate in the city – because they're seen often as a problem, but maybe they can be part of the solution as well*. (Participant 2)

> *It challenges the community's perceptions for young people hugely, like. When we opened the community fun day and had the whole music aspect of it – which was entirely run by young people – we had all these parents coming down with young kids going 'Oh my God, this is brilliant. When can they join? What age do they have to be?' So they're peer role models then as well [which is] great*. (Participant 2)

In this respect, musical participation is valued in relation to socialisation: for developing an 'appropriate' consciousness in young people, thereby assisting them in achieving integration, internalising moral values, and contributing positively to society and to social cohesion (Hurley and Treacy 1993: 10-11).

Furthermore, this model incorporates skills learning for the economy; within the character-building model, education is responsible for 'the selection and allocation of human capital' (ibid: 14). This aspect of learning is increasingly emphasised in relation to an entrepreneurial agenda and the language of learning for the 'new' economy in the 21st century. Participants highlighted the transferable skills that young people learn through music-making, which might be relevant in relation to enhancing their future employability.

> [The aim] *is to develop the group's knowledge and skills within the area of live music events; to develop and bring different music and media aspects to the programme… Music media develops other young people's skills that have an interest in music; to ensure that the events will have good practice on rules, and protocols are followed; to provide better facilities for the members who have an interest in music and media… And where you are doing good protocol and good practice you're teaching them a better way of doing it instead of messing up… But we're also trying to do more stuff with the community and not just with the Centre. So the likes of doing outside events, which opens up new regulations, rules… [It's about] teaching them what needs to be done to actually achieve something that is bigger than just running it in-house.* (Participant 4)

> *The skills you develop as a musician, you know, beyond your musicality, will be applicable to other situations in your life. So it's like on one hand we need to be putting some energy into sustaining local infrastructure and economies so that musicians are recognised as having jobs and being valuable member of the local employment sector. And on the other hand, if you want to support your broader economy then make sure that you've got creative leaning and musical learning and what sort of example people can relate to in a very direct way. Make sure that you're developing those skills in the future workforce because then they're going to be matching what's happening globally.* (Group C)

> *The lads I work with are very clued into the music business… They're getting gigs from websites [since] promoters are looking at websites for local bands. They're very clued*

into copyright, very protective of the songs they write, even sometimes with each other… They want recognition…They know how to copyright as they are writing… They can see that they can have a career. (Group C)

2.2.2 THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Music was perceived as key in terms of personal development education, to young people's identity work, and to their emotional development. In the youth work setting, participants value music-making as means of exploring emotions and engaging in dialogue with young people about a range of personal developmental issues.

I think [music-making] opens up dialogue with young people. It empowers them. It empowers them to express themselves about anything that they want to express, [to] develop self-esteem. (Participant 1)

[Music] is so much an integral part of growing up and learning about the world and learning to express oneself. (Participant 1)

They're all crazy creative. I think at that age you're more creative than probably any period again in your life and it's getting them to, like that, think outside the box, because there's so much potential and imagination and there's more to them than just the survival humdrum. (Participant 1)

I think young people deal with life through music; [it] helps them [to] process the world through music. (Participant 1)

There are so many issues that are coming up for the young people, it's phenomenal. And I think music, because it's such a creative form, young people seem to be a lot more open in it. They do come looking for support about things… Because you're talking about music, you're talking about the meanings, you're talking about lyrics, you're talking about grief, that then you end up having conversations that you wouldn't otherwise have… Like young people talking about someone who passed away only, let's say, the month or two before... You wouldn't have had those conversations except that that's what's at the forefront of their mind, that's what they wrote lyrics about… So they may start to discuss grief and then you just start to discuss how it plays out in you

every day and your memories of that person. So that's, I suppose, how music facilitates youth work massively is that. (Participant 1)

Empathy would come into it, I'm sure, because there's so much emotion involved with music. And to be sensitive to people and music and yourself and be able to kind of describe where you're at through the music that's part of your life at that time. Some people can be low and they can go deep in themselves. The music can help them when they're there. And they can also be elated and music can help them when they're there too. It doesn't have to kind of fit that typecast of [listening to] depressing music means you're depressed. Some people are happy enough to be listening to that. You know, it's reflective as well, music. It makes people think. (Participant 2)

In the personal development model, the youth work assumes the role of confidante, counsellor and motivator and this is based on the belief that young people 'can be enabled to develop as individuals in their own right, who can think, reflect, develop their life view and accept responsibility for their own behaviour' (Hurley and Treacy 1993: 29). Youth workers will therefore aim to develop positive self-identity through informal and non-formal learning.

2.2.3 CRITICAL SOCIAL EDUCATION

The critical social education model enables youth workers engaged with young people to 'develop consciousness raising strategies as a core curriculum approach' with the aim of making young people 'critically aware of their own social and political situation' and thereby mobilising them to seek change (Hurley and Treacy, 1993: 40). Music's potential for developing young people's capacities for critical thinking was noted; thus, music-making becomes a tool for critical social education. Within this framework, several participants related to the transformative effect of youth participation in music-making:

Music development education definitely is a way to kind of unpack and explore issues. Even looking at even like culture – different cultures – music is very much a universal language… And integration. I mean, as a way to kind of bring young people together initially music is brilliant, and for them to feel comfortable with each other and acknowledge that it's okay to be different and there's beauty in being different... I mean, to value diversity… People can start to show off their culture and who it is that they are and what they're into and what they believe in and [to] bring their different,

kind of, interests politically through music, religion through music, in a different way… [It's not] sitting down and going: 'Okay, we're going to talk about religion today'. You can put on a song and you can start to talk about what were the themes in this song and people can start to have a conversation around that which can be opened up and challenged and teased and brought forward. (Participant 2)

As a youth worker, if you are starting with where that person is in the world and their perspective in it and working to that perspective, by all means as part of the course of their education and interaction – your education as well – explore these other areas, explore these other musics, and us that frame of reference for where you are and where you want to take your musical expressiveness (Group D).

It encourages them to express their own culture as well as opening up new opportunities to learn new music as well. It is so important in their identity, their attitudes, opinions on life, what they challenge, their peer group, their substance use, I mean, depending on what type of music influence the substance of choice (Group B)

Like we did a session one day where it was like think of songs that have changed the world. And they all kind of came up with different ones. I'd like them to develop a bit more of their analysis of society, I suppose, and inequalities a bit more through music. Now I think they're quite insular and they're looking at their own lives. But I'd like to move that down the road to looking broader. Like, the likes of Macklemore, which they do listen to, that look at broader issues in their community, and goes that way. (Participant 1)

Participants also referred to music capacity for emplacing young people, for developing their self-identity in relation to discourses of belonging and to take pride in where they are from and their local identity.

We come from a country… that has the highest amount of musicians per capita in the world. We also come from a country with incredible oral traditions. Like if you've got this pride, you know, 'we're the best storytellers in the world and we talk more than anyone else and we're great musicians' and it's like 'wow what do you sing about? We might sing about anything that is happening around, anything at all'. [There's] a pride in our oral tradition, a pride in our musical tradition. (Group D)

This was also posited as a useful approach for unpacking the concept of 'Irishness' and for conceptualising a more inclusive understanding of local identity that comes through the process of indigenising global musical cultures, such as hip-hop. The critical social education model was also evident in seeing music-making as a medium through which to consider diversity and interculturalism.

