

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

*We Made This Song.*

**The Group Song Writing Processes  
of Three Adolescent Rock Bands**

by Vicki Thorpe

A thesis  
submitted to the New Zealand School of Music  
in the fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Music  
in History and Literature of Music

New Zealand School of Music

2007

## Abstract

In garages, practice rooms and classrooms, young people are composing music in rock and pop bands; engaged in working together in the shared enterprise of group music making. This study aims to contribute to scholarly knowledge through describing, analysing and interpreting the collaborative compositional processes (song writing) of three teenage rock bands. A theoretical model was developed and is applied to an analysis of the compositional processes of each group. Communication within each of the bands is analysed in terms of musical, non-verbal and verbal communication. The teaching and cooperative learning that occurred within each of the bands is presented, and each band is described in terms of a *community of practice*. An analysis of the compositional processes reveals that the three bands employed similar methods to generate ideas and construct their songs. However, when the data are viewed from a number of other theoretical perspectives, it is clear that two of the bands composed collaboratively, working together within mutually supportive, highly focussed and respectful communities; and that the third band's songs were the work of a single composer, achieved through the cooperation and participation of the other band members. The young people in all three bands were highly engaged in self-directed music learning, finding meaning and identity in the process.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Dr Richard Hardie, my thesis supervisor, for his expertise, patience and enthusiastic support of this project. I am grateful to Professor Janice Wearmouth for assisting me in exploring theoretical perspectives, and for very timely advice and feedback. Thanks to Dorothy Buchanan, Merryn Dunmill, Mark Stone, Julian Ward and Susan Kaiser for their time, advice and expertise. I am grateful to the VUW College of Education for awarding me the grants that helped make the writing of this work possible, and to Warren Butcher for his invaluable advice and technical support in managing the video data. I would also like to thank the principals and teachers of the schools I worked in during this research for their willingness to allow me access to their students and their classrooms.

I am grateful to Julie Crosland and Karen Coulton for their encouragement, proof reading skills, access to their libraries and for their wonderful, warm hospitality, and also to Andrea Milligan, Kathryn Smith and my parents. Special thanks go to my partner Philip Aitken for his encouragement, support, tolerance and love while writing this work.

Finally, I would like to thank the young musicians who participated in this project. They are at its heart, and I am very grateful for their openness, friendliness, and tolerance of my presence while they were working.

To my friend Kathryn Smith

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Playing and composing in a band .....	1
1.2 Formulation of the research questions .....	2
1.3 Theoretical Perspectives .....	3
1.3.1 The Creative Process and Models of Composing .....	3
1.3.2 Other theoretical perspectives .....	4
1.4 Method of enquiry .....	5
1.5 A brief history of the teaching and assessment of composition at senior level in New Zealand secondary schools .....	6
1.5.1 Composition and assessment in New Zealand schools 1904 to 1993 ...	6
1.5.2 Standards-based assessment 1995 – 2007 .....	9
1.5.3 Popular and contemporary music making outside of the classroom....	12
1.6 Summary .....	15
<b>Chapter 2 Review of Literature .....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	16
2.2 The individual compositional processes of children and adolescents at school .....	17
2.2.1 Early studies (1986 – 1989) .....	17
2.2.2 More recent studies (1998 – 2004) .....	21
2.3 Group Composing by Children and Adolescents at School .....	26
2.4 Adolescents Playing and Composing Popular Music Outside of School ...	35
2.5 Formal and informal music learning .....	40
2.6 Theories of social learning .....	42
2.6.1 Socio-cultural Learning Theories and <i>Communities of Practice</i> .....	43
2.6.2 Cooperative Learning Theory and <i>Positive Interdependence</i> .....	45
2.7 Summary .....	48
<b>Chapter 3 Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>49</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	49
3.2 Qualitative Research .....	49
3.3 Case Study Research methodology .....	51
3.4 Size and scope of the study .....	53
3.5 My stance as a researcher .....	55
3.6 Method of Enquiry .....	57
3.6.1 Data .....	57
3.6.2 Collecting the data and ethical considerations .....	58
3.6.3 Timeframe .....	62
3.6.4 Summary of data collected .....	64
3.6.5 Limitations of the data .....	64
3.7 Data Analysis Methodology .....	66
3.7.1 Formulation of the theoretical model of collaborative composition ...	66
3.7.2 Creating the theoretical model .....	67
3.7.3 Modification of the theoretical model during analysis .....	71
3.7.4 Coding and graphing the data .....	74
3.7.5 Other Kinds of Data Analysis .....	76
3.7.6 Validity .....	77
3.8 Summary .....	78

<b>Chapter 4 Case studies</b> .....	<b>79</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	79
4.2 Case study: <i>Junior</i> .....	79
4.2.1 Set-up.....	80
4.2.2 Songs worked on during the observations .....	81
4.2.3 Applying compositional model to the data: Phase 1 .....	82
4.2.4 Applying the compositional model: Phase 2 .....	84
4.3 Case Study: <i>Senior</i> .....	86
4.3.1 Set-up.....	87
4.3.2 Songs worked on during the observations .....	88
4.3.3 Applying the compositional model to the data: Phase 1.....	89
4.3.4 Applying the compositional model to the data: Phase 2.....	91
4.4 Case Study: <i>Boys</i> .....	93
4.4.1 Background to the data .....	93
4.4.2 Set-up.....	94
4.5 Songs worked on during the observations .....	95
4.5.1 Applying the theoretical model to the data: Phase 1 .....	95
4.6 Applying the theoretical model to the data: Phase 2 .....	97
4.7 Analysis of Observation 2 data.....	98
4.8 The theoretical model of collaborative composition and <i>Boys</i> .....	100
4.9 Comparing the analysed data across the three cases .....	101
4.9.1 The early stages in the composition of a song .....	101
4.9.2 The middle stages of a song's composition .....	103
4.9.3 Comparing the end of a song's composition with how it began .....	104
4.9.4 Time spent in phases and the act of creativity .....	106
4.9.5 Lyrics and vocal lines.....	107
4.10 Summary .....	110
<b>Chapter 5 Interpretative Findings</b> .....	<b>111</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	111
5.2. Communication .....	111
5.2.1 Verbal communication .....	112
5.2.2 Musical and Gestural Communication .....	116
5.3 Teaching and Learning .....	119
5.3.1 <i>Senior</i> .....	119
5.3.2 Teaching and Learning: <i>Junior</i> .....	123
5.4 Teaching and Learning: <i>Boys</i> .....	128
5.5 Ownership of the compositions .....	130
5.6 Summary .....	131
<b>Chapter 6 Conclusion</b> .....	<b>133</b>
6.1. The compositional processes of <i>Senior</i> , <i>Junior</i> and <i>Boys</i> .....	133
6.2 Informal and formal music learning .....	137
6.2.1 Conditions needed to support collaborative rock bands .....	138
6.3 The formal assessment of collaborative composition .....	141
6.4 Discussion.....	144
Bibliography .....	146

## Appendices

Appendix A: NCEA Music/ Arts Related Standards Levels 1-4 .....	152
Appendix B: Graphed data of <i>Junior's</i> Composing Processes.....	157
Appendix C: Graphed data of <i>Senior's</i> Composing Processes .....	160
Appendix D: Graphed data of <i>Boys' Composing Processes</i> .....	163
Appendix E: Participant Questionnaire.....	165
Appendix F: Interview Questions .....	170
Appendix G: Letters of Introduction and Information .....	174
Appendix H: Consent Forms.....	177

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Webster's model of creativity in music.....	19
Figure 2.2: Burnard and Younker's model of creative thinking in music .....	22
Figure 2.3: McGillen and McMillan's model of group composing.....	34
Figure 3.1: The theoretical model prior to data analysis .....	70
Figure 3.2 Example of the coding and analysis chart.....	71
Figure 3.3: The theoretical model modified in response to the data analysis ...	73
Figure 3.4: Graphing the coded data .....	75
Figure 3.5: Predicted movement through the stages over time .....	76
Figure 4.1: <i>Junior</i> positions when working together.....	81
Figure 4.2: <i>Junior</i> jamming to an idea by Reese, Observation 2 .....	84
Figure 4.3: Phase 2 compositional stages of <i>Suicidal Love</i> , Observation 2.....	85
Figure 4.4: Set up-for <i>Senior</i> .....	87
Figure 4.5: Phase 1 compositional stages.....	89
Figure 4.6: The song is going nowhere .....	92
Figure 4.7: The set-up of <i>Boys</i> during Observation 1.....	94
Figure 4.8: Phase 1 stages of <i>Cross the Line</i> .....	96
Figure 4.9: The middle of Observation 2 .....	99
Figure 4.10: Comparing the middle of a song's composition .....	104
Figure 4.11: Comparing early Phase 1 with late Phase 2 stages ( <i>Senior</i> ) .....	105

## List of Tables

Table 1: Burnard and Younker's composing pathways .....	23
Table 2: Fautley's model of group composing .....	31
Table 3: Differences between formal and informal music learning.....	40
Table 4: Typology of Attributes for the selection of cases.....	55
Table 5: Ten group compositional stages.....	69
Table 6: <i>Junior's</i> songs .....	82
Table 7: <i>Senior's</i> songs .....	88
Table 8: <i>Boys' songs</i> .....	95



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Playing and composing in a band

In countless garages, practice rooms and classrooms, young people are composing music in rock and pop bands. They are engaged in working together in a shared enterprise of group music making where the playing of their own original material validates them as authentic rock or pop performers. Until recently the music learning associated with contemporary genres has been largely overlooked by music education researchers.<sup>1</sup> However, in the last few years an increased focus upon students' engagement in learning and the recognition of the necessity of providing today's young people with authentic learning contexts has music educationists questioning why it is that many teenagers are more interested in playing and composing in a rock band than engaging with what is being offered in their high school music classrooms. Within the New Zealand education system a series of radical reforms in recent years has seen an increased recognition of the validity of contemporary music making, supported by a number of external sources. Today, as never before, students are playing and composing within contemporary genres as part of their schoolwork. This study aims to describe, analyse and interpret the collaborative compositional processes (song writing) of three teenage rock bands.

---

<sup>1</sup> Patricia Shehan Campbell, 'Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting: The Musical Development of Young Rock Musicians', *Research Studies in Music Education*, Vol.4, 1995, pp.12-20.

## 1.2 Formulation of the research questions

In the course of working with high school music teachers and their students as an in-service professional development facilitator in secondary music education, I observed, over a number of years, that the collaboratively composing rock band exists both inside and outside of school structures. I also observed that the members of these bands are highly engaged in their song writing and work hard in their own time on compositions that do not “count” towards their formal qualifications. At the same time a teacher whose senior students were composing almost exclusively in rock or pop bands asked me to help him locate a unit standard which assessed group composition. We soon realised that no such unit standard exists, although some, as explained below, do track the process of being a performer in a group. Initially I intended that my study would investigate how one might assess an individual’s contribution, in a rock band, to a collaboratively composed work. However, I soon realised that there was no literature examining how these songs were composed. Although there are a few studies that examine various aspects of the interactions within a rock band, no-one to date has published research that looks at how young people write songs together in bands. Therefore, my research question changed from:

- How might collaborative composing be assessed?

To:

1. How are songs composed collaboratively within a teenage rock band?

There are a few studies which have provided theoretical models for group composing in other musical contexts and these have been the starting point for the formulation of a theoretical model whereby the collaborative creative process can be described and analysed. This has led to the formulation of a second question:

2. Can a theoretical model be used to identify and describe how songs are composed within a group?

The application of the theoretical model to the first question then led to the formulation of a third and fourth question, looking more deeply into the ways in which the members of bands react and interact with each other:

3. How do the members of a group interact when composing together?
4. Do group members learn from each other and, if so, how does this occur?

### **1.3 Theoretical Perspectives**

#### **1.3.1 The Creative Process and Models of Composing**

An examination of literature involving the composition of young people will show that there is a paucity of research into the collaborative compositional process. None of the studies discussed in the next chapter is from New Zealand. Although there is much that can be learned from studies that are similar, this current study is a socio-musical investigation that is new. Most studies of children and young people's compositional processes are founded upon theories and

models of the creative process, and this theoretical perspective is discussed at length in Chapter 2. This discussion then informs the formulation of the theoretical model, outlined in detail in Chapter 4. Therefore, a model of collaborative composition has been formulated, informed by theories of creativity and the work of other music education researchers, but primarily influenced by the research as it progressed. Group compositional practices will be described and analysed in relation to this model in Chapters 5 and 6.

### **1.3.2 Other theoretical perspectives**

The intention of this research is not only to describe the musical process of collaborative composing, but also to show how the interactions amongst and between the members of each band are integral to the group's song writing processes and music learning. Therefore, in addition to applying the data to a theoretical model of collaborative composition, interactions within each band are analysed from two other perspectives:

- Communication (verbal, musical and non-verbal/gestural)

and

- Socio-cultural and educational theoretical perspectives: within *zones of proximal development*, through *positive interdependence* and as a *community of practice*.

## 1.4 Method of enquiry

This research is presented as three qualitative case studies involving three teenage rock bands and is an investigation of the contemporary phenomenon of collaborative song writing by teenagers, within the real-life context of a series of band rehearsals. The case studies are a purposive sample only and are not intended to be representative of all teenage rock bands. Rather, the intention is to throw some light upon what happens within the three cases, with the aim of improving our knowledge of the collaborative compositional process.<sup>2</sup> In turn, it is hoped that the findings will contribute further insights into what is already known about how adolescents play and compose music together. The methodology of this study will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Three bands were selected according to a set of criteria that were informed by the work of those referred to in the next chapter.<sup>3</sup> In 2006, over a period of six months, the participants were observed and videoed playing and composing together. Wherever possible, the context of the data collection was an attempt to capture what would have occurred anyway. One band broke up during this time, and the two remaining bands took part in group interviews and completed a questionnaire. The data were analysed, coded and applied to the theoretical model, resulting in a series of graphs that were analysed, revealing each band's composing processes. These data were then re-

---

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998. p.53.