> *A funny phenomenon that I noticed…was, you know, you were saying rapping about the fianna[4] and all that. Some of these guys were doing all that because they were developing a huge pride in Irish history. But what was weird was a few years later some of their friends that they were still rapping with were people that I didn't know - one was Brazilian and the other was Nigerian. And I met up with these guys and the two black guys come over and they're like 'Hey, buachaill, conas a tá tú?[5]' So now it's like this 'Hey, boy, what's going on?' has transcended, because these immigrants that are now Irish are taking pride in being Irish as opposed to pride of being an immigrant and they are now passing that pride on to the Irish people who wouldn't have said that in Irish, who don't have that pride.* (Group D)

The critical social education model therefore encapsulates an understanding that culture is a process and that young people, through their music-making, are actively engaged in producing culture. In this model, youth work is concerned with 'awareness-raising strategies' and 'in awakening the consciousness of young people' (Hurley and Treacy 1993: 40).

2.2.4 RADICAL SOCIAL CHANGE

In both the individual and group discussions, there was little evidence of Hurley and Treacy's 'radical social change' model. Within this framework, the aim is to develop a socialist and politicised consciousness through dialogue with working class young people; it is politically aspirational in seeking to transform young people's position in society from one of powerlessness to mobilising their self-conscious agency towards social and political change

[4] The 'fianna' are bands of warriors from Irish mythology.
[5] Translation from Irish: 'Hey, boy, how are you?'

(1993: 54).[6] This raises some interesting questions about the possible de-radicalisation of youth work and whether youth workers in the contemporary context are being increasingly corralled – willingly or otherwise – into a gentler and more reformist agenda. The vision for youth work evidenced in the Costello Report in 1984, which saw its potential as a radical and transformative practice, is largely absent from the data. Given the socio-economic and socio-cultural turbulence that has characterised Irish society in the last few years, the invisibility of this radical approach is notable.

2.3 FORMAL, INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Formal learning is more strongly associated with educational institutions. Non-formal learning refers to planned learning in out-of-school contexts. Informal learning refers to 'unplanned' learning, which happens more organically through social interactions (ibid). Youth work is more often associated with the informal and non-formal categories, and has in practice traditionally emphasised the former (Hurley and Treacy, 1993: 1). This is not to imply that youth work is unstructured; indeed, youth work has arguably become increasingly structured in recent years. However, the underpinning assumption is often that young people's learning occurs in more 'natural' social encounters and interactions between young people and their peers and between young people and adults in various kinds of youth work environments (ibid: 1-2). According to Hurley and Treacy, informal education 'refers to the accidental and/or unplanned learning which takes place by virtue of the hidden messages individuals receive in their interaction with each other' (ibid: 1). Batsleer's (2008: 5) definition of informal learning highlights how new learning occurs through engaging in 'everyday problem-posing'. In youth work practice, then, both 'planned' and 'unplanned' learning take place within planned programmes.

Participants perceived a mismatch between the types of music education that are provided in formal contexts and their own understandings of what many young people desire, which is a more relaxed, informal approach.[7] Green (2008: 9-10) usefully defines informal music education as a pedagogical approach that is distinct from formal education approaches in

[6] This was hinted at by one participant regarding a 'politics of resistance', and this data is included under the 'Taste and Cultural Politics' heading below. Significantly, however, this participant did not have any experience of youth work practice on the island of Ireland.

[7] Of course, most of the participants practice though a more informal/non-formal approach, so they are likely to be predisposed to seeing this as the 'best' model.

relation to five underlying principles. Firstly – the 'prime' factor – is that, in the informal approach, learning begins with music chosen by the learners themselves, as opposed to formal education where musical materials are normally pre-selected by teachers. Secondly, the main method of skills-acquisition involves the copying of recordings by ear, which is rarely used in formal education. Thirdly, informal learning happens both alone and with friends, 'through self-directed, peer-directed and group learning', and incorporates the 'conscious and unconscious acquisition and exchange of skills' (ibid: 10). Fourthly, in informal learning, skills and knowledge are developed in relation to the 'whole' piece of music and therefore the 'stepped' progression that characterises formal learning approaches is less evident and relevant. In the informal approach, then, musicians will learn – individually or with peers – what they need to recreate the sounds that they hear. Skills are therefore more likely to be integrated in 'haphazard, idiosyncratic and holistic ways' (ibid). Finally, Green proposes, informal music learning typically involves 'a deep integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing throughout the learning process, with an emphasis on personal creativity', whereas formal music education tends to focus on one or more of these activities in isolation from the other, and is less concerned with creativity (ibid).

These 'principles' of informal music learning are evident throughout the data, indicating a deep synthesis between informal music learning and informal learning in youth work practice. The findings suggest that the integration of listening, performing, improvising and composing processes through informal music learning enhances youth workers' capacities for understanding and working with young people; the 'haphazard' approach works well in creating problem-posing and 'accidental' learning opportunities. Participants were keen to dissociate what they do from more formal approaches and standardised curricula.

> *It's not about teaching; it's about what they learn. And, listen, everybody's different. So there is no standard, it's whatever* their *standard is.* (Group B).

> *Everything is tailored to the individual. If someone comes in and clearly doesn't have much of an attention span, then I won't programme a long session. Likewise, if it's a group that's working really well, then I'd give them more time. So it's about changing it around to suit the people.* (Participant 6)

One participant captured this seemingly chaotic environment very well, but in his narrative highlighted the incredibly complex and multi-layered skills that are deployed in the youth work space:

Well, we have a few rooms open. So what we generally do is that we have a sort of open vibe in the [large room], and I generally have a few helpers as well… So it wouldn't be just me on my own with a group. Like the young people would be moving around, going out for a smoke, or coming up to the computer room and going on Facebook… So this whole floor would have people moving around. And sometimes something live could kick off in the large room or sometimes it wouldn't and people would just be drinking tea and chatting and then I might… Like, I very much move around the whole space, is what I'm getting at, so I might come in here and talk to somebody for ten minutes about a song that they're writing, while [others] are in another room singing. And someone else might say 'I've got this [song] and I really want to record this tonight, can I get you to do it? And I'd be like, 'Ok, but I've to do this first [Laughs] but in half an hour, be ready! Set up a microphone and I'll do it in half an hour', so then I'd go do that for ten minutes… So it's just dealing on the moment with people's needs and trying to make sure that nobody is left out, that nobody feel they're not getting attention… But then, not giving too much attention either, because it's their… Like, they're coming here for this 'club' mentality, so they don't want a music lesson, they want to just hang out. So there's a real mixture of things going on. There could be someone sitting here, writing a rap at the table, there could be raps going on down near the fire escape [Laughs] and there really would be little pockets of people around the building doing different activities. (Participant 6)

This participant had formal education music training, but found that he had to adapt his approach in/to the youth work context:

I did the Grad Dip[loma] in Music Education and also had a BMus, so I suppose I had a formalised idea of how it was supposed to be and I started doing that and realised quite soon that that was not the way it was going to be [Laughs] in the youth work context. I realised quite quickly that it was more about 'capturing' them… Bringing them in and making them want *to engage. It had to be* enjoyable *from the get-go, you know? They were doing off their own bat – it wasn't school and they were only doing it if they were interested… So when I first started, I thought I had to go 'teach' them. You might come in the door and the question was 'what can I "teach" you?' Whereas, you might just want to sit there, and watch and listen.* (Participant 6)

He argued that the formal approach, or introducing a more formal approach to teaching music, would not likely work in the youth work environment. As he put it:

> *It wouldn't work in this particular building because [the young people] have expectations already of what they are going to do when they come up here and they are their reasons for coming, and I think if you messed with that too much, then you would risk them not coming.* (Participant 6)

He also noted that, given young people's participation is voluntary, that this shapes the context of teaching and learning:

> *You have to sense when you're teaching somebody in a youth work context, you have to sense when they might not be enjoying it, and then change tack… Because if they're not enjoying it then they might decide not to come any more and that's the end of their… musical 'career'. So, if you're following a curriculum [it's different]. Like, I don't* have *to teach them a D minor scale. I might think that it's a good idea but if I can see that it's not working for them then it's ok for me to go 'Ok, well then let's sing a Bruno Mars song instead', because it's a youth work context. Whereas, if they had to sit a Grade 4 exam, then I'd have to stick with the D major scale. So, I suppose some of it is curriculum and [sometimes] it's the expectation of* other *people sometimes* on *them… If parents are spending money then they might have higher expectations and they might not know how to gauge progress so they view it in terms of… Well, I don't know, but it's not the same way as I view it anyway.* (Participant 6)

Furthermore, he argues that in the youth work context, the main focus is not on the musical learning per se, but the learning that comes through engaging with other people through music:

> *Or in a school, you have to teach them this in order for them to pass their exam, whereas in youth work, where there's more of a 'social' element in it. Your main objective is not… it's to improve their confidence and to enhance their enjoyment of music. And sometimes your objective is not to teach them music at all, but to get them to work with a group, or to get them talking to someone else. There could be all sorts of different agendas there and I suppose it's going to be my relationship with the youth workers that determines these. So sometimes the youth workers would come to me and say, 'Oh there's this guy and he's not involved in a youth work project and*

he's always on his own and not talking to anybody, but he said he'd be up for coming to a music group'. So then I'd be thinking about who I'd put him with who'd be nice and how they might get on… So that's kind of how it happens. (Participant 6)

Recognition of the value of group and peer-directed musical learning was prominent; this is not surprising given the significance of group work in youth work practice, but it is worth highlighting the extent to which music-making shaped an environment conducive to *doing* youth work. As one participant put it:

The primary objective is to come in here and to work with other people and learn how to behave socially, kind of, in a constructive manner outside of the school context. And it's the same with the art project. They're the same objectives, even though they are totally different art forms. (Participant 6)

A key approach, then, was *'getting people who were at the same level and working with them together [as] a group of peers'* (Participant 1). This participant also extended peer learning beyond the realm of music education in relation to models of youth work outlined above, particularly in relation to the character-building and personal development models:

The mutual learning is really, really important part of it and it's great to see. And young people who mightn't have the best self-image, then when they are sitting down and they're helping someone else write a song and that young person's really grateful for it, it makes a big difference. (Participant 1)

Again, participants highlighted the valuable youth work that takes place through informal music learning, music-making, and creative practices and their impact on young people's personal and social development:

It is very informal. That's why it's so unique and where you learn from your mistakes and whether you've made it right you learn not to do that the next week, then you do that the next week. (Participant 4)

The skills you develop as a musician, you know, beyond your musicality, will be applicable to other situations in your life. I think it's important to remember that it's an artistic enterprise. What they're doing is coming together to be artists together, and that is a different way of accessing each other from often what the school curriculum's designed to do, which is tests, sort of grounding in terms of memory and

stuff and writing things in the right order or you could be able to put those skills together. (Group C)

Another angle that we do here is whatever angst or happiness – whatever they have inside them – to help bring that out and write songs with it and express it that way through music, you know. (Participant 5)

One participant referenced an example of a young person who had performed for the first time and the impact of that experience on her self-confidence and self-identity:

She came down off that stage and she was buzzing. And I met her a few times afterwards and she was just so elated. She couldn't believe that she had done something which she never thought was achievable. She was always holding back, saying: 'I can't do that. I can't do that'. I don't know if she'll ever go on and become a pianist, but you talk about things like identity, self-esteem, confidence – tick, tick, tick. (Participant 1)

2.4 YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Hart's 'ladder of participation' (Fig. 1) helps us to think about where we really are and where we'd like to be in terms of young people's participation in youth services. This ladder was not created to suggest that we have to be 'at the top' rung, but rather, that we ought to be aiming to move beyond the lower rungs of non-participation, and think of ways to genuinely engage children and young people. This is a useful framework for framing the respondents' approach to working *with* young people. For example:

If we can create this environment that is youth-friendly and that has a young person as part of the organising committee that brings credibility […] because they're directing it as opposed to old fellas like me doing it… Before I do a programme I go in and meet the young people and ask them what it is they want and shape the programme around what it is that their interests and needs are. (Participant 2)

Another observed that feedback from young people is important to shaping a positive environment and in shaping future plans:

> *[So] that there's some form of listening for that information to be actually taken and put into the policy on how the organisation's run in the background, and that the other parts of the environment are key to that. So if you create the correct environment with the right attitude and the right people who run it then you're in a position where these buildings would be open and people will want to go to them.* (Participant 1)

In these models, young people are consulted and informed in both the development and implementation of youth work services (Rung 5). Another participant reflected on the development of a strategic plan, which involved consultation with young people in their area, through compiling seven hundred questionnaires '*about what type of stuff young people want to be involved in, what they'd like to see happening in the youth centre, and what were their ideas about how the youth centre could address the problems that's happening for young people out there'* (Participant 3), which again correlates with Rung 5 on Hart's ladder and contributes to the development of evidence-informed practice. In a similar vein, and emphasising a higher level of participation, some of the music projects support youth participation by informing young people that '*this is your youth project… If you get your heads together, if you're able to do it, we'll stand off. But you have to be serious about it'* (Participant 2); therefore young people lead and initiate action (Rung 7). Another participant reflected that:

> *the long-term plan was always that there would be a committee of young people who would take over the running of it so that when it got off the ground as kind of a recording studio of sorts that the young people manage who uses it, when it's used, and if it's charged for or if it's not, or whatever they want to do.* (Participant 1)

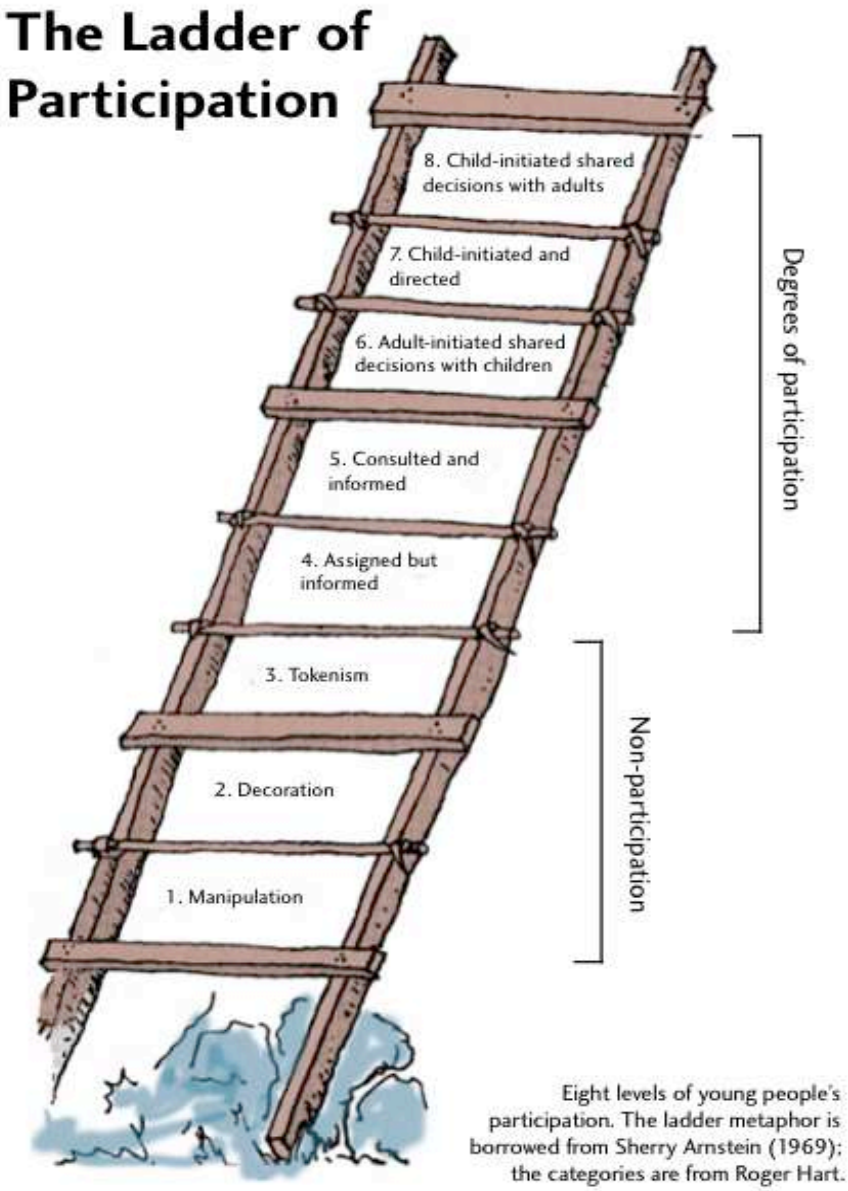


Fig: 1: Hart's 'Ladder of Participation
Source: http://www.whydev.org/moving-beyond-tokenism-to-make-youth-participation-a-reality/

Some participants, however, contested the 'ladder' understanding of youth participation:

> *And there [are] new models of participation that are actually coming out now and being developed, particularly with certain lecturers in Belfast, who are coming up with this…flat model of participation. And what it's saying is… We used to have this traditional model, which was the ladder, and the bottom rungs of the ladder was kind of young people kind of coming in and having a look around and seeing what it is and leaving, to the top level of the ladder where young people are in on the youth*

committee, actively developing services and all this kind of stuff. But what they found was because you're looking at this from a theoretical point of view in a linear way that in some ways you could say that the top level is actually the best model. But the young person who comes in once a week and accesses the service might actually be getting much more out of the service in terms of their own life than the person who might be in here and actually might run the place... So they have this new model of kind of participation, which is about creating the correct environment for young people and making sure the environment is always correct for young people to be involved in. And that means that young people have an opportunity to, in a proper way, give their opinions about what happens. (Participant 1)

Another participant found that the young people began to describe their music project as a 'club' and that this changed his own perception of how and why they were participating – it was not 'just' about musical learning, but also about the social experience of music-making.

That was a turning point actually, to find that they had been calling it 'club', whereas I had been viewing it as music lessons – 'group music lessons'. I don't know what that means exactly*, but it is definitely different. And then you were getting a few people who were coming up and did not participate that much in the music, which also gave it more of that 'club' environment. And that doesn't mean that they didn't enjoy it, or need it, or get something out of it… I don't think we originally had that 'club' ethos in mind, but it just happened and developed into that and more people kept on coming and we had some people who would just 'hang out' and* not *participate, but then other times they* would *participate. And I noticed that this was working, that I didn't have to push them* (Participant 6).

The visualisation of a linear progression through Hart's ladder therefore was found to inadequately represent the diverse range of young people's encounters through youth work. This is an important issue in relation to capturing the qualitative complexities of youth work practice and its impact in the lives of young people. Oftentimes, in measuring 'outcomes', the focus is on 'higher' levels of participation, which is easier to benchmark and measure (for example through enumerating those involved in youth-led committees or in decision-making structures). However, this undermines the deep impact on young people who engage at 'lower' levels in meaningful ways that are not as readily quantifiable.

2.5 TASTE AND CULTURAL POLITICS

An interesting debate emerged within the symposium space on engaging young people through music, which was further unpacked in the discussion groups, relating to questions of musical taste. Conversation in relation to musical expression and taste reflected on elitist perspectives in music education and a prevalent distinction between 'high' (classical/art) and 'low' (popular) cultures. As one participant explained:

> *Why should we try and get young people today to be imitating 19th-century Germans in terms of the musical cultures that are around?… Things move on and sadly, musical education funding doesn't and hasn't really moved on in the last 100 years. So this notion that…we're letting them down somehow by not opening their eyes to this wonderful music that they've been deprived of their whole lives because of their 'poor backgrounds' is a load of absolute tosh. Actually, as a youth worker, if you're starting with where that person is in the world and their perspective in it and working to that perspective, by all means as part of the course of their education and that interaction – your education as well – explore these other areas, explore these other musics, and use that as a frame of reference for where you are and where you want to take your musical expressiveness. And that applies to hip-hop… as much as it does to the Western classical canon. There's absolutely nothing to suggest that we shouldn't deconstruct everything that people have ever written and reproduce it in a completely different manner and using the instruments, the technology, the attitudes, the styles, the access that currently exists. Why isn't everyone doing that? Why are we pushing people towards this kind of replication, this performative/orchestral tradition that is complexly irrelevant?* (Group D)

Debate centred on participants' beliefs about the most appropriate approach to engaging young people through music. One participant identified this tension in relation to the youth worker's role as either 'reactive' or 'proactive' (Group D). On the one hand, there is the question of whether the youth worker's role is educational, that youth workers' responsibility is to *'open up young people to new experiences and new types of music'*. On the other hand, some argued that it more important to meet young people where they are at in relation to musical tastes: *'Well, the context in which I work with young people, you know, they're interested in what they're interested in. And in order for me to fulfil my role as youth worker or whatever in terms of the soft skills and so on, I find that a better way to work with them, a*

better vehicle perhaps' (Group D). Participants' position-taking on this issue provoked intense and animated discussion. One participant related her experiences of trying to engage young people in group work through listening to different kinds of music (jazz and classical music), but found that they were *'closed off to the styles of music that they didn't like… They can be kind of tunnel-visioned into that because of where they come from and what their background is, what their peer group is, and exposing themselves to other genres is slow or may not happen.'* (Group D). Further conversation centred on the question of access, wherein participants noted that young people now have immediate access to a broad range of musical tastes and genres through digital technology and online platforms. As one participant put it:

> *There [are] two levels of access. So there's access in that you can't get it – that was the old sense before we had Internet, that if you didn't physically have it you didn't have it. But the new sense, which is the nth degree of access, is if you don't* understand *it you can't access it. So if you don't know what the different instruments in the classical [genre] are, how it's put together and all that, then you can't hold on to it enough to understand anything; therefore you can't like it. But I think [although there are] two sides, there's a very large middle ground that both meet in.* (Group D)

Participants argued that this tension of how best to engage with young people, with the aim of building interpersonal relationships, is fundamental to youth work practice; that youth workers have to constantly negotiate spaces of engagement with young people. As one person articulated:

> *[It's] the tension of sort of trying to… young people have some new experiences and much that should be pushed and also how much you should live in their world basically. And obviously for a youth worker getting that right's important.* (Group D)

It was argued that the more heavy-handed, directive or formal style might not be the most appropriate or effective, since young people are participating voluntarily (for the most part) and are likely to shy away from more explicit interventionist approaches.

> *This is youth work. This is what we have to do as youth workers all the time. So it's just another example of the kind of skill that we have to get good at. You meet young people where they're at, you listen to them, you befriend them. You do want to push them a little bit. Like if you meet a young person who's smoking weed three times a*

day all week you're going to want to push them on that a bit over time, but it's not going to be the first conversation you have with them. And it's the same with music. If they walk in and they want to listen to Eminem all day, maybe in the back of your mind you're thinking: 'There's an interesting precedence to this music. I could push this guy in some new directions. That'd be good for him.' You're not going to do that the first time you meet him. You're not going to be like: 'Would you like to learn tenor saxophone?' You know, it's just not going to go well. (Group D)

Participants also observed tensions that emerge through the process of 'using' music as a tool for engagement in relation to censorship.

I'm not sure about on-the-ground censorship of young people, like. Some young people start to talk about their reality and start to describe it in ways that it's very uncomfortable for the adults in the room. Should that be censored? I don't know. I'm not saying it should be, but I'd be interested to have that conversation in and around what happens when it comes up. It's uncomfortable for the people in the group. I know I've been involved in stuff that has made people uncomfortable outside of it, because I was going back, saying: 'Look, this is the young people. They own this work. They've done it. It's not maybe what you'd like them to do, but this is their genuine voice.' Try saying that to a funder and they go: 'That's not what we're about.' Which… fair enough. From their side that makes sense too… Obviously you want to get consensus around general pieces, but to apply one solution to it all that's going to be… Like in any situation when it's such diversity that's going to be a major challenge. (Group B)

This issue was recently highlighted in the media in relation to a request by the Limerick City of Culture CEO to change rap lyrics by two Limerick teenagers, because some of their references to the city were not in-keeping with the image that the organisation wanted to portray. This prompted a strongly critical response from the city's artistic community, 'who felt it would amount to a "muzzling" of young people, who were not being paid, and represented the business end of the organisation interfering in the artistic direction of the festival' (Kelly 2014). Yet, as one symposium participant argued, for these young people from Limerick, *'it took pride to say that. It was like "[Limerick] looks a bit rough, but we're doing this". You know, [the organisers] didn't see beyond what was being said'* (Group D). An interesting exchange emerged on the value of censorship as a topic for discussion with

young people that should take place *in the process* of youth work and young people's music-making.

> Participant A: *[C]ensorship should be self-regulated so that they're actually discussing these things. You know, I don't care about the language. That's an issue for the audience. If the audience is below a certain age then they need to make the decision to 'beep' that out. But the contextualisation of, you know, saying a certain thing… Well, now there's the empathy of discussing it as a group as to whether it's appropriate or not.*
>
> Participant B: *And it happens in dialogue and it happens based on a relation that you're building. We found this kind of censorship thing to be a really good ground for, like, leadership development. So if my young leaders are in the studio with a rapper and he's talking about he's going to cut somebody's head off and dance in their blood or something - I mean, we've heard it all, right? They're going to not know 100% exactly how to deal with that situation. That's good. That's great that they don't know how to do it. That brings about a rich opportunity for us to discuss it afterwards. 'Did you feel like you needed to stop him when he said that? Why didn't you? Was it the right thing to do? How are you going to follow that up next time you see him? Are we going to publish this on [our organisation's] website? No.' You know, there's all sorts of wonderful questions that come out of those experiences, and if we just put a sign on the wall that says: 'These are the following things you're not allowed to say while you're rapping in the street…'*
>
> Participant A: *Well, the other thing is it's a challenge of... It's a call to arms. It's a challenge for them to find a more appropriate way of expressing themselves. So it means studying the language a bit more to find a way of phrasing the same thing. So they become a bit more eloquent… So the censorship thing… I think it doesn't need to be censored by us. It's for them to talk or to discuss what their subject matter is.* (Group D)

Further to the character-building model of youth work, whilst some were more uncomfortable with the notion of 'self-regulation', others argued that this was fundamental to the process of 'growing up'. As one participant argued:

Isn't that a development challenge for an adolescent anyway? Like that's one of the big things you're trying to do in your adolescence is learn[ing] how to self-regulate. So we can help them do that. We're helping them into the adult world – if it's true self-regulation, if it's not self-censorship. (Group D)

Another commented on the value of group work, whereby young people learn how to negotiate shifting power relations within the group:

And the other thing of self-regulation – of the group, as opposed to the person – is the fact that if the 'loud mouth' of the group who's always trying to thinking of smart things to say or trip someone else up or whatever is the weak link in the band or whatever… Then, I've noticed that in workshops they become the shrinking violet and then act up or act out. Ways I've had of dealing with it would be like put them in charge even though they're the 'weak link'. And now they're self-regulating and they're helping regulate the rest of the people because they're the boss, because outside of it they're the boss, you know. So there's weird dynamics that can be played with, but yeah, I didn't… Like you were saying, I didn't cringe when that was coming up like [one of the symposium participants] did. I thought these are positive learning curves. (Group D)

Music-making was identified as a sensitive space of identity work for young people, since it is closely intertwined with ideas of 'cool'. This raises an interesting question about the appropriation of subcultures as rebellious sites into youth work (for example, hip-hop and graffiti), whereby in this process, subcultural style becomes mainstreamed and thereby loses its attraction. There are risks, then, in over-regulating culture through its appropriation. As one participant argued

I know it's sort of something that's kind of popular around the discussion and debate around hip-hop and things, which is the sort of misogyny and so on with some of the lyrics…but isn't the very nature of what makes music and youth culture attractive some element of threat or danger or rebellion, or …transgression. And by its very nature then that's… Yes, on an intellectual level you can see where this is offensive and so on, but equally that carries within it the very thing that attracts young people to using it in the first place. (Group D)

One participant highlighted the significance of maintaining music's 'edginess', which is also associated with quality of musical outcomes. That is, it is important to avoid a potential outcome whereby we *'stereotype a kind of a "youth music" genre':*