<sup>3</sup> See pages 53 and 54 for a rationale and full list of these criteria.

analysed in relation to questions 3 and 4 and viewed from the other perspectives outlined earlier. This built up a rich description for each case, also highlighting distinct similarities, patterns and points of difference between all three.<sup>4</sup>

## **1.5 A brief history of the teaching and assessment of composition at senior level in New Zealand secondary schools**

In order to have a clearer understanding of the context of this research, it is necessary to place both composing and rock-pop music within the New Zealand educational system.

### **1.5.1 Composition and assessment in New Zealand schools 1904 to 1993**

The majority of schools in New Zealand today reflect the basic tenets on which formal education was founded in the nineteenth century: state-run, secular and free, with a strong emphasis upon European culture.<sup>5</sup> Music has been a compulsory part of the primary school curriculum since 1904, and a “core subject” at secondary school level. It has been a written examination subject through *School Certificate* since 1945. Composition received scant attention in New Zealand schools until the mid 1970s when a “composers in schools” scheme was implemented in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, running until the mid 1990s.<sup>6</sup> In 1989, a new music syllabus, *Music Education: Early Childhood to Form 7* identified

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>5</sup> Kirsten Grant Price, ‘In Art There’s Just No Right or Wrong’, *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*, Vol. 1, available from <https://www.Arts-Journal.com>, accessed 22 August, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Sue Braatvedt, ‘A History of Music Education in New Zealand State Primary and Intermediate Schools 1878 – 1989’, Ph. D. diss., University of Canterbury, 2002, p.439.

composing explicitly as a requirement as part of three interrelated strands: *create, recreate and appreciate*.<sup>7</sup> By 1993, the *New Zealand Curriculum Framework* stated that, within the essential learning area of “the arts”, “students will be given opportunities, individually and co-operatively, to explore, to generate, to shape, and to communicate their ideas in creative ways”.<sup>8</sup>

In 1991, two groups of teachers in Christchurch and Wellington rejected the national School Certificate Music examination in favour of trialling a local, unregistered assessment.<sup>9</sup> At the time, the norm-referenced School Certificate examination was a written one, involving essay writing, score analysis and aural transcription. “Composition” involved short, notated responses that were more transactive than creative, and the tasks had not changed markedly since it was first implemented in 1945. Playing and singing skills were not assessed and teachers working with students who were playing and composing within popular genres believed that this was both unmusical and inequitable.<sup>10</sup> Merryn Dunmill, a pre-service lecturer in secondary teacher education at the time, describes the situation in 1991:

We’d had endless meetings in Christchurch about the existing School C. with no performance component and how ridiculous it was now that we had all these rising bands. Composition was just a little word-set and, you know, “continue this classical phrase”. Kids would just work by method and not by any sense of creativity and there was nothing about the kids’ experience. Teachers [of students working in rock and popular genres] were saying “my kids just won’t do it.”<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education, *Music Education: Early Childhood to Form 7: Syllabus for Schools*, Wellington: Learning Media, 1989, p.15.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, Wellington: Learning Media, 1993, p.15.

<sup>9</sup> Merryn Dunmill, Interview at University of Canterbury, 2 March, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Dorothy Buchanan, Interview in Wellington, 14 January, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Dunmill, 2007.

In 1991 and 1992, six co-educational Christchurch Schools rejected School Certificate Music in favour of a course based on 50% performance (no composition). At the same time, an “alternative School Certificate” course, which included the formal assessment of both performance and composition, developed and administrated by Dorothy Buchanan and Jeremy Winter (Teacher Support Service advisers), was being trialled in Wellington. Dorothy Buchanan notes that:

About fifty percent of the Wellington Schools were on board in 1991. Then the numbers in the classes increased because, of course, all the rock kids came in. Kids who had any kind of creativity were allowed to fly. By the end of the year NZQA had to take notice because they were losing so many kids out of the traditional School C.<sup>12</sup>

In 1993, in response to the success of these two alternative programmes, and amid calls for reform from teachers, educational institutions and music education lobby groups such as the New Zealand Society for Music Education, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) implemented the formal, nationally moderated assessment of both composition (20% individual) and performance (40% solo and group) at senior secondary level, through the School Certificate and, later in 1995, the University Bursaries examinations.<sup>13</sup> Considering that neither performance nor composition, now accounting for 60% of the qualifications, had been formally assessed at a national level before, these were radical changes indeed. Suddenly students who were playing in rock bands and in popular genres were able to have their playing and composing assessed as part of a national qualification.

---

<sup>12</sup> Buchanan, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Education, ‘School Certificate Music 060’, *School Certificate Prescription*, Wellington: Learning Media, 1993, pp.246-257.



### 1.5.2 Standards-based assessment 1995 – 2007

The 1990s also saw the development of a National Qualifications Framework by the Ministry of Education, with the aim of providing a seamless assessment pathway from secondary to tertiary learning in both practical and academic subjects. The norm-referenced assessment system, which measured a narrow base of academic knowledge, was seen as promoting the failure of a set proportion of learners. It was argued that the future lay in a system that placed equal value upon practical as well as academic subjects.<sup>14</sup> A system of standards-based assessments called *unit standards*, where learning was broken up into statements that describe what a student knows or can do, was developed and implemented in secondary schools, on a voluntary basis, in the mid 1990s. Student outcomes are compared with prescribed criteria or performance descriptors and are awarded one of two assessment decisions: *achieved* or *not achieved*. The consultation process involved in developing unit standards for Music included input from the popular music industry, secondary and tertiary music educators, those teaching vocational and music industry courses, as well as professional musicians. Composition unit standards differed from School Certificate prescriptions in that a student could choose to be assessed as a composer without being obliged to be assessed in other aspects of music, such as score analysis, music works studies or aural transcription. In addition to this, composition unit standards did not necessarily require a written score as part of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Price, 'In Art There's Just No Right Or Wrong', p.2.

assessment process.<sup>15</sup> This immediately had significant implications for students (usually song writers) who were composing within the predominately oral and aural traditions of popular music genres. Some teachers, whose students were playing and composing within popular and/or Māori or Pasifika contexts, chose to assess these students' compositions through unit standards, rather than School Certificate because a written score was not required. However, as with the School Certificate and University Bursaries examinations, students could not be assessed as composers if they had worked collaboratively. The work was required to be that of an individual.

Unit standards met with limited success in most secondary school subjects, including Music. The use of "pass/fail" criteria was seen as too crude an instrument to measure the large bodies of knowledge and diverse ranges of skills contained within the conventional and academic subjects.<sup>16</sup> Unit standards were deemed by many, including principals, teachers and academics, to be merely competency-based and not sufficient to challenge students to strive for excellence. In addition to this, the vocational and applied character of many unit standards highlighted the polarisation of the value placed upon *applied* versus *academic* knowledge by the New Zealand secondary education system.<sup>17</sup> The lack of acceptance of unit standards led the Government to consult more widely,

---

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Education, 'Demonstrate music compositional skills through two short music compositions, Unit Standard 10654', available from <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea>; accessed 17 October 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Roberts, 'A Critique of the NZQA Policy Reforms', in M. Olssen and Kay Morris Matthews (eds.), *Education Policy in New Zealand: the 1990s and beyond*, Palmerston North: Dunmore, 1997, pp.162-189.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Gilbert, *Catching the Knowledge Wave? The Knowledge Society and the Future of Education*, Wellington: NZCER Press, 2005, pp.159-161.

both in New Zealand and internationally, leading to a decision in 1997 to implement a new standards-based qualification and assessment system: the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Amid intense debate (which continues still) the NCEA was first implemented in 2002. Like unit standards, achievement standards have a certain number of credits attached to them and assess a specific part of a course of study, such as solo performance, score reading or composition for example. They have three criteria – *achievement*, *merit* or *excellence* and range across Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the National Qualifications Framework. NCEA may be awarded to students who achieve the required number of credits gained from assessment in either achievement standards, or unit standards, or a combination of both. In 2007, senior secondary music courses of study can be extremely diverse and can include a combination of unit or achievement standards, assessing solo and group performance (including reflection upon the nature of rehearsing and performing), conducting, composition (individual but either notated or recorded, or both), arrangement, instrumentation, aural perception, music works analysis, research, music technology, music industry skills, recording engineering, and cross-curricular performing and theatre arts.<sup>18</sup>

In 2000, a national curriculum statement for *The Arts* was added to the national curriculum framework.<sup>19</sup> Music is contained within that curriculum as one of four arts disciplines: Drama, Dance, Music and

---

<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Education, 'NCEA Music/Arts Related Standards Levels 1 to 4', available from [http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resource-exchange/view\\_resource.php?res=303](http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resource-exchange/view_resource.php?res=303); accessed 18 October, 2007. See Appendix A.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Education, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, Wellington, Learning Media, 2000, pp.52-69.

Visual Art. The Arts Curriculum is described through four interrelated strands: Practical Knowledge (PK), Developing Ideas (DI), Communicating and Interpreting (CI), and Understanding in Context (UC). This curriculum has been revised recently as part of the new New Zealand Curriculum and “Music” has been re-named “Music - Sound Arts” within the learning area of “The Arts”.<sup>20</sup> The interrelated strands remain, where composing is described through the Developing Ideas strand.

### 1.5.3 Popular and contemporary music making outside of the classroom

The 1990s also saw the emergence of RockQuest. This national competition is independent of the New Zealand school system, although it receives funding from the Ministry of Education, and developed out of a “battle of the bands” run by a Christchurch radio station in the late 1980s.<sup>21</sup> In 2007 it is a national competition across 26 regions, has a televised national final, a website, a television series, and has launched the professional careers of dozens of rock and pop musicians who are now “world famous in New Zealand”.<sup>22</sup> In 2006, more than 650 bands entered the competition, each performing an original song in the regional heats. Those going on to the national finals performed a whole set of original songs. The aims of the event are to:

- encourage as many school students as possible to write and perform their own music

---

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum*, Wellington, Learning Media, 2007, pp.20-21.

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Education, ‘Coke Smokefree Rockquest 2003’, available from <http://www.tki.org.nz/r/art/music/rockquest>; accessed on 3 March, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> *Shihad*, Bic Runga, Anika Moya, *The Datsuns*, *Goldenhorse*, *Evermore* to name a few. See <http://www.theset.co.nz/smokefreerockquest/node/39>; accessed 14 October, 2007.

- provide a goal for young contemporary musicians, and an incentive for interested students to stay on at school
- deliver to the music industry the best secondary school contemporary music act in the country, complete with a radio-ready single and associated music video.<sup>23</sup>

Most New Zealand secondary schools support the entry of at least one band in RockQuest every year. Bands can only be entered in the competition through teachers and schools, despite the fact that many are formed outside of school. RockQuest, and its hip-hop/r&b partner Pasifika Beats, exist in a symbiotic relationship with the New Zealand education system, part of the curriculum and yet independent of it.

The New Zealand Music Commission (NZMC) also supports young people's composing in contemporary genres. The NZMC is a government funded trust that aims to help grow the New Zealand popular music industry.<sup>24</sup> Through its music mentoring scheme, the NZMC has trained and supported over eighty contemporary musicians to work with students as musical mentors in schools throughout New Zealand. Much of the mentoring involves workshops that focus upon either performing or song writing.<sup>25</sup> *Play it Strange* is another New Zealand charitable trust that aims to support young people playing and composing in contemporary genres. It provides young people with links to role

---

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Education, 'Coke Smokefree Rockquest 2003', available from <http://www.tki.org.nz/r/art/music/rockquest>; accessed on 3 March, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Kate Tringham, 'How The Mentor Scheme Works', *New Zealand Education Gazette*, Vol.85, no.10, 2006, pp.4-6.

<sup>25</sup> In 2005 two of the bands in this study were mentored by a professional musician through the NZMC.

models and assists established professional musicians to mentor young musicians in their song writing and playing, as well as supporting a song writing competition.<sup>26</sup>

Some students' learning outside of the classroom, through co-curricular and extracurricular music making, is stimulated and supported by organisations such as RockQuest, NZMC and *Play it Strange*, and this work is often assessed at school through the NCEA. Quite often students performing collaboratively composed, original songs in RockQuest are assessed against NCEA group performance standards as part of their schoolwork. However, NCEA composition standards, which require that the work be that of a sole composer, cannot be applied to the group-composed songs of RockQuest band members, unlike the primarily solo composition supported by *Play It Strange*, for example.<sup>27</sup> The young people who took part in this research all performed in RockQuest and although all three bands were formed independently of the school system, all members used school instruments or amplifiers, rehearsed and composed songs at school, and, to a lesser or greater extent, received some form of teacher support as a co-curricular activity. Some of those eligible for assessment at NCEA Level 3 took the opportunity to be assessed as performers within their group.

---

<sup>26</sup> About Play It Strange', available from [www.playitstrange.co.nz/about](http://www.playitstrange.co.nz/about); accessed 20 September, 2007.

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix A.

## **1.6 Summary**

The collaborative compositional processes of three teenage bands are presented here as three qualitative case studies. This research has come about as an initial investigation into the feasibility of assessing collaborative composition at senior secondary level in New Zealand schools, leading to the formulation of four research questions that examine the ways in which the participants in the study worked together to compose music. A detailed examination of relevant literature to this study follows in the next chapter.

## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion and analysis of literature pertinent to the research, particularly studies of composition by children and young people. This discussion will show that most of these focus upon individuals in classroom based, teacher directed contexts. As outlined briefly in Chapter 1, there is very little literature (none from New Zealand) that is specifically concerned with group composition by secondary school aged students. On the whole, the earlier studies investigate the compositional processes of individual, primary school aged children, usually ten to twelve years, using classroom instruments in response to a task set by the teacher or researcher.<sup>28</sup> The first research into group or collaborative composing occurred in the 1990s, as did a small number of investigations into the socio-musical and cultural interactions within groups of young rock music musicians.<sup>29</sup> The chapter will also show that the notion of viewing composing from the cognitive psychological perspective of *problem solving* and *creative thinking* has shifted in the past few years to that of *creative learning*, and research involving collaboratively composing groups has inevitably

---

<sup>28</sup> Such as the work of: Swanwick and Tillman, 'The Sequence of Musical Development: A Study of Children's Composition', *British Journal of Music Education*, Vol.3, no.3, 1986, pp.305-339; and John Kratus, 'A Time Analysis of the Compositional Processes Used by Children Ages 7 to 11', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.31, no.1, 1989, pp.5-20.

<sup>29</sup> Notably: Jacqueline Wiggins, 'Children's Strategies for Solving Compositional Problems with Peers', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.42, no.3, 1994, pp.232 -252; Johan Fornas, Ulf Lindberg and Ove Sernhede, *In Garageland. Rock, Youth and Modernity*, trans J. Teeland, London: Routledge, 1995; and Campbell, 'Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting', pp.12-20.



included theories of social and cooperative learning. The turn of the century has also seen a heightened interest in the informal learning processes of young people, which continues today, particularly within the context of playing, composing and listening to popular music.<sup>30</sup>

## **2.2 The individual compositional processes of children and adolescents at school**

### **2.2.1 Early studies (1986 – 1989)**

There have been numerous studies conducted into the nature of children's composing from both musical and educational perspectives. Many include an adapted view of Wallas' stages of *creative thinking*: preparation time; time away (incubation); working through (illumination) and polishing (verification).<sup>31</sup> In particular, Peter Webster's adaptation of these stages has been influential in studies involving the analysis of compositional processes.<sup>32</sup> At the centre of Webster's model of creative thinking in music are *convergent* and *divergent* thinking.<sup>33</sup> Convergent thinking usually has just one solution and could be involved, for example, in the acquisition of playing skills. Divergent thinking, on the other hand, has many different possible approaches and answers, such as thinking when improvising or composing. See **Figure 2.1**.

In their study of over seven hundred children's compositions, Swanwick and Tillman suggest that the sequence of musical

---

<sup>30</sup> Work by Lucy Green, and also Goran Folkestad, discussed near the end of this chapter, will be shown to have been particularly influential.

<sup>31</sup> Graham Wallas, *The Art of Thought*, London: Jonathon Cape, 1926, pp.79-83.

<sup>32</sup> Peter R. Webster, 'Conceptual Bases For Creative Thinking In Music' in J. Peery, I. Peery and T. Draper (eds.), *Music and Child Development*, New York: Springer Verlag, 1987, pp.158-174.

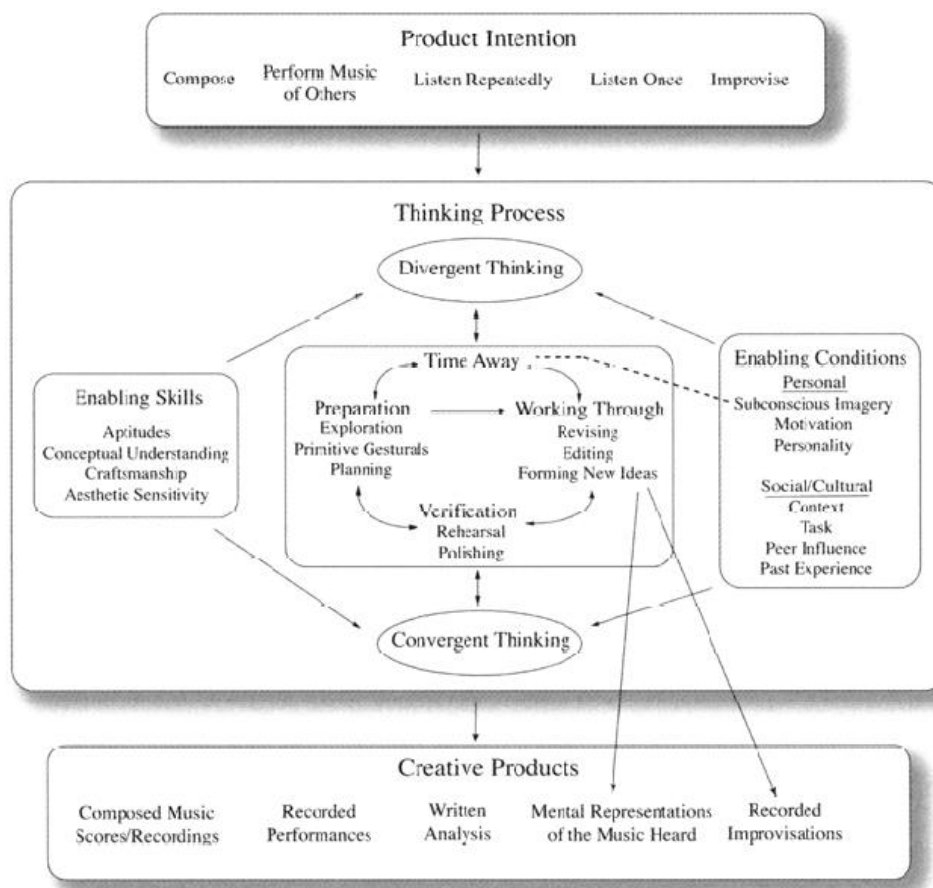
<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.162.

development in children from the age of three to the late teens can be viewed as a spiral.<sup>34</sup> Their Piagetian model leads through four fundamental transformations, from the mastery of, and delight in, musical materials, through imitation and imaginative play to metacognition, self-awareness and an aesthetic appreciation of musical systems. Swanwick and Tillman suggest that by the age of thirteen or fourteen “there is a strong tendency to move towards what children regard as ‘grown-up’ musical style or idiom” and “children seek to enter recognisable communities”. They found that after the age of about fifteen “there is a growing sense of music’s affective power” and “musical values become more idiosyncratic and commitment to music is frequently based on an intensity of experience that is felt as unique and highly significant”.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Swanwick and Tillman, ‘The Sequence of Musical Development: A Study of Children’s Composition’, pp.305-339.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.333.



**Figure 2.1: Webster's model of creativity in music<sup>36</sup>**

John Kratus' study into children's composing examined the use of exploration, development, repetition and silence by sixty children, aged either seven, nine or eleven.<sup>37</sup> Kratus summarises Webster's model and employs the concepts of divergent and convergent thinking. He notes that studies of adult composing tended to support Webster's model and that the process of composition, as described in these reports, is one of exploring and developing musical ideas, ultimately resulting in closure on a unique musical product.<sup>38</sup> However, he also observes that Sloboda's suggestions for sources of data for studying composition (sketches and notebooks; composers' comments about

<sup>36</sup> Webster, 'Conceptual Bases for Creative Thinking in Music', p.162.

<sup>37</sup> Kratus, 'A Time Analysis of the Compositional Processes Used by Children Ages 7 to 11', pp.5-20.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.6.

their work; interviews with composers while at work; and observation of improvisation) were problematic when working with young children because they are unlikely to have sufficient knowledge of composition to be able to talk about the process.<sup>39</sup> Kratus argues that because composing is dynamic, happening over time, an analysis of how much time was spent in four compositional phases (exploration, development, repetition and silence) was a valid way to account for children's compositional processes.<sup>40</sup> He does not, unfortunately, elaborate on how or why he came to choose these criteria. Each student was "tested" individually in a laboratory-style setting and sat at a table with a small keyboard, a cassette player (recording the sounds made) and a large clock. Subjects were given fifteen minutes to "make up a song on the piano" using only the white keys.<sup>41</sup> The results of the study suggested that while younger children spent most of their time improvising, older children's compositional processes were consistent with those of adults. Kratus found that the difference between the older children and adult composers' compositional processes was a difference in enabling skills as defined by Webster, namely: musical aptitude; conceptual understanding; craftsmanship; and aesthetic sensitivity. Dewey believed that "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself".<sup>42</sup> If this is the case, then one must question the validity of a study where the data were gathered

---

<sup>39</sup> John Sloboda, *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, p.49.

<sup>40</sup> Kratus, 'A Time Analysis of the Compositional Processes', p.7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>42</sup> John Dewey, 'My Pedagogic Creed', in Larry A. Hickman & Thomas M. Alexander (eds.) *The Essential Dewey*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998, p.229.

in such an artificial and imposed compositional context, and also ask whether it is valid to compare the findings with those of studies of adult composers working within their chosen creative spheres, instruments, styles and genres over extended periods.

### 2.2.2 More recent studies (1998 – 2004)

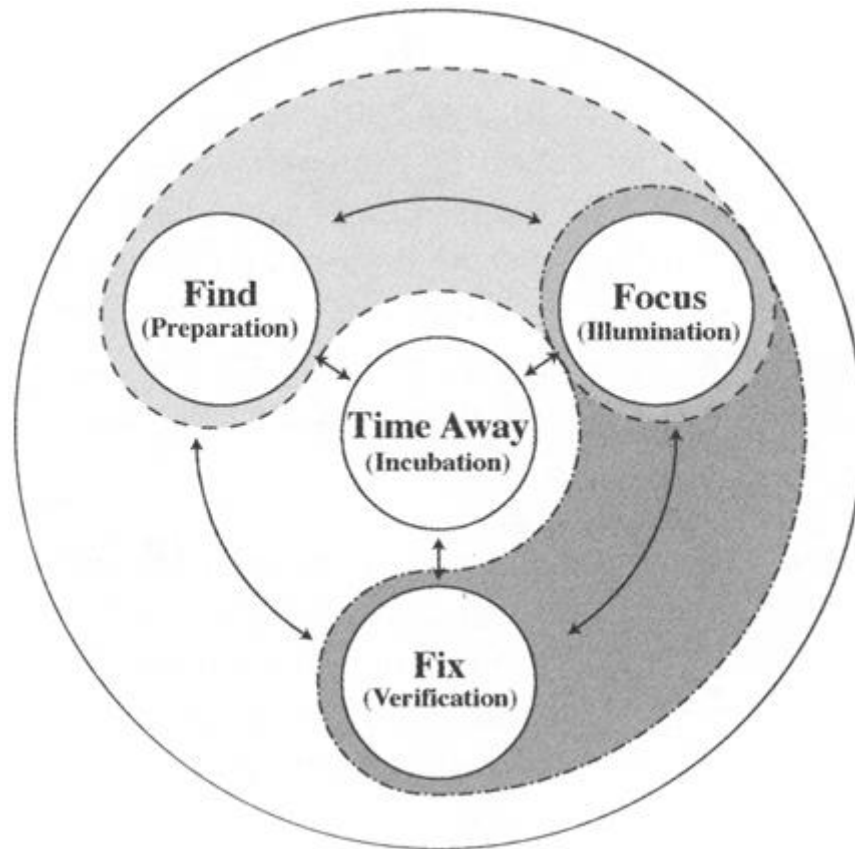
Burnard and Younker analysed students' individual composing pathways in terms of problem solving and creative thinking.<sup>43</sup> Their study summarises educational research on creativity that has, in turn, been informed by studies that examine the nature of creative thinking, referring to the work of Csikszentmihalyi, Davis, Robinson and Webster among others.<sup>44</sup> Composition is viewed as the making of something, through which problems arise and are solved. Burnard and Younker argue that, from a cognitive psychology perspective, problem solving is a crucial part of the process of learning how to compose. They emphasise the importance of helping students to bring their everyday understanding of music into their composing in the classroom and state that the experience can only be meaningful if it is relevant to the students' world and if they construct their understanding through doing. Wallas' and Webster's models are reinterpreted and represented diagrammatically in **Figure 2.2**.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Pamela Burnard and Betty Anne Younker, 'Problem solving and Creativity: Insights from Students' Individual Composing Pathways', *International Journal of Music Education*, Vol. 22, no.1, 2004, pp.59-76.

<sup>44</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, New York: Harper Collins, 1996; Gary A. Davis, *Creativity is Forever*, Dubuque: Kendall Hunt, 1986; Ken Robinson, *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*, Oxford, Capstone 2001; Peter Webster, 'Research on Creative Thinking in Music: The Assessment Literature', in R. Colwell (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Music Teaching and Learning*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992.

<sup>45</sup> Burnard and Younker, 'Problem solving and Creativity' p.65.



**Figure 2.2:**  
**Burnard and Younker's model of creative thinking in music**

Burnard and Younker's study compares the individual composing pathways of a sample of secondary school-aged students from a range of data sets in Australia, Canada and the UK which tracked students' thinking as they composed. The data from existing studies were re-analysed from a cross-cultural perspective in order to identify various aspects of problem solving as they relate to composing. The intention was to explore various ways of identifying difference and diversity in composing and, in particular, to look critically at what viewing difference might mean for teaching. The researchers do not claim that their findings can be generalised, but state that through reinterpreting data from a number of studies across three countries, the specific empirical findings of their study rest on theoretical inference, represented and conceptualised in mapping and theoretical modelling

of students' composing pathways. These creative pathways are exemplified through three student composer pairs, from simplest to most sophisticated (see Table 1).<sup>46</sup>

<p>A. <i>'floater'</i> (much exploration, minimal verification and incubation) to <i>'linear'</i> (much exploration, skips direct to verification, minimal phase interplay)</p> <p>B. <i>'serial'</i> (no preparation, minimal verification, minimal phase interplay) to <i>'staged'</i> (progressive movement forward and across phases, verification as notation)</p> <p>C. <i>'recursive'</i> (time shared between preparation, incubation, illumination and verification with much interplay between phases and expressive intention emphasised) to <i>'regulated'</i> (continuous interplay between phases, much incubation such as mind-writing and mind-playing, with expressive intention realised as goal-setting)</p>
---

**Table 1: Burnard and Younker's composing pathways**

These pathways highlight the interplay between problem solving and problem finding and the diversity of ways in which students compose. Pathways were revealed through the participants' talk and reflection on action and thus, were consistent with Burnard's earlier study. She and Younker emphasise the importance of music education that acknowledges students' own realities and perspectives as composers.<sup>47</sup>

There are numerous studies of children and young people's composing that focus upon strategies used in computer-based composing. One such study, by Seddon and O'Neil, compares the creative thinking processes of adolescents who had and who had not had formal musical

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.64

<sup>47</sup> Pamela Burnard, 'How Children Ascribe Meaning to Improvisation and Composition: Rethinking Pedagogy in Music Education', *Music Education Research*, Vol.2, no.1, 2000, pp.7-23. Burnard investigated how eighteen 12-year-olds engaged in, and reflected upon, their experiences of improvising and composing. Through observation and such interview techniques as image-based 'talk and draw' and critical incident charting, she analysed the children's ways of engaging in composing and improvising, and also mapped their worlds of meaning through their experiential descriptions. She found that the children readily improvised when composing and that musical training was a less critical determinant of the ways of experiencing improvising and composing than the creative intention. She emphasises the importance of music education that focuses on genuine experiences of children being improvisers and composers rather than acting out a predefined model.

training.<sup>48</sup> Seddon and O’Neil assert that viewing composition as problem solving is limiting and contentious, in that problem solving is more closely identified with deductive logic than originality. They were critical of studies that limited the compositional task to that of solving a problem using traditional musical notation, with its implied tonality, and refer to studies using open-ended compositional tasks such as those by Folkestad. In one study, Folkestad *et al.* reported finding two main strategies of composition: *horizontal* (conceptually completing the composition in form and content from beginning to end before using the computer for arrangement and instrumentation), and *vertical* (completing the composition in discrete, fully-formed, consecutive sections).<sup>49</sup> These resonate with the findings of studies referred to earlier in this discussion in that they identify strategies that both conceptualise a composition as a whole and also involve passing through a series of processes until a composition is created. Seddon and O’Neil found that students with prior experience of formal instrumental training tended to adhere to musical parameters associated with traditional forms and structures. These students experimented and explored far less than those who had not had formal musical training. Seddon and O’Neil postulate that, as Webster has proposed, the acquisition of performance skill focuses on convergent thinking processes, and improvisation and composition focus upon divergent thinking. They also suggest that instrumental tuition gives

---

<sup>48</sup> Frederick Seddon and Susan O’Neil, ‘Creative Thinking Processes in Adolescent Computer-Based Composition: An Analysis of Strategies Adopted and the Influence of Instrumental Music Training’, *Music Education Research*, Vol.5, no.2, 2003, pp.125-137.

<sup>49</sup> Goran Folkestad, David Hargreaves and B. Lindstrom, ‘Compositional Strategies in Computer-Based Music Making’, *British Journal of Music Education*, Vol. 15, 1998, pp.83-97.



the participants skills that enable them to develop musical ideas away from the computer (similar to Burnard and Younker's *recursive* compositional pathway).

Kennedy's study of adolescent compositional processes aims to identify effective teaching strategies for high school music teachers.<sup>50</sup> As an argument for composition to be a part of every high school music programme, she refers to numerous writers who have theorised that the ability to compose is present in all people.<sup>51</sup> Four tenth-grade students in Victoria, Canada, were given two composition tasks: firstly to set a given poem to music using acoustic instruments and, secondly, to compose a piece of their own choosing at a computer workstation. Kennedy's model of the listening and compositional processes that adolescent composers use fails to account fully for the complexities of the creative thinking (as defined by Webster and Wallas), in that it is linear and episodic, rather than cyclical, and uses listening only as an indicator of creative phases. This may be because the researcher was not present during composing and much of the data are based upon the participants' perceptions and own understanding of their composing, and does not include data gathered through observation. Kennedy's study does, however, throw light upon the conditions adolescents say they need for individual composition. Participants tended to procrastinate and routinely waited until the last minute to work on acoustic pieces (usually the night before they were asked to complete them), working quickly

---

<sup>50</sup> Mary Kennedy, 'Listening to the Music: Compositional Processes of High School Composers', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol. 50, no.2, 2002, pp.94-111.

<sup>51</sup> Kennedy includes the following: Brinkman, 1995; Czikszenmihalyi, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Reimer, 1997; Swanwick & Tillman, 1986.

without much revision. They all mentioned a preference for quiet when composing, preferably at home when the house was otherwise empty. The need for “thinking time” was a common element and Kennedy cites theorists such as Wallas and Csikszentmihalyi who have identified the need for introspection as part of the creative process.<sup>52</sup> Listening was also identified as a significant factor in the analysis of compositional strategies, where a composer’s individual soundscapes acted as both context and inspiration, and in the process of improvising, experimenting with, and selecting ideas.

### **2.3 Group Composing by Children and Adolescents at School**

Wiggins investigated the compositional strategies used by two target students, working in small groups in her fifth-grade class.<sup>53</sup> She refers to literature that considers the nature of an individual’s interaction with music to be reflective of the nature of their musical understanding, and relates this to theories of musical cognition.<sup>54</sup> As with Burnard and Younker’s study, the act of composing is viewed as a process of musical problem solving. As such, the study sought to reveal musical learning processes through an analysis of the strategies two students used to solve the problem of how to compose a piece of music within a small group. The students (both novice composers without formal musical training) worked on three small-group composition projects over a period of five months in a general music class. While it was not

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 99-100.

<sup>53</sup> Jacqueline Wiggins, ‘Children’s Strategies for Solving Compositional Problems with Peers’, pp.232 - 252.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. These include Swanwick, 1988; Bamberger, 1991; Barrett, 1991; Kratus, 1989 and Webster, 1990.

Wiggins' intention to study the interactions amongst members of the group, in the process of analysing individuals she noted that:

... the children had to develop their own ideas and then explain them to peers, which they did through both verbal and non-verbal means (including singing, rhythmic speech, non-verbal imitation of sounds, demonstration of ideas on instruments, and graphic representation of ideas).<sup>55</sup>

Wiggins found that the compositional strategies of individual students followed a pattern of moving from the whole (initial planning) to part (development of motivic ideas) to whole (reassembling and practising), and that their decision making seemed to stem from a vision of the final product which had been conceived at the outset. There was very little random exploration, and she comments (with reference to Bamberger, and Davidson and Welsh) that holistic planning might be characteristic of the work of novices.<sup>56</sup> She also points out that a sample of two students is too small to generalise these findings.

Miell and McDonald studied the social processes involved when children compose music together.<sup>57</sup> They observe that at the time of publication there had been very little research on the nature of collaborative composition, despite a current emphasis in the UK upon group work and joint activity in music teaching. They refer to theories of collaborative learning where one of the key features affecting the nature of children's collaboration is the degree to which they are engaged with each other's ideas and perspectives. A socio-cognitive,

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.234.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.249.

<sup>57</sup> Dorothy Miell and Roger McDonald, 'Children's Creative Collaborations: The Importance of Friendship When Working Together on a Musical Composition', *Social Development*, no.3, 2000, pp.348 -369.

Piagetian perspective, where the child learns through the resolution of conflict, is contrasted with that of Vygotskian social constructivism, which stresses co-operation and the establishment of joint definitions. Meill and McDonald refer to the work of Kruger, and Berkowitz *et al.* who defined *transactive communication* as “the presence of reasoned dialogue, the exploration of the ideas of more than one person and the attempt to integrate these.”<sup>58</sup> They go on to state that high levels of transactive communication have been associated with a greater likelihood of successful collaboration, with greater subsequent gains in learning in a number of areas, such as mathematical reasoning and problem solving.<sup>59</sup> Referring to a number of studies, Meill and McDonald suggest that learning does not happen just because others are present, and that there is a greater likelihood of transactive communication between groups of friends than those with no prior history of relationship. They note that most prior studies into working in friendship groups used closed, highly structured tasks, usually involving mathematical or scientific reasoning. Meill and McDonald postulate that in an open-ended and creative activity such as composing music, the main task for partners working together is to construct a shared social reality, and that the focus shifts from a target solution to that of establishing and maintaining productive mutual engagement.

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.349.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Meill and McDonald refer to the work of Kruger, 1992; Rogoff, 1990; and Teasely & Roschelle, 1993.

Their study involved twenty pairs of predominately white, middle-class eleven to twelve year-olds who were identified as “socially functional”, excluding students identified as “socially rejected or neglected.”<sup>60</sup> Ten pairs were in friendship groups and ten were not. The students had fifteen minutes to “work together to write some music about the rain forest.” Students had the opportunity to choose the instruments they used and it was stressed that there was no “right answer” to the task. Given the short timeframe and the absence of student choice in compositional context one must question the closed nature of this task. Despite the justification for the pre-selection of the participants, one must also question whether or not the sample was pre-selected with an outcome in mind.

Meill and McDonald found that, overall, the communication style of children in friendship groups was significantly different to that of non-friendship pairs. Friendship pairs made proportionately more transactive statements based on their partner’s ideas, responses and questions than non-friendship pairs. They found that children working in friendship groups were more likely to stay on task than those who were not. The researchers also analysed the responses of pairs in terms of prior learning in music and found that “non-experienced” children did better when paired with an “experienced” friend.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Meill and McDonald defend this criterion for selection by citing research which suggests that such children behave differently in collaborative settings. This is in contrast to research into rock music collaborations by teenagers, such as that of Fornas et al., where social neglect and exclusion, including peer group pressure, has led to the teenagers identifying themselves with a rock group as a means of self definition. See Fornas, Lindberg and Sernhede, *In Garageland*, p.254.

<sup>61</sup> This could be interpreted as acting within Vygotsky’s *zone of proximal development* where Vygotsky declared that working with “more competent peers” can aid a child’s learning. See L. S. Vygotsky, *The Mind In Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978, p.86.

Other than studies of on-line and computer-based collaboration, which are outside of the frame of this discussion, there is little research into the collaborative compositional processes of teenagers, face-to-face, in real time and in the classroom. One study that investigates group compositional processes in the secondary classroom is by Fautley.<sup>62</sup> He points out that there has been a limited amount of research undertaken that concerns group composing, particularly at secondary school level. He states that there is a need for a theoretical model of group composition, located within a classroom context, so that teachers have a greater understanding of teaching and learning of composition in generalist music programmes. Fautley outlines existing models of composing, referring, in the first instance, to Wallas' model. Fautley observes that this model labels the stages within the creative process but what happens *within* those stages is not described. He summarises two main categories of compositional models: *expert* and *novice*, and draws together the commonalities between the models.<sup>63</sup> He identifies what he terms "cognates" of the composing processes of the individual and goes on to relate these to group composing through the notion of *distributed cognition*.<sup>64</sup> Fautley argues that if composing is viewed as a process of distributed cognition where "resources that shape and enable activity are distributed in configuration across people, environments and situations", then the composing process is jointly

---

<sup>62</sup> Martin Fautley, 'A New Model of the Group Composing Process of Lower Secondary School Students', *Music Education Research*, Vol.7, no.1, 2005, pp.39-57.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. Fautley refers to the work of Sloboda, 1985; Roozendaal, 1993; Lerdahl and Jackendoff, 1983; Lerdahl, 1988; and Pressing, 1984,1988; Webster, 1988; Swanwick & Tillman, 1986; and Burnard & Younker, 2002 and 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp.42-43. Fautley refers to the work of Cole, 1996; Cole and Engstrom, 1993; Salomon, 1993; and Pea, 1993.

‘owned’ by the group.<sup>65</sup> Fautley goes on to describe music composed by a group as a shared *artifact*, as defined by Salomon, created between members of a composing community of students, and then relates this idea to Lave and Wenger’s view of learning as a situated activity.<sup>66</sup> By allying the notion of distributed cognition with his “cognates”, Fautley identifies components of group composing (general tonal knowledge; idea; thematic material; and transformation, extension and development) and interprets them within the parameters of individual, shared and distributed behaviours.<sup>67</sup>

With reference to his composing “cognates”, Fautley produced descriptors for a series of stages through which groups pass when composing, and formed these into a model (see Table 2). How Fautley went on to test this model is discussed in Chapter 3.

<p><b>Pre-generative stage</b> (resulting from a stimulus to compose)</p> <p>Individual aspects (cognitive and sensory-motor) the individual brings to the composition when considering what response to make: musical knowledge, aesthetic awareness and a repertoire of composing techniques.</p> <p><b>Generative stage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial confirmatory phase (ICP)</li> <li>2. Generation of ideas</li> <li>3. Exploration</li> <li>4. Organisation</li> </ol> <p><b>Post-Generative stage</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. ‘Work in progress’ performance (WPP)</li> <li>6. Revision</li> <li>7. Transformation/modification</li> <li>8. Extension and development</li> <li>9. Final performance</li> </ol>
--

**Table 2: Fautley’s model of group composing**

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.43.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp.48-49.

<sup>67</sup> Why these aspects of composing were chosen is not clear, and Fautley concedes that the two-dimensional table format is not quite sufficient to clearly represent the complexities of interaction. This insufficiency also became apparent when I attempted to create a two-dimensional format that described group composing. See Chapter 3.

A comparison with Webster's model reveals that his cycle of preparation (time away; working through; and verification) is expanded so that it is both cyclical and sequential. There is no reference to "incubation" or "time away". This is hardly surprising given that Fautley sought to develop a model that accounts for group composing in generalist classrooms, where composing happens 'on the spot' in response to a teacher-directed task and where students in this context usually have little or no opportunity to take ideas away and work on them alone. Fautley's research is a case study of a group of four girls working for fifty minutes on a piece depicting either "happy" or "sad", using acoustic instruments typical of the generalist classroom. While the findings themselves are of limited value, given that they represent a single instance and not able to be generalised, Fautley's quantitative analysis of the data provides some useful tools for testing his model in other group-composing contexts.