> *But there definitely could be over time a certain kind of hip-hop [for example] that you know is produced in a youth music studio, and if teenagers pick up on that they'll never come back to youth music studios. We do need to be careful that the music that we create is relevant in the real world of music and isn't instantly recognised as some 'Sesame Street' version of it.* (Group D)

Participants also identified the complex implications of stereotyping and labelling young people through the language of 'risk' or 'social disadvantage'. One participant highlighted the tendency within policy-making to reify communities as disadvantaged, deprived and therefore problematic, which does not reflect the lived experiences of people within these communities:

> *It doesn't always have to be doom and gloom. I mean, you know yourselves the myriad of positive things that are happening in so-called 'deprived' areas, the good people, the energy… It annoys me… Naturally enough, people are screaming for social justice, this, that and the other thing, but, you know, you must try and celebrate… You know, I come from Ballyphehane. There are lots of good things happening in Ballyphehane. They're not fighting every night outside the community centre. You know what I mean? ...I'm all about giving young people a bit of pride.* (Group D)

Another argued that:

> *And you know what's funny as well is in these 'disadvantaged' areas, those living in there don't see their area as disadvantaged and they don't call themselves 'disadvantaged'. And next thing they come out of the social bubble that is their area and they hear: 'Oh, sure, Farranree is disadvantaged. The Glen is disadvantaged.' They're like: 'Err…' Because [it was only] when I went back [to college] and did my degree, that, you know, the social policies and all the terminologies started coming in and I was, like, [living in so-called 'disadvantaged areas' in Cork and] never in my whole existence did I ever hear the word 'disadvantaged' or was it used in conversation or was it mentioned. And then all of a sudden it's like: 'Those poor kids*

up there are disadvantaged.' You're like: 'Hang on one minute!' Because the education and support that they get in schools - you know, because they're the DEIS areas they get so much money allocated – there's so much more resources. You've all the youth clubs in these disadvantaged areas, so the young people in those areas have a lot more access to youth workers and youth clubs and all these kinds of things. So how can they see themselves as disadvantaged when all these things are put in place and they just get on with it? It's when you're outside looking in that you start using the terminology and that you kind of say these people are disadvantaged because... But, I mean, if you look at a middle class area that wouldn't have youth clubs and there's young people that don't have anywhere to go, would you not say they're at a disadvantage?... And if they are getting music lessons it might be individual music lessons – they go to their lessons and they come home to study. There's no social aspect to it. (Group D)

Other participants argued that music-making is a site wherein these processes can be highlighted. As one participant argued:

I think there's an opportunity for youth workers in the same way there is for these kind of music workers that we fund to use those sites and those opportunities as points of resistance against our dominant cultural structures, dominant cultural forms. Going back to that music thing that we were talking about right at the start, by actually going on the philosophy of it's not the same as formal education but the philosophy of being equals and recognising that these communities have assets rather than deficits is a point that's a really important political point of resistance. Whether that's done through the musical cultures that exist within those communities - that are hugely varied anyway… So even if it's just this stereotypical youth music of pop or hip-hop or rock, the tastes and identities that those young people have will be hugely different from each other. So that fabric is already very rich even if from an outsider's view it's not looking like it's celebrating enough musical diversity or cultures or high cultures or whatever. And actually youth workers are the ones that are going in at these points, working with young people in a reciprocal way to resist these kind of dominant structures and challenge them and reveal them. I think that's a point of power that's quite subtle in some cases and it's often overlooked and not really regarded as being as powerful as it is, I think. (Group D)

2.6 RESOURCES

The idea of 'resources' was conceived in two main ways:

a. Physical resources: This includes references to the spaces and places of music-making and the availability of a safe, high quality, and well-resourced building, which contains the instruments and equipment necessary for learning, practicing, performing and producing music.
b. Human resources: This includes the availability of highly skilled staff, ideally with a youth work professional background and/or high levels of youth work experience and a range of musical skills.

Delivering good quality music projects in youth work depends on the availability of good music facilities. All of the projects had invested in capacity-building in that sense, buying instruments that could be made easily accessible (i.e. having instruments 'lying about' in a more casual way), developing recording facilities, developing performance spaces within the project building itself, access to good audio-visual recording equipment, and access to music software, etc.

In terms of human resources, this was significant in a number of ways. First, it was recognised as important that staff and/or volunteers have good youth work skills. Participants were keen to emphasise that music tutors should, ideally, undertake youth work training at some level, since the values and desired outcomes in youth work were somewhat different to the values and desired outcomes in music education. This is related to participants' perceptions of 'quality' in music-oriented youth work:

> *We [aim to] have the right people working with young people at the right time. And that's very important. So that the people who are supervising in the youth café would have some basic level of youth work training. So if we take in any volunteer or any TÚS worker like that we run them through a basic introduction to youth work programme here, which is a couple of hours of training with and delivering by myself and it's just basically getting them used to the things that are going to happen.* (Participant 3)

This indicates a sense of professional identity and a commitment to ensuring quality youth work interventions in engaging with young people through emphasising the specificity of youth work practice, skills, and professional training (Jenkinson, 2013).

Second, participants emphasises the value of having a range of musical skills within the core staff group and amongst volunteers. As one participant observed:

> *There wouldn't be that many youth workers who'd be skilled in the area of music too. They'd be able to give it a go. I suppose it's great to kind of excite the interest, but to actually move it forward you need maybe some particular skills around it. I'm open to be challenged on that, but I suppose if you kick a football it doesn't mean you're a footballer, so to speak.* (Participant 2)

Another drew on a diversity of music skills in his practice:

> *I suppose I teach bits of everything. It would really depend on the person. It took me a while to develop a strategy. We have lots of different instruments here…and I'd be one of those musicians who plays a bit of everything. I don't necessarily play everything well but I do play lots of different things. So, I suppose they are good skills to have in this sort of situation. If someone came in and wanted to play guitar, I could accommodate that, or if someone else wanted to play drums, I could accommodate that too.* (Participant 6)

This desire to 'fit' personnel to music-oriented youth work practice was evident in the recruitment of all staff, both 'professional' and 'voluntary' (notwithstanding these as fuzzy categories):

> *And then one of the things just in terms of anybody who's coming in here to deliver any programme, be it personal development, be it music or anything else, we like to see them have some sort of musical background.* (Participant 3)

In relation to staff skills, however, it was noted that there is an element of 'chance' in getting the right people to come on board, who have high quality music education skills.

> *If there wasn't somebody musical in the place there would be difficulty. And we've been very, very lucky in the fact that we've had people… The workers that we get from TÚS, some of them have been very musically gifted. And, like, it's amazing. This town is just the weirdest place in the world. We've looked for a TÚS worker and someone comes in and says: 'Oh yeah, I'm actually lead singer in a band and we're very successful and we play Oxegen and Electric Picnic and all this kind of stuff', next to a young person who's sitting here and going: 'This is fantastic'. This is*

exactly the people you want to be connected young people up with, you know, and it's absolutely amazing… (Participant 3)

Third, participants were keen to emphasise capacity-building through young people themselves and through local members of the community/local volunteers; as young people progressed through the youth projects, the ideal was for them to undertake training in youth leadership. Similarly, the ideal was for local volunteers to undertake training. In that way, the projects become sustainable since they are carried into the future by the community itself.