McGillen and McMillan investigated the interactions of a group of teenagers in terms of compositional processes, identity construction, co-operative learning and power-sharing/positive engagement with adults.<sup>68</sup> The group, *Jungle Express*, was a unique, school-based ensemble of about twenty musicians and three adult facilitators who met at the end of the school day to improvise, jam and compose non-notated music within a range of popular genres. The students played a variety of instruments, both electric and acoustic, and some were singers. The study's theoretical framework was grounded in theories of

---

<sup>68</sup> Christopher McGillen and Ros McMillan, 'Co-operative Song Writing: Adventures in Anarchy and Engagement with Adolescents', *Australian Journal of Music Education*, Vol.1, 2003, pp.25-38.

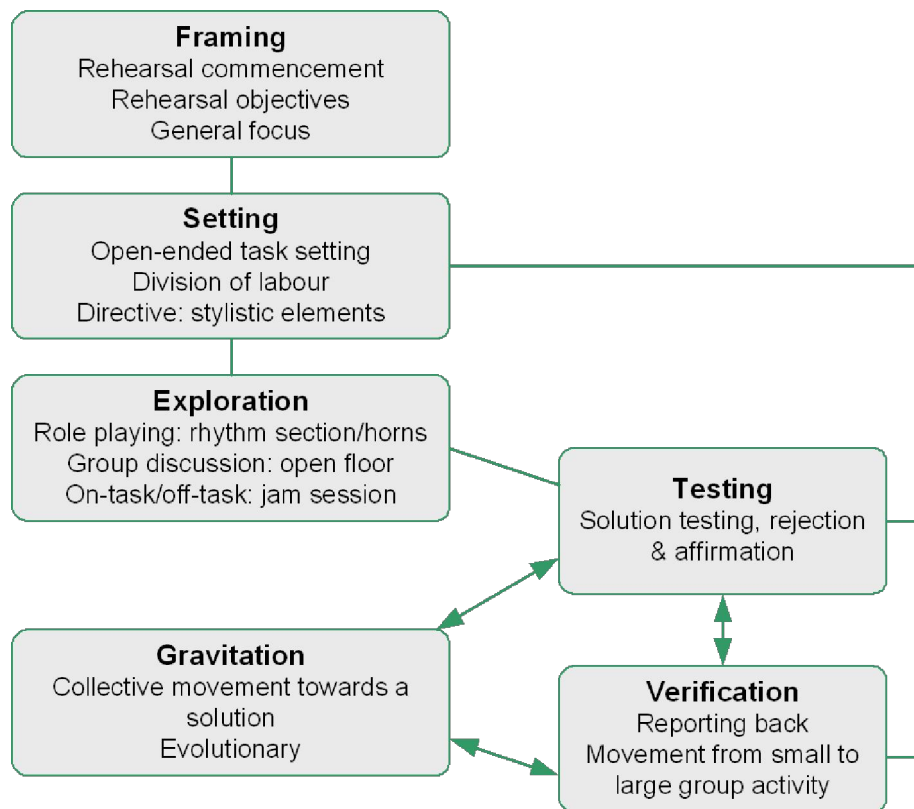


co-operative learning, with reference to studies of the contextualised, peer-based music making of young garage bands.<sup>69</sup> McGillen and McMillan's focus was primarily socio-musical. They were interested in the socio-musical interactions between the members of *Jungle Express* and what these interactions meant to the participants. Johnson and Johnson's notion of *positive interdependence* was regarded as a significant element, particularly with regard to small-group learning. *Jungle Express* is also described in terms of a teenage "garage" rock band. The researchers assert that the gathered data revealed many of the characteristics of a "garage" band, although they admit these links are tenuous, given that *Jungle Express* was facilitated by adults. Nevertheless, the participants' shared drive and focus, and their sense of identity and validation through membership of the group does resonate with what young rock musicians had to say about why they play and compose together in garage bands. In order to describe the compositional, relational and co-operative processes observed within the group, McGillen and McMillan looked to educational theory as well as studies of the creative process and developed a conceptual model of 'co-operative composition' (see Figure 2.3).<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> McGillen and McMillan, 'Co-operative Song Writing', p.26. McGillen and McMillan refer to the cooperative learning theories of Johnson and Johnson, 1994; Abrami, Chambers, Poulson, De Simone, D'Appolonia and Howden, 1995; and Slavin, 1994, as well as research into garage bands by Campbell, 1995 and 1998; and Fornas, Lindberg and Sernhede, 1995.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.29-30.



**Figure 2.3: McGillen and McMillan’s model of group composing**

McGillen and McMillan highlight the students’ democratic and informal relationships with adults as a significant feature of interactions within the group and suggest that there is a direct correlation between the low level of direct adult input and the high level of engagement of the students. Rather than the music itself, they argue that it is the quality of the relationships between adults, adolescents and “their” music that is a crucial factor in engagement. They describe *Jungle Express* as occupying “middle ground” between the perceived anarchy of a garage band and mainstream, school-based ensembles.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.34

## 2.4 Adolescents Playing and Composing Popular Music Outside of School

Until recently, the teenage rock band, which often exists on the fringes of music education, has been largely overlooked by music educators and to date, there has been very little research into how music is composed collaboratively by young people in a rock or pop band. One of the earliest studies is by Fornas, Lindberg and Sernhede who followed the progress of three Swedish garage bands in the early 1990s.<sup>72</sup> As with McGillen and McMillan, their focus was primarily socio-musical, with an emphasis upon the participants' search for identity within the specific, symbolic praxis of rock music. They argue that the systems, disciplines and institutionalised spheres of the modern world can marginalise young people, particularly those who are ill-at-ease in family life. This marginalisation can lead to adolescents, particularly boys, feeling unproductive and anonymous.<sup>73</sup> Fornas *et al.* suggest that the collective autonomy of the rock band, where peers can function as an alternative family, supports the individual's sense of self, aiding the development of a strong personal identity in late adolescence.<sup>74</sup> Thus, they argue, peer-group rock playing develops social group structures that are relatively free of the group pressures of conformity while remaining "voluntary, spontaneous, non-institutionalised and self-governing".<sup>75</sup> With regards to song writing, the researchers refer, in general terms, to a transference

---

<sup>72</sup> Fornas, Lindberg & Sernhede, *In Garageland. Rock, Youth and Modernity.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.254.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252.

method of composition involving informal learning between members of the bands:

Someone comes up with new song ideas and must express them so that the others understand. Someone else stubbornly practises a difficult passage several times on his or her instrument. Timbre and parts for the song, guitars, synth must be worked out. Perhaps someone refers to other songs familiar to the band in order to explain how something should be done. They all borrow ideas from other bands, but are often anxious not to copy: they want to be original as well. Conflicts may arise between different musical tastes, but these are conflicts to which everyone seeks acceptable solutions, so that everyone participates, no one is ignored and the band retains its distinctive character. All this occurs through lively discussion in which the decision making structure is constantly tested, and through which a strong communal feeling is attained, expressed in a shared euphoria when the song comes together for the first time: "It's us who did that!"<sup>76</sup>

Around the same time as Fornas *et al.*'s study, Campbell investigated systems of music transmission, teaching and learning within two teenage rock bands, including song writing.<sup>77</sup> She comments that:

Music educators typically have been concerned with music instruction within school settings, while sociologists interested in interactions among group members have not targeted musical ensembles as groups for their investigation.<sup>78</sup>

Campbell places rock music within the context of music education and points out that, while popular music *as content* is routinely part of high school music programmes, the essential "raw realness" and fundamentally anti-establishment character of heavy rock music is lost when it finds its way into a classroom. She asserts that music teachers' interpretations of what constitutes rock music are too often "antiseptic, a pale imitation of its true colours."<sup>79</sup> The bands studied by Campbell were two groups of boys; one younger group, 14 years old; and one

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p.231.

<sup>77</sup> Campbell, 'Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting', pp.12-20.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p.13.

older group, 15 to 16 years old. The boys had formed the bands themselves and rehearsed in modified garages at the homes of band members. The bands arose from informal groups of friends who had listened together to music of a common preference, going past the point of mere listening to playing that music. Both groups of boys decided that they wanted to form a band before they had instruments or, in some cases, could even play the instrument they had in mind. They met to get the feel of the pieces and work out the chords even before they had the resources to play together.

Parallel to Fornas, Sernhede and Lindstrom's study, Campbell focuses upon the socio-musical aspects of garage bands and describes the processes of teaching and learning amongst members of the groups, as a rigorous form of musical transmission that she refers to as "song-getting".<sup>80</sup> She also analyses the boys' somewhat disillusioned and cynical attitudes and perceptions of their own experiences of school music. Campbell briefly investigates the compositional strategies used by the older band, noting that members of the younger, novice band were still aspiring to copy songs they knew and that composition in the form of song writing was, as yet, beyond them.<sup>81</sup> The older boys defined their group through what Campbell terms "collective composition", even though composing and playing original songs was something they did rarely. The guitarist or keyboard player "wrote their songs at home" and brought them to band practice when deemed ready for group input.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.16.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p.18.

This entailed teaching the song to the others by singing it repeatedly while the others watched and listened until all were able to play along (“song-getting”). The song writer never dictated to the others how they should do this, so the process was one of experimentation and improvisation, often incorporating a standard repertoire of formulas and patterns. Individuals then refined their parts over the course of repeated playings. Campbell concludes her paper by stating that the systematic study of garage bands and the learning processes that take place amongst members of these bands may shed further light on the psychological and social nature of musical development.<sup>83</sup>

In her detailed and extensive analysis of the nature of popular musicians’ informal learning practices, attitudes and values, Green has identified very similar collaborative compositional processes to those identified by Fornas *et al.* and Campbell.<sup>84</sup> Among her sample of popular musicians (aged from fifteen to fifty), group composing usually involved one or two members of the band bringing ideas to the group for embellishment by the others. Frequently, this process began with lyrics only which were then “mucked around with” by the others.

Andy, a member of the 1990’s band *Devoid* explains:

The main writer is the singer – he does come up with all the lyrics – and more often than not he comes up with the basic tune. But as soon as we get into rehearsal it’s no longer what he came up with. We pull it apart, we reform it, we re-structure it ... And it comes out as a different product.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>84</sup> Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn. A Way Ahead for Music Education*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001, pp.79-80.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.80.

Green places peer-directed and group learning at the centre of the informal learning practices of popular music. She notes that, while not overtly educational, the activities associated with playing in a band (from learning to play basic chords to the creation and refinement of musical ideas through group negotiation) significantly, and inevitably, involve the musician in both teaching and learning.<sup>86</sup>

In a more recent paper discussing her later study of adolescent popular music making processes, Green identifies two main music learning practices which take place in the absence of adult supervision or guidance.<sup>87</sup> The first is solitary (usually at home) and involves experimenting, playing along with and imitating recordings, improvising and composing. The second takes place in groups and involves both the conscious direction of peers and unconscious learning (through observing, imitating and talking). Composition and improvisation are integrated with listening and revolve around music in which the learners are thoroughly enculturated. Personal qualities such as cooperation, responsibility and commitment are highly valued, with an emphasis placed upon musicality and getting the “feel” right, as opposed to technical prowess. She differentiates “informal” learning practices from those traditionally associated with “formal” (ie classroom) music education.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.82.

<sup>87</sup> Lucy Green, ‘The Music Curriculum As Lived Experience: Children’s “Natural” Music-Learning Processes’, *Music Educators Journal*, Vol.91, no.4, 2005, pp.27-32.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p.65.

## 2.5 Formal and informal music learning

Green asserts that playing, listening and composing are integrated into group music making by participants who identify with, and are thoroughly encultured in, the music that they play.<sup>89</sup> She highlights the differences between this kind of music learning and that of the traditional music classroom, which she refers to as “formal music learning”. This is presented in summary here (see Table 3).

Formal Music learning (in the classroom)	Informal Music learning (popular music outside of the classroom)
Listening to new and often unfamiliar music	Personal choice, familiar music with whom the listener identifies
Learning music transmission through notated instructions and exercises	Recorded music as the principal, aural means of music transmission and skill acquisition
Learning through adult supervision and guidance, curricula, syllabi or external assessment	Self-teaching and peer-directed learning
Following a progression from simple to complex	Assimilating skills and knowledge in haphazard ways according to musical preferences
Listening, performing, composing and improvising increasingly differentiated as skills and knowledge are acquired	Listening, performing, improvising and composing integrated into the learning process as a whole

**Table 3: Differences between formal and informal music learning**

Folkestad echoes Green’s assertions, pointing to an awakening interest in the ways in which young people learn to play and compose informally and outside of school. He notes that this interest is primarily due to a shift in focus in recent years from music *teaching* to music *learning*.<sup>90</sup> He warns against viewing either formal or informal music learning as “bad” or “good”, arguing that they are not a dichotomy but

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp.27-32.

<sup>90</sup> Goran Folkestad, ‘Formal and Informal Learning Situations or Practices vs Formal and Informal Ways of Learning’, *British Journal of Music Education*, 2006, Vol.23, no.2, pp.135-145.



rather two ends of a spectrum, present to a greater or lesser extent in all music learning situations. He states that formal music learning involves the teacher planning the learning sequence for the students and that informal music learning is a self-chosen and voluntary activity. He observes that all teaching is, in itself, a formal activity, even if it occurs within an informal setting. Folkestad uses Jorgensen's term "eduction", where the music teacher can be likened to a gardener creating good conditions for informal music learning to take place, to point the way forward for music educators.<sup>91</sup>

Savage is highly critical of current compositional teaching practice in the United Kingdom, and raises the issue of inauthentic models which are overly prescriptive and formal and which fail to engage students.<sup>92</sup> He highlights the findings of both Campbell and Green's research and argues for a re-evaluation of music teaching and learning. American music educationalists Allsup and Stauffer point to the notions of mutual and peer learning, democratic action and connecting students' learning to real-life contexts.<sup>93</sup> Allsup calls for a "renegotiation of the dichotomy between the music we teach in school and the music our students enjoy in homes and hallways".<sup>94</sup> In his study into the group music making, notably composing, of two groups of American high school band students, he investigates the notion of democracy within

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.137.