I always think for there to be any longevity of any programme or anything we do here the skills have to be in the young people. Like we've learned from the past you can have a highly-skilled staff member, but they go. Where has it gone? So it's like any training that we access now we're like okay, get an old or young person on that, get them trained up. So then the skill stays in the community then no matter what. (Participant 1)

And it just helps with the work [if young people see themselves as stakeholders]. I mean, they stay far more engaged. They own it; it becomes theirs. And the idea then is to try and leave some sort of legacy that you can walk away from and that can continue. So it's about upskilling them to be able to continue it for themselves or in other cases to pass on those skills within the project as peer educators or junior leaders as well. (Participant 2)

Generally they keep coming back until they're about 19 years of age and then they often become junior leaders. I've a few people who are really into it and they're into their 20s. I'd still have them up on Tuesday evenings but I'd view them as helpers or mentors for the younger teenagers. And it is brilliant. The more positive role models you have in this kind of work, the better. (Participant 6)

Participants also hoped for a more collaborative approach between youth work services and music education providers in the interests of maximising resources through shared planning. Some availed of other community-based and educational resources and found this collaborative approach enhanced and supported the young people's learning:

That's why we have volunteers and students – we're always linking in with different community and college settings. We had School of Music students come up here with cellos and it's just amazing to have our gang jamming with cellos. It's nice that they

get to do that – they might not ever have even seen a cello before, so it's nice for them to mix with other community groups. (Participant 6)

The problem of adequate resourcing is intertwined with concerns about the value that is placed upon music-oriented youth work. As one participant stated:

> *I have a soundtrack of my life through music. I suppose I'd put massive value on it because I see the benefits from what I've achieved in my own life and gone through it. I like to create a situation where that gift can be passed on. But it's not a God-given gift; it's a gift you develop in yourself given the opportunity. But because of the barriers that are there – like, is it affordable, is it available, is it accessible? Removing these barriers is key.* (Group E)

Furthermore, one participant outlined the 'planned' processes underpinning youth work practice:

> *The way the system works for our programmes is you have a programme proposal. You then have your implementation plan. You then deliver the plan out. You have the young people's feedback in terms of an evaluation form and then you have the final part, which is your final report. And the final report is done by the tutor and includes the comments from the young people, and it's only ever signed off by myself, after we have a final meeting on the programme. So basically what that system does is kind of ring-fences the fact that the young people are very much at the centre of it and that one of the questions in both the young people's and the tutor's questionnaires would be: 'Having done this course what would be the next step?' And the tutor would be asked: 'Looking at the whole group of young people that you had what would be the next progression routes of these young people?'* (Participant 3)

In this respect, programmes are being devised, implemented and evaluated in ways that indicate the increasing importance of evidence-based practice.

2.7 EVIDENCING THE VALUE OF MUSIC-ORIENTED YOUTH WORK

Individual interviewees and symposium participants identified external policy developments and funding cuts in the context of austerity as a deepening threat to the sustainability of music-centred youth work projects.

> *I suppose that's what jumped out at me: the vulnerability. [There's] such great work happening but it's still so vulnerable.* (Group A)

Participants struggled with narrow measurements of 'success'. For example, one participant stated that:

> *Success is when somebody is getting joy out of their participation in music or if their participation in the music group has really helped them to socially interact or the confidence to do something else…* Or, *when I feel that somebody who's coming up here has been engaged in positivity as opposed to negativity, which they might have encountered had they been somewhere else -wherever they might have been if they weren't here. It's not my goal to get them into further study in music. That wouldn't necessarily be my objective – that's really up to them. I'd talk to them about it and would be delighted if they did, but I'd be just as happy if they could sit around a campfire and play a few songs and that might give them as much of a link…* (Participant 6)

The formal education approach was viewed as more amenable to measurement and more easily quantifiable. It was suggested that capturing the nuances of the informal approach in ways that can be documented and understood by stakeholders becomes quite challenging, which potentially results in a resourcing problem.

> *You can give people instruments but you rely on that informal [approach]. The distinctions we always work with is between formal music education and informal music education, where people are sitting teaching themselves either by listening to records or just jamming with friends, making a noise and hoping it goes somewhere. And then there's the space in between, which is often overlooked, […] which is non-formal. You know, the labels maybe don't matter [although I think] that really they do matter… But it's recognising and valuing and making visible the highly skilled and need-for-resourced aspect of your employee that's able to go out and get these guys involved and you being able to say: 'Well, we're not able to get you a guitar at the*

moment, but come in and do this instead or as well'. Because it is seen as quite outside the formal and different from how musicians teach themselves, I don't think it's given the value it deserves, which is possibly why you don't get the funding as much as you would like. (Group C)

Allied to this was a concern about how best to evidence the impact of musical participation in the lives of young people. The importance of developing a meaningful assessment of the value of music-making and a comprehensive evidence base through which to articulate its value and to defend youth work services against further funding cuts was identified as a key priority.

The challenge comes more in formalising an informal activity. And I'm not against that. I totally get it. I understand why we should report outcomes and things like that. Knowing myself and knowing my project I think it's totally fundable and I think it's totally valuable, but I can understand why a national funder or a government agency would look at me and say: 'Prove it.' I get that. I think that's legitimate. If they're going to throw thousands of euros at something they want to know that it's getting results. But that's a real challenge. How do you exactly capture the value of what you do? How do you explain it? And even just practically how do you even find time? ...I do it, but to be honest I do a pretty lousy job of it because I just don't have time. So to do a really good one [and] to really do a good job of that I'd probably have to clear my schedule for two or three weeks. And I just don't have it. I don't have two or three hours. So to find time to really do the good work, to really get underneath what's happening, that's a funding issue. Nobody's paying enough to do all the work as well as step back from the work and reflect on it. So finding time to really do the work. I get the value of it, but it is a big challenge. (Group B)

What struck me in [Douglas Lonie's] talk was he was so well able to articulate it and so well able to make the links between the psychology and the actual music itself and the transformative affect for young people. And, I mean, I think if we were all as well able to articulate that element of the work that we do it would be much easier to sell. (Group A)

You're so busy doing the work that you're not really thinking about what the background or the actual outcome of it is going to be. Even though you have an intrinsic knowledge about it, an intrinsic instinct, it isn't as easy to kind of say:

'Okay, we did X and what happened was A, B and C.' And I think that kind of challenge… And I suppose it links back to the collaboration and the language of it really, doesn't it? (Group A)

Participants struggled in devising evaluative frameworks that deliver evidence of impact according to the increasingly managerial language of 'outcomes' and 'outputs', which they found, typifies the kinds of quantitative information that funders seek. In practice, participants argued, this managerialist language imposes an obdurate and unhelpful distinction between 'process' and 'product'. This binary is reflected in the often very different concepts that practitioners and funders use in relation to outcomes. The various models that are used for reporting 'outcomes' also reveal divergent perspectives on the role of youth work:

But people are coming at it from different aspects. How a worker or an organisation or funder values or sees music education and youth work can be on a paradigm completely opposite. [Is it about] get[ting] them off the street or actually empower[ing] them to go out and to talk about the community? (Group B)

I think the biggest thing that would make the biggest difference in terms of being able to make the case, being able to 'market' this work, is a shift in the perception of evaluation and this 'outcomes' approach and why funders ask for certain types of information, or just a change in the perception of what evaluation is for *in a project. Because at the moment as soon as I speak to a practitioner I can speak to them on their own terms and have a conversation with them about their work and they'll tell me about the amazing stuff that they do and the highly complex nature of it… I don't know if it's a terminology thing or how it will happen, but until that's shifted, I think… I think it has to be bottom up in that sense, with people working at youth levels trying to make it happen. There's something about how evaluation is perceived and enacted with project work and on the sort of ground level that I think isn't helping anyone and there's probably space there for that to be changed and made a bit better.* (Group E)

Participants also commented that this managerial language is ill-equipped to capture the multidimensional meanings of music-making in young people's lives.