<sup>92</sup> Jonathon Savage, 'Informal Approaches to the Development of Young People's Composition Skills', *Music Education Research*, Vol.5, no.1, 2003, pp.82-85.

<sup>93</sup> Randall Everett Allsup, 'Mutual Learning and Democratic Action in Instrumental Music Education', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.51, no.1, pp.24-37; and Susan Stauffer, 'Connections Between the Musical and Life Experiences of Young Composers and Their Compositions', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.50, no.4, pp.301-313.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.25.

the group as a “community-in-the-making.”<sup>95</sup> He notes that group members found working in classical music styles and genres unproductive for group composing or “community-making”, whereas group-composing in a jazz or popular style was viewed as “fun, non-obligatory, self-directed and personally meaningful”.<sup>96</sup> He also notes that in such settings there was an emphasis on interpersonal relationships, peer learning and peer critique, as well as an expectation that group members would take care of each other.

## 2.6 Theories of social learning

The studies examined above rarely dwell exclusively upon the music.<sup>97</sup> As noted earlier, young people’s composing can also be viewed from three broad perspectives: as cognitive processes, as a socio-cultural activity or as sociological phenomena. What the students think about their composing, their sources of motivation, the contexts within which they are composing, and their social groupings are frequently included in theoretical frameworks of analysis. Burnard and Younker stress the importance of acknowledging students’ own realities and perspectives.<sup>98</sup> This is also the case in investigations into group composing where the creative act is, by necessity, a social one.<sup>99</sup> Social-scientific theories of youth culture, rather than those associated with

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.29

<sup>97</sup> An exception to this is Kratus, ‘A Time Analysis of the Compositional Processes’.

<sup>98</sup> Burnard and Younker, ‘Problem solving and Creativity’ pp.59-76.

<sup>99</sup> Examples of these kinds of study are: McGillen and McMillan, ‘Co-operative Song Writing’, pp.25-38 and Campbell, ‘Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting’ pp.12-20. A possible exception is that of Fautley’s, ‘A New Model of the Group Composing Process’, pp.39-57. Whilst Fautley has focussed almost entirely upon the musical interactions, he makes reference to educational theorists in terms of cooperative learning and the notion of *distributed cognition*.

musical creativity, predominate in the work of Fornas et al.<sup>100</sup> The learning that occurs when young people compose has been the theoretical focus for many researchers. Fautley's study, although limited in its scope, was one of the first to view group composing through the lenses of situative learning and communities of practice.<sup>101</sup> Recent work by Green points to the need for more studies that focus upon the informal learning practices of young rock and pop musicians, so that teachers can be better informed about music learning within the classroom, as well as out of it. Theories of group and peer-based learning are central to her argument.

### 2.6.1 Socio-cultural Learning Theories and *Communities of Practice*

Barab and Duffy state that knowledge is situated through experience and that the term most commonly used to describe the essence of learning contexts is *situated*.<sup>102</sup> Within the sphere of situative learning theory, Lave and Wenger employ the concept of *legitimate peripheral participation* to characterise learning within an apprenticeship, broadening the traditional connotations of the master/apprentice relationship to one of dynamic participation and identity transformation within a community of practice, where the novice moves from peripheral to full participation along a learning trajectory.<sup>103</sup> Green acknowledges that this characterises music learning in a number of cultures. She points out that for many young pop and

---

<sup>100</sup> Fornas, Lindberg and Sernhede, *In Garageland*, 1995.

<sup>101</sup> Fautley refers to Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

<sup>102</sup> Sasha A. Barab and Thomas M. Duffy, 'From Practice Fields to Communities of Practice', in David Jonassen and Susan Land (eds.), *Theoretical Foundations of Learning Environments*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000, pp.25-50.

<sup>103</sup> Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, pp.15-18.

rock musicians, a community of experienced adult musicians is largely unavailable to them and therefore legitimate peripheral participation within such a community is unlikely. She argues that young musicians tend to participate as members of a community of peers rather than master musicians.<sup>104</sup>

However, it can be argued that a band is a community of practice in its own right and that peripheral participation is quite valid. Wenger defines *communities of practice* as “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis. These people meet because they find value in their interactions”.<sup>105</sup> This certainly describes a teenage rock band where young people form communities, “created over time in the pursuit of a shared enterprise”.<sup>106</sup> Barab and Duffy go on to assert that any discussions of learning must begin within a community of practice. They define the features of a community of practice as having:

- Common cultural and historical heritage, including shared goals, negotiated meanings and practices
- An interdependent system, in that individuals are becoming part of something larger than themselves
- A reproduction cycle through which newcomers can become old timers.

---

<sup>104</sup> Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, p.16.

<sup>105</sup> Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott and William Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp.4-5.

<sup>106</sup> Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.45.

If Wenger's definition and Barab and Duffy's list of characteristics apply to a collaboratively composing rock band, a rock band could be viewed as a *community* where its members are engaged in the *practice* of playing and composing together. Wenger argues that learning is primarily about identities and modes of belonging, and only secondarily about learning skills and knowledge.<sup>107</sup> He states that "for many students, school represents a choice between a meaningful identity and learning - a choice that creates conflict between their social and personal lives and their intellectual engagement at school".<sup>108</sup> He compares this with the learning of adults within their professional (and chosen) communities of practice where frequently social and intellectual spheres are merged. This resonates with the literature discussed earlier regarding informal and formal music learning practices, and also with studies of the music making within groups, particularly informal groups such as rock or garage bands.

### **2.6.2 Cooperative Learning Theory and *Positive Interdependence***

Viewing a collaboratively composing band as a community of practice incorporates the learning of individuals into the whole group. However, one can also examine the kinds of teaching and learning that happens *between* members of rock bands. As observed by Green, and also by McGillen and McMillan, there is much common ground between the general application of cooperative practice and peer-based collaborative

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.262.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.270.

composition.<sup>109</sup> Vygotsky has shown that a less knowledgeable child is able to learn more from a more able or more knowledgeable peer than on his or her own. He described the sphere in which children learn as a being within a *zone of proximal development* where a tutor provides a scaffold for the learner to tackle problems that are beyond their current level of ability.<sup>110</sup> Vygotskian and social constructivist theories of knowledge acquisition are based on the belief that all thought is social in nature and that learning happens consensually through social interaction.<sup>111</sup> Song writing within a group can be described as a collective search for understanding and also as a process of cooperative learning. As Slavin observes, all cooperative learning methods share the idea that when students work together they not only learn individually but each member is also responsible for the learning of the others so that the group's goals may be achieved.<sup>112</sup> Dillenbourg notes that defining collaborative, as opposed to cooperative, learning is a fraught and complex task where the word "collaborative" is more meaningful than "learning".<sup>113</sup> He emphasises the importance of the interaction between members of a group within a situation, rather than the cooperative structures within which they are working and it is this emphasis that shall be used here.

---

<sup>109</sup> McGillen and McMillan, 'Engaging with Adolescent Musicians', p.1.

<sup>110</sup> LevVygotsky, *The Mind In Society*, p.86.

<sup>111</sup> Sarah McCarthy and Susan McMahon, 'From Convention to Invention: Approaches to Peer Interaction During Writing', in Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz and Norman Miller (eds.) *Interaction in Cooperative Groups*, 1992, pp.1-35.

<sup>112</sup> Robert E. Slavin, *Cooperative Learning*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995, p.5.

<sup>113</sup> Pierre Dillenbourg, 'What Do You Mean By Collaborative Learning?', in P. Dillenbourg (ed.) *Collaborative-learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches*, Elsevier: Geneva, 1999.

The notion of *positive interdependence* can be applied when describing and interpreting the interactions between collaboratively composing band members. Johnson and Johnson define *positive interdependence* as existing “when one perceives that one is linked with others in a way so that one cannot succeed unless they do (and vice versa) and/or that one must coordinate one’s efforts with the efforts of others to complete a task”.<sup>114</sup> They also stress the importance of placing positive interdependence within a context of social interdependence.<sup>115</sup> Johnson and Johnson identify four conditions of positive interdependence, where group efforts may be expected to be more productive than individual efforts:

- Considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction
- Personal responsibility (individual accountability to achieve the group’s goals)
- Frequent use of relevant interpersonal and small-group skills
- Periodic and frequent group processing.<sup>116</sup>

As with the metaphor of community of practice, these criteria resonate with the findings of the studies of composing and group music making discussed earlier, and seem to describe what happens when young people get together to play and compose rock music.

---

<sup>114</sup> David Johnson and Roger Johnson, ‘Cooperative Learning and Achievement’, in Shlomo Sharan (ed.) *Cooperative Learning*, New York: Praeger, 1990, pp.27-28.

<sup>115</sup> David Johnson and Roger Johnson, ‘Positive Interdependence: Key to Effective Cooperation’, in Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz and Norman Miller (eds.), *Interaction in Cooperative Groups*, 1992, pp.174-193.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter has examined the most significant research into the compositional processes of children and young people. The work of theorists, particularly that of Wallas and Csikszentmihalyi, has been shown to be influential in these studies, as has Webster's model of creativity in music. Increasingly, the research makes reference to cooperative learning theories, particularly those of Vygotsky, and Johnson and Johnson, with a growing awareness that the formal learning processes of the traditional music classroom are not the only places where music learning takes place for young people today. The metaphor of a community of practice and theories of situative learning have also been referred to in recent studies, such as those by Green and Fautley, reflecting a shift in music education away from thinking about music teaching to that of music learning. Studies within a rock or pop context, such as those by Campbell and Green, have generated intense interest over the past five years in the "informal" learning practices of adolescents when they play and compose within these genres. However, there is still a paucity of research into the compositional processes of young people who play in popular genres and within popular cultures, and there is a need to develop a model for collaborative composition in these "informal" settings. This study will develop this model.



## Chapter 3

# Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the qualitative method of enquiry chosen for this study. It will outline the kinds of data collected and the means by which these were analysed, addressing the four research questions:

- How are songs composed collaboratively within a teenage rock band?
- Can a theoretical model be used to identify and describe how songs are composed within a group?
- How do the members of a group interact when composing together?
- Do group members learn from each other and, if so, how does this occur?

The relative strengths and limitations of the research methodologies are examined here, along with the stance taken by the researcher, and the analytical framework is outlined.

### 3.2 Qualitative Research

Merriam defines qualitative research as a collective term for a number of forms of enquiry such as *naturalistic enquiry*, *interpretive research*, *field study*, *participant observation*, *case study* and *ethnography*.<sup>117</sup> The key assumption upon which qualitative research is based is that the qualitative researcher

---

<sup>117</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998, p.5.

seeks to understand complex interrelationships, where the uniqueness of individual cases and contexts is important to that understanding.<sup>118</sup> Qualitative research involves the “studied use of a variety of empirical methods” in an interconnected way, in order to “get a better fix on the subject matter in hand”.<sup>119</sup> The intention of the present study is to use a variety of methods to get a better fix upon the way in which young people compose together. Denzin and Lincoln describe this process as a *bricolage*: “a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation”.<sup>120</sup> Crotty disputes Denzin and Lincoln’s self-reflexive “can I do it?” interpretation of the word and instead sees a *bricoleur* as someone who “makes something new out of a range of materials that had previously made up something different”. He argues that the focus should remain on the research “object” rather than the researcher.<sup>121</sup> It seems reasonable to accept both interpretations of the term *bricolage*, where, in the process of investigating the collaborative compositional processes of the bands the researcher employs a range of approaches to research methodology whilst paying sustained and responsive attention to the “objects” of the research. The study involved fieldwork, employed an inductive research strategy, and is richly descriptive.

While a mixed methods approach was considered, the research presented in this study will demonstrate what Merriam identifies as *the characteristics*

---

<sup>118</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p.39.

<sup>119</sup> Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, ‘The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research’, in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003, p.2.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., pp.2-3.

<sup>121</sup> Michael Crotty, *Foundations of Social Research*, St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1998, p.50.

of *qualitative research*, in that the researcher is “interested in the meanings people have constructed”.<sup>122</sup> Some quantitative data were generated when some of the analysis involved coding compositional pathways and phases in relation to the theoretical model. Stake emphasises the epistemological difference between *explaining* and *interpreting* data, where quantitative enquiry seeks to identify and explain cause and effect, and qualitative enquiry seeks to understand through the interpretation of complex human interactions.<sup>123</sup> Yin highlights a debate within the field of evaluative research, where quantitative and qualitative methodologies are seen as mutually exclusive, but disputes this, arguing that regardless of whether one favours qualitative or quantitative research, there is strong and essential ground between the two.<sup>124</sup> With this in mind, the quantitative data generated by this study are graphed and then analysed in light of the qualitative data, adding to, and informing, a rich, qualitative description of each band’s compositional processes and interactions.

### **3.3 Case Study Research methodology**

This research is presented as three qualitative case studies. Yin describes a case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident”.<sup>125</sup> This is entirely congruent with the present study in that it is an investigation of

---

<sup>122</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications*, pp.7-8.

<sup>123</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p.39.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Yin, *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003, pp.14-5.

<sup>125</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, p.13; and Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p.38.

the contemporary phenomenon of collaborative song writing by teenagers, within the real-life context of a series of band rehearsals. The case studies undertaken here reflect what Stake describes as “a purposive sample, building in variety and acknowledging opportunities for intensive study”, where the intention is to improve our knowledge of the collaborative compositional process.<sup>126</sup> In turn, the findings will contribute further insights into what is already known about how adolescents play and compose music together.

Guba and Lincoln warn against assuming that a case study accounts for the whole and suggest that it be viewed as a “slice of life”.<sup>127</sup> Stake also notes that a sample of one, or a sample of just a few, is unlikely to be a strong representation of others.<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, Yin considers that single and multiple case studies fall within the same methodological framework but that (obviously) “multiple cases are considered more compelling and the overall study is regarded as more robust”.<sup>129</sup> Case study research is not sampling research in that it does not have as its primary goal the comparison of multiple samples. According to Miles and Huberman, qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, studied in depth and “nested in their context”, and that the small sample is purposive rather than random.<sup>130</sup> The intention here, therefore, is not to create a statistical basis from which to draw

---

<sup>126</sup> Stake, ‘Qualitative Case Studies’, in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003, p.451.

<sup>127</sup> Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln, *Effective Evaluation*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981, p.23.

<sup>128</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, pp.4-5.

<sup>129</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, p.45.

<sup>130</sup> Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994, p.27.

conclusions for an entire set, but instead to throw some light upon what happens within each of a small number of cases, that is, groups of young people playing rock music and writing songs together. The three cases will provide an insight into three individual and unique instances of group composing and are not generalisations about the nature of group composing as a whole. This does not mean, however, that the similarities and contrasts between cases are not illuminating. With these issues in mind, the compositional processes for each band were examined as unique to each case.

### **3.4 Size and scope of the study**

Although this study comprises three cases, five bands were initially selected for investigation because it was predicted that some groups would not stay together during the research period. This was wholly reasonable, given that they were voluntary and self-created, and subject to the needs, desires, artistic ambitions and circumstances of their teenage members. Indeed, two groups disbanded in the first week of the study, leaving three groups.<sup>131</sup> Through professional networks, secondary teachers were asked to nominate bands whose members were composing collaboratively. A number responded and a typology of attributes was used to select the cases (see Table 4).<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>131</sup> A leading member of one band decided to perform at RockQuest as a solo singer/song writer and, without her, the band soon folded. The members of a second band parted company due to artistic differences. The lead singer of the band wanted to continue working in the semi-acoustic, soft rock style as they had been doing for some months, while the other members of the band had moved on to new forms of social and musical expression and wanted to play death metal/thrash metal. It was clearly going to be some time before the newly formed metal group were working well together and they were withdrawn from the study.

<sup>132</sup> Stake, 'Qualitative Case Studies', p.451.

The bands chosen for the study possessed all of the attributes listed in Table 4. The fourteen participants came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, in both urban and rural settings and included twelve boys and two girls. The three bands were assigned pseudonyms: *Junior*, *Senior* and *Boys*. The members of *Boys* and *Junior* were all in Year 10, either 14 or 15 years old. The members of *Senior* were all in Year 13 and either 17 or 18 years old. The bands will be described in detail later, in this and the next, chapter.

Range	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age of participants: from 13 to 18 years</li> <li>• Location: urban, suburban, rural</li> <li>• School type: state, private, single-sex, co-educational, decile<sup>133</sup></li> <li>• Gender</li> </ul>	Participants needed to be of secondary school age. As three cases were planned, it was important that the three groups were as diverse as possible within the parameters set below in order to allow for some comparison between the groups. It was anticipated that there would be more boys than girls.

Attributes	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The researcher was previously unknown to the members of the group</li> </ul>	In order to facilitate access to the group and to minimise as much as possible the surveillance effect of the researcher being present. <sup>134</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group has a regular rehearsal time and day of the week, either in class time or after school (to ensure accessibility)</li> <li>• Members rehearse at a venue that is accessible to the researcher</li> <li>• The school principal, members of the school's Board of Trustees and parents of the participants are supportive of the study</li> </ul>	To gain and maintain sustained access to the participants on an on-going basis and over an unknown time frame
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All members of the group have responded positively when asked if they wish to participate</li> <li>• Group is supported by at least one classroom music teacher who is actively enthusiastic about the study</li> </ul>	To ensure that the participants were "hospitable to our enquiry" <sup>135</sup>  Necessary for sustained access to the group

<sup>133</sup> Decile denotes the socio-economic status of the local community.

<sup>134</sup> Maud Hickey, 'The Computer as a Tool in Creative Music Making', *Research Studies in Music Education*, Vol. 8, 1997, p.56-70.

<sup>135</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, pp. 4-5.

Attributes	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the group are proficient players</li> <li>• The teacher has reported that, over time, the members of the band have shown commitment to playing and composing together</li>   <li>• The group has been in existence (playing and sing writing) for at least 3 months</li> </ul>	<p>Campbell has shown that collaborative composition is developmental and that novices tend to focus upon replication of existing songs rather than composing their own.<sup>136</sup> Therefore participants needed to have some experience of composing together and be able to play their instruments with reasonable proficiency</p> <p>Ensuring that the group’s identity, its social, creative, stylistic and musical parameters and ways of working together have already been established</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the band are intending to participate in Rock Quest 2006</li> </ul>	<p>Rock Quest requires the performance of original music. This ensures that the group was focussed upon song writing. This attribute also selects bands playing within one genre – rock music.</p>

**Table 4: Typology of Attributes for the selection of cases**

### 3.5 My stance as a researcher

The qualitative paradigm assumes that value-free interpretative research is impossible; every researcher brings preconceptions and interpretations of the problem being studied.<sup>137</sup> My background consists of training as a pianist and singer in the classical tradition, as a secondary school music teacher, and as an in-service professional development facilitator, working with secondary music teachers and their students. Over the years I had tutored a number of bands in preparation for RockQuest although I had not engaged in their song writing. As a student, I had performed in rock bands myself and, at the time of conducting the research, was performing in an adult band, playing popular music, much of which was composed and arranged by

---

<sup>136</sup> Campbell, ‘Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting’, p.19.

<sup>137</sup> Liora Bresler, ‘Traditions and Change Across the Arts: Case Studies in Arts Education’, *International Journal of Music Education*, Vol.27, p.31.

its members. As such, I am familiar with music making in contemporary popular genres.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the research question arose out of my desire to find out more about collaborative composition, following conversations with a teacher who was wondering how he might assess this work as part of NCEA. I had developed close professional relationships with some of the secondary music teachers in the region having worked with them and their students over a number of years as an in-service facilitator. I was interested in finding pathways by which students who were composing in groups might gain access to the NCEA qualifications process, and regarded the current assessment process (focussed upon the composition of a sole individual) as unrepresentative of the composing of secondary school students. Through my work as an in-service facilitator, the teachers involved were well aware of my views and therefore my subjective position within the research. As Olesen notes, such dilemmas can arise from doing research in one's own professional culture, where the researcher and professional roles may conflict.<sup>138</sup> With this in mind, the student participants were chosen from bands that were unknown to me. As Stake observes, the interpretation of data will be shaped by the mood, the experience and the intention of the researcher and while some of these can be ignored or ameliorated, some cannot.<sup>139</sup> However, the positive and collegial professional relationships I had already

---

<sup>138</sup> Virginia Olesen, 'Feminisms and Models of Qualitative Research', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003, pp.83-98.

<sup>139</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p.5



established with their teachers meant that I could be readily introduced to the bands as a person in whom they could trust. This made gaining access to the bands relatively straightforward and I was made to feel welcome and accepted from the first observation by the members of all three bands.

The primary focus of the data collection was on the students and, although the teachers were aware of the subjective context within which I was working, the students were not. I introduced myself to the participants in the study as someone who wanted to “find out more about how you write songs together.” I also presented myself as a fellow musician who was, like them, playing original music in a band. Neither the teachers nor I sought to hide the fact that I was a welcome visitor to the school and that our relationship was well established and that of professional peers.

## **3.6 Method of Enquiry**

### **3.6.1 Data**

Of the six kinds of commonly used case study data (documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations and physical artefacts, which includes works of art), direct observation and interviews were deemed the most logical choices of data to seek for this study.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, most studies of compositional processes referred to in Chapter 2 employ these forms of evidence in their investigations. For example, Campbell includes video and audio

---

<sup>140</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, pp.85-97

recordings, and interviews in her data set.<sup>141</sup> Fornas, Lindberg and Sernhede's comprehensive ethnographic study focuses primarily upon the functions of playing rock music as symbols of post-modern youth culture and does not focus upon the music the groups composed and played.<sup>142</sup> However, as with McGillen and McMillan's study, there is a strong sense of the voices of the participants, with excerpts from individual interviews running alongside the main body of the text. Green also includes extensive references to participant voice in her study of popular musicians.<sup>143</sup> Most of the previous studies entailed the making of video and audio recordings of the groups working together, and field notes were made during observations. Many include the voices of the participants in their research. Fautley, and McGillen and McMillan have presented graphic models of the composing process. These methodologies are consistent with those associated with those of case study. They are also common-sense ways to capture group composing as it happens and, as such, have been used here. In addition to these a questionnaire was developed which asked the participants about their music education and their musical interests.<sup>144</sup>

### 3.6.2 Collecting the data and ethical considerations

Stake's description of the characteristics of qualitative research provides an apt summary of the methodological approach to data collection in this study:

---

<sup>141</sup> Campbell, 'Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting', pp.12-20.

<sup>142</sup> Fornas et al., *In Garageland*.

<sup>143</sup> Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*.

<sup>144</sup> See Appendix E.

For all their intrusions into habitats and personal affairs, qualitative researchers are non-interventionists. They try to see what would have happened had they not been there. During fieldwork they try not to draw attention to themselves or their work. Other than positioning themselves, they try to avoid creating situations to test their hypothesis. They try to observe the ordinary and they try to observe it long enough to comprehend what, for the case, ordinary means. For them, naturalistic observation has been the primary medium of acquaintance. When they cannot see for themselves, they ask others who have seen. When formal records have been kept, they pour over the documents. But most of them favour a personal capture of the experience so, from their own involvement, they can interpret it, recognise its context, puzzle the many meanings while still there, and pass along an experiential, naturalistic account for readers to participate themselves in some similar reflection.<sup>145</sup>

In this study, participants and their teachers, school principals and parents were informed of the scope and intent of the study according to ethical guidelines and gave written permission for observations, recordings and interviews to take place. Anonymity of the participants, their teachers and their schools was regarded as a very important ethical consideration involving fieldwork.<sup>146</sup> Pseudonyms were used to identify all of the participants and any specific information that identified them or their schools was removed from the written data. However, consent was sought from, and granted by, all parties for the use of videoed observations and audio recordings in the overall report and discussion.

The observations were intended to be carried out in an unobtrusive manner within the naturalistic setting of ordinary band rehearsals which would have occurred anyway. Access to the bands was negotiated with band members and their teachers, and appropriate

---

<sup>145</sup> Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p.44.

<sup>146</sup> D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, 'Personal Experience Methods', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003, pp.413-427.

times and dates were chosen.<sup>147</sup> It was intended that all of the observations would occur during the school year but prior to the RockQuest regional heats, that is, between March and June 2006. The rationale for this was to ensure that the data were collected at a time when the bands would be composing together, and at a period in the school year when the participants were working together in one place, mainly at school. However, after two observations of each band, conducted between March and May, all three groups began to focus upon refining and practising existing songs for performance at RockQuest, rather than composing new songs. As such the research was suspended until song writing was resumed. One band broke up during this period and subsequently two bands were observed again, post RockQuest, in July and October. The break-up resulted in an incomplete data set for one band and the hiatus had some effect upon the data for the other two bands. The consequences of these will be addressed in the next chapter.

A video tripod, which could be raised high above the heads of the participants, and a fish-eye lens on the video camera were used during the observation to capture the whole group rehearsing in small spaces such as school practice rooms and garages. I set the video camera and audio recorder in one place in the rehearsal space. In order to avoid any disruption to the naturalistic setting the camera position was shifted only when the players moved out of shot. I occasionally asked questions if the participants engaged with me of their own accord and,

---

<sup>147</sup> However observations tended to be made on an opportunistic basis when the band was in a compositional phase and the school timetable allowed access.

if captured on audio or video, these conversations were treated as informal interviews. Field notes were made at this time where my status was that of non-participant observer.<sup>148</sup> All of the observations were conducted using the same methodology so that some degree of comparison could be achieved within the sessions of each band and also between each group.

The participants were interviewed as a group. These interviews were semi-structured and were conducted collectively in the manner of Soderman and Folkestad's investigation into how hip-hop musicians interact.<sup>149</sup> While there was a degree of commonality in the questions and responses to these, each interview exists in its own right as a snapshot of the group's impressions of how they write their songs. Fontana and Frey point out that the results of group interviews cannot be generalized because the emerging group culture may interfere with individual expression (a group can be dominated by one person for example) and "group-think" is a possible outcome.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, a number of informal conversations between the researcher and participants were videoed during and after the observations, and these were also transcribed as unstructured interviews. These types of conversations are a predictable outcome of observation in that although some qualitative researchers differentiate between in-depth

---

<sup>148</sup> Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, *Research Methods in Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New York: Croom Helm 1980, p.56-57.

<sup>149</sup> Johan Soderman and Goran Folkestad, 'How Hip-hop Musicians Learn: Strategies in Informal Creative Music Making', *Music Education Research*, 2004, Vol.6, no.3, p.316.

<sup>150</sup> Andrea Fontana and James Frey, 'The Interview', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003, p.705.

(ethnographic) interviewing and participant observation, the two go hand in hand.<sup>151</sup>

In order to provide another perspective on how a group composed, the teachers involved with two of the groups were interviewed individually about their perceptions of how the groups composed their songs. The participants also completed questionnaires about their musical education, background and influences. These questionnaires provided comparable detail for all participants and helped to build up a stylistic picture of the musical contexts within which each band and each individual was working.