[S]ometimes [an] argument can be used by people as a way of saying: 'Well, the musical part of it's not that important.' But that's because it's part of a bigger

discourse, that doesn't actually value music-making itself and the value of that in the human experience. I think that's partly the issue here. And I would have thought that what might be communicated out is that this relationship between youth work and music needs to explore that and articulate that narrative quite clearly and to do that in a way then that embraces all of the things that are already going on. Because clearly there is a lot going on. It isn't as mono-genre as maybe the public perception of it might be. (Group E)

And the problem, I think – one of the problems – is that both those constituencies – youth work and music – or sort of arts, shall we say, generally – have simply never been taken seriously by policy-makers in terms of their importance. So right away you're talking about two constituencies that are vulnerable, are always looking over their shoulder for funding, or always having to jump through hoops to justify that. (Group A)

Some participants suggested that undervaluing musical participation was connected to perceptions of musicality as innate, and often conceptualised in association with (a) 'Irishness' or (b) 'giftedness'. Participants were frustrated with the lack of acknowledgement of musicality as a skill that is developed through years of practice.

I think another problem with getting funding in this country is the fact that we feel it's part of our culture so much that we are musical that… It's not that we look down at it but we just take it as being commonplace. So part of the reason why somebody – a major artist in this country – we just treat them like someone down the street, we have that humility but it seems true to the fact that anyone… 'Ah, sure, anyone can be a musician'. So we just accept it as being the norm. Like we've more musicians per capita in this country than anywhere else in the world, so we just take it as commonplace, whereas other countries would invest heavily in this as a cultural endeavour. So I can see that as being an issue with getting funding in this country in particular. (Group A)

The tensions associated with defining outcomes also related to the theme of 'formal' and 'informal' approaches.

[A lot of discussion today] touched on the notion of hard skills and soft skills and this kind of thing. I mean, clearly the East Cork [Music] Project was interesting when he

was going through the sort of various aspects of what they do. Then at the end sort of came the clarification of having a FETAC[8] kind of identity as well, which was kind of necessary. I understand completely why that's there in terms of funding and so on, but again it sort of raises this thing with young people and working with young people: does music have to be ostensibly a vehicle by which you can then identify harder skills like preparation and go[ing] back into education or social skills development or whatever, or can it simply exist as a creative act in itself, and if so, are there any tensions there? (Group A)

Because that's the problem. The funders are coming saying: 'Give us a course.' And if you look at [the language] – 'FETAC Level 4'. I don't know what that is, but that makes sense to funders – 'We'll have that.' And the young people are saying: 'This is like school. I don't really want to do that.' (Group B)

Music's definitely one of the things that I don't think should be measured. I think you should have it and really enjoy it, learn from it, and be part of it and then do. This is why I was saying… Then go and do your 'A' Levels, Leaving Cert and all that sort of stuff - people understanding. Let your music be a part of that. (Group B)

A very positive outcome of the symposium was the reaffirmation that came through meeting with like-minded practitioners who are facing similar challenges and asking similar questions about their practice. Cross-disciplinary connections also emerged; one of the symposium participants who is a community music practitioner stated that *'I feel like we'd have very similar outcomes and goals but I wouldn't have necessarily associated myself with youth work'* (Group B). Participants recognised the value of developing better collaborative links between youth work and music education practitioners and researchers. This was posited as potentially beneficial in developing new evaluative frameworks and in challenging the predominance of managerialist language within current assessment models.

I'm thinking that part of the answer might be that we should work together more. It feels that there are a lot of people working in their own little silo trying to understand their own work and asking their own young people what works and what doesn't, and

[8] FETAC (the Further Education and Training Awards Council) is a former statutory awarding body for further education in Ireland. Its functions have been passed to the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). In the National Framework of Qualifications, FETAC awards are represented at levels 1-6. (See http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)

> *then there also seems to be the stuff nationally we're they're kind of like… You know, in the Department they say: 'Well, these seven things work. Please do these seven things.' But there's a lot of room in between, right? There's a lot of mid-level stuff where on the ground makes sense to people on the ground, policy level makes sense to people making policy, but there's like nothing in between – or at least if there is I'm not really in touch with that. But if we work together… Like me and [another participant], we're probably doing pretty similar work, but we never met each other until this morning.* (Group B)

However, some questioned whether the current funding models pit practitioners against each other in forcing them to compete for resources and suggested that this may act as a barrier to collaboration.

3 FUTURE RESEARCH

We hope that this report has captured, to some degree, the richness and vibrancy of discussion, and the high levels of energy and enthusiasm that contributed to the success of the 'Intersections' event. Through sharing their experiences and reflections, participants constructed the worlds of youth work and young people's musical participation as creative, productive and resilient spaces. A key theme that emerged throughout the day was the importance of documenting and articulating the epistemological, ideological and practical issues associated with designing, developing, delivering and evaluating music-oriented youth work services. This indicates a demand and a desire on the part of practitioners and researchers to engage and expand on evidence-based practice, with the aim of better understanding, conceptualizing, implementing and defending music-centred youth work. Furthermore, this has implications for other creative approaches in youth work practice and youth work as a profession and/or voluntary enterprise.

This research, then, is a modest contribution towards that goal. However, this is a clearly under-researched area, both in the Irish context and beyond. There are indications that the expansion of Music Generation will encourage practitioners to engage in research that extends our understandings of the meanings of musical participation for young people. We suggest however, that it is important in relation to youth work's professional identity that future research will consider young people's musical learning and music-making from an

explicitly youth work perspective. Given the oftentimes overlapping and complementary aims and approaches that are evident in youth work and music education, particularly in relation to informal music learning, it is suggested that a more collaborative research approach would be highly productive. It is the aim of the research partners to continue to develop this research material. This report presents preliminary findings, but also presents opportunities for further expansion of the research and the research field. Documenting these complex ideas and processes is challenging and we look forward to developing further collaborative links with practitioners (including young people themselves) who are keen to evidence their practices through a reflexive approach that incorporates the multidimensional qualities of music-making in the lives of young people. It is also critical to develop methods through which to better articulate – to ourselves, to each other, and to policy-makers, funders and stakeholders – the importance of what takes place in these worlds of youth music-making. And, after all, young people – along with the youth workers, music tutors, educators, volunteers, families and communities that are involved in creating music and supporting music-making through their collective enterprise – deserve nothing less.

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