### 3.6.3 Timeframe

Observations and interviews were conducted over two time periods. The first was from April to May 2006, prior to the RockQuest regional heats in June. All three bands were working hard, writing songs to be performed at the competition. However, as the date for the RockQuest “regionals” approached, the bands’ rehearsal sessions became increasingly focussed upon refinement of their stagecraft and becoming familiar with their chosen songs, rather than song writing and so the research was suspended in June. Each band was observed twice prior to this. The members of *Junior* and *Senior* completed questionnaires at the end of their second observation. As a band member was absent during the second *Boys* observation, the boys agreed to complete the questionnaire at the end of a third scheduled observation. However,

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p.705.

before this could occur, just prior to RockQuest, *Boys* suddenly, and rather acrimoniously, broke up although the boys did manage to perform together at RockQuest. Its members declined to be interviewed.<sup>152</sup> The Music teacher at *Boys'* school was new to the school in 2006 and did not know the band well and so the teacher was not interviewed.

Members of *Senior* and *Junior* continued to play and compose after RockQuest and group interviews were conducted in July 2006. *Junior* was observed for a third time in July 2006 and a studio recording of two *Junior's* songs was subsequently made in November, 2006. The members of *Senior* took a break from song writing in July and August while they rehearsed for gigs, resuming song writing again in September. A third observation of their group song writing was made in October. By this stage, the members of *Senior* were either eighteen years old or nearly eighteen, and it was clear that they were all more than ready to leave school. Perhaps it is not surprising that the band broke up in early November, 2006. The Music teachers at *Junior* and *Senior's* schools were interviewed in November 2006.

---

<sup>152</sup> While this means that the data set for this case is incomplete, compared with that of the other two bands, an analysis of the data gathered during two observations of *Boys* has been included in this study because it affords some interesting points of contrast with those of the other two bands.

### **3.6.4 Summary of data collected**

The following sets of data were collected for two of the cases (*Junior* and *Senior*):

- Field notes made during observations of three band practices
- Video and audio recordings of these
- Detailed observational notes made while viewing video footage
- Transcripts of selected verbal exchanges made during the sessions
- Transcripts of group interviews (both formal and informal)
- Transcripts of individual teacher interviews
- Questionnaire.

The third data set (for *Boys*) is incomplete and consists of:

- Field notes made during observations of two band practices
- Video and audio recordings of these
- Detailed observational notes made while viewing video footage
- Transcripts of selected verbal exchanges made during the sessions.

### **3.6.5 Limitations of the data**

Data of the kinds listed above have their limitations. The participants in the study were able to talk about their impressions of how the group went about writing songs in a general way, but did not have the opportunity to engage with the observational data and describe what was happening. Interpretation of what occurred during the song writing



sessions is mine alone because members of the bands did not view videos of these sessions, nor did they have the opportunity to explain what was happening in these particular instances. Their motivations and intentions at that point cannot be known.

Sometimes verbal exchanges between band members were made while others were playing loudly so that what was said could not be heard (band members were not wearing microphones because this would have compromised the naturalistic setting). Sometimes the data are not always sequential because a song writing session (or more than one) occurred between one observation and the next, meaning that some parts of the compositional process for a particular song were missed.

For two of the bands (*Junior* and *Senior*) the observational data were provisionally analysed as they were gathered until there was sufficient evidence that a range of compositional phases had been passed through and the data began to repeat themselves. In both cases this occurred after three observations. Observational data for the incomplete third case (*Boys*) was examined in the light of the data collected for the other two cases. These data were deemed sufficient to reveal how the band's songs were composed and also provided some interesting points of contrast with the other two cases, and so were retained as part of the study.

Finally, while some conclusions are drawn about the ways in which learning happened within the collaboration, what the participants actually learned and what they thought about how or what they learned

could only be superficially examined through the methods outlined above. This means that in-depth analysis of the participants' *individual* cognitive and creative processes is outside the range of this study.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Methodology**

Miles and Huberman identify some common features of qualitative data analysis which focus upon naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings and these, listed below, have been used as the means of data analysis in this study:

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations or interviews
- Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins
- Sorting, sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences
- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalisations that cover consistencies discerned in the database
- Confronting those generalisations with a formalised body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.<sup>153</sup>

#### **3.7.1 Formulation of the theoretical model of collaborative composition**

The construction of a theoretical model of collaborative composing was highly informed by the work of others. Fautley's study, discussed in Chapter 2, included the creation of a theoretical model in an attempt to show how groups of collaborative composers in a lower secondary school progressed through compositional phases.<sup>154</sup> Although the study is based upon observational data from just a single instance, the model itself represents a distillation of a number of well-established theoretical models. It provided a useful and valid starting point from which to

---

<sup>153</sup> Miles and Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, p.9.

<sup>154</sup> Fautley, 'A New Model of Group Composing', pp.39-57.

develop a model for the present study. McGillen and McMillan also created a model of the group composing process that is similar in structure, although not content, to Fautley's.<sup>155</sup> Both of these owe their structure to models developed by Webster and Wallas that have been described in Chapter 2. The current study uses these two models, informed as they are by earlier ones, to create a theoretical model that, as Fautley puts it, "accounts for group composing".<sup>156</sup>

### **3.7.2 Creating the theoretical model**

The aim of the data analysis was to use an inductive process of organising, sifting, categorising, describing and classifying phenomena in order to find out how a teenage rock band composed in a group. As discussed earlier, although Fautley examined just a single instance of collaborative composing within a music class, his study is well grounded in both educational and musical theory. The model he developed arose from a comprehensive examination of a wide variety of creative models and, as such, was a valid starting point for the development of a collaborative model within more informal settings. Fautley developed a series of stages within which he placed a series of phases, describing compositional processes as they occurred. These stages and phases were examined as the data were collected and used as the basis for the creation of a new inferential model of collaborative composition, specific to the context of the research.<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> McGillen and McMillan, 'Cooperative Song Writing', pp.33-34.

<sup>156</sup> Fautley, 'A New Model of Group Composing', p.39.

<sup>157</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Case Study Research*, p.187.

The theoretical model for the current study was developed through a process of *constant comparison* that was carried out simultaneously with the collection of data.<sup>158</sup> Although the intent was not to build a substantive theory through grounded theory, the basic strategy of constant comparison can be regarded as compatible with what Merriam calls the “inductive, concept-building orientation of all qualitative research”.<sup>159</sup> Six of Fautley’s phases were retained: *generation, exploration, organisation, work-in-progress, revision* and *transformation and modification*. The terms *phase* and *stage* were reversed as it seemed to me that the collaboratively composing groups were likely to remain in a particular compositional *phase*, within which there were a number of *stages* that were passed through, both sequentially and cyclically. Through constant comparison strategies, informed by Fautley’s work as explained above, ten compositional stages were identified as being likely to occur (see Table 5).

It was theorised that these terms could be used to identify stages in collaborative composition and that these occurred in both a sequential and cyclical way that could be represented as a kind of flow chart. It was also theorised that these could be divided into three compositional phases, representing two phases of creativity and one of performance. In the first phase an idea is generated and confirmed by the members of the band as being something that is worth working on. It is then taught

---

<sup>158</sup> Constant comparison, as a method of data analysis, was developed by Glaser and Strauss as a means of developing grounded theory. Constant comparison occurs when the researcher builds upon a series of comparisons which lead to the formulation of tentative categories and concepts, which in turn leads to the formulation of a theory. See a definition of grounded theory in William Wiersma, *Research Methods in Education*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000, pp.17-18.

<sup>159</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Case Study Research*, p.187.

and learned and then “jammed” as a “work in progress”. These stages are associated with the creation of new ideas and so are different from stages where the band is working on established ideas. Therefore, the theoretical compositional stages were organised into three phases. These were not seen as being discrete and it was anticipated that bands would move back into Phase 1 stages when new material was being added to an existing song (see Figure 3.1).

<b>Stages</b>	<b>Compositional behaviours</b>
<i>Explorative (EX)</i>	Experimenting, trying things out, looking for ideas, general musical doodling, “mucking around” <sup>160</sup> , jamming.
<i>Generative (GEN)</i>	“Coming up with” an idea that has potential or seems to work
<i>Confirmative (CON)</i>	The idea is recognised as being valuable by the rest of the band and is confirmed as having potential for a group composition. This may be the catalyst for beginning a new song or material for inclusion in an existing song.
<i>Transmission (TRAN)</i>	The composer of the new idea teaches it to (one or more of) the others, sometimes supported by someone who has picked it up more quickly.
<i>Work in progress (WIP)</i>	Playing through the song as it exists so far. A process of review and rehearsal.
<i>Revision and reconfirmation (R&amp;R)</i>	Playing through material from an earlier session. A process of familiarisation, revision and critique. <i>How does it go again? Is it as good as we thought it was?</i>
<i>Transformation and modification (T&amp;M)</i>	An intensely creative process of transforming an existing idea, often in order to make it playable or singable. Sometimes occurring during jamming.
<i>Organisation (O)</i>	Structural discussion, usually verbal. <i>Who does what and when.</i>
<i>Refinement (REF)</i>	Polishing ideas, clarifying small details.
<i>Rehearsal (RH)</i>	Rehearsal

**Table 5: Ten group compositional stages**

---

<sup>160</sup> Members of both *Junior* and *Senior*, and also their teachers, tended to describe this process as “mucking around”. This concept is examined in detail later.

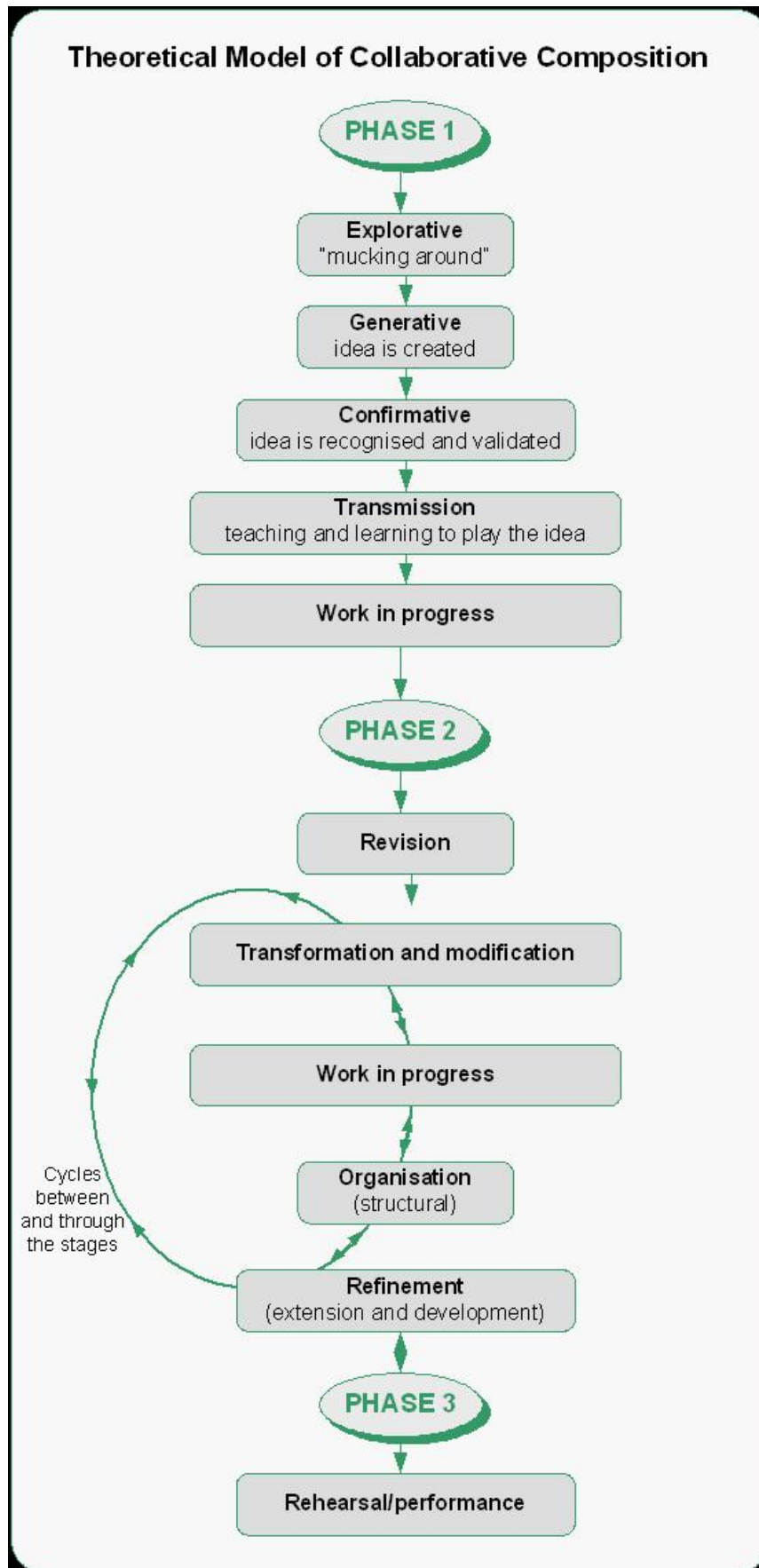


Figure 3.1: The theoretical model prior to data analysis

Observational field notes and video recordings of the bands' composing were analysed and coded according to this model using a chart (see Figure 3.2).

BAND: <i>Junior</i>		Observation no.: 3
TIME code (minutes.seconds)	COMP. Code	COMMENT
4.05 – 5.34	TRAN/O	R teaches C his bass line idea for intro & they all talk about how to link into verse 1
5:35 – 6.32	WIP	Play thru to incorporate new ideas
etc		

**Figure 3.2: Example of the coding and analysis chart**

### 3.7.3 Modification of the theoretical model during analysis

As the coding progressed, three modifications to the theoretical model were required in order to account fully for what was happening in all three bands. Firstly, explorative stages [EX] occurred in three different ways and these seemed to be mutually exclusive. They were:

- *Mucking around*: seemingly random and aimless individual musical doodling, usually at the end of a session or during periods of low creative energy
- *Jamming*: purposeful group improvisation to a riff or chord progression
- *Lyric writing*. This usually involved one person lyric writing while the rest of band *looped*, that is, played one section of a song over and over until the lyrics were written in a singable form.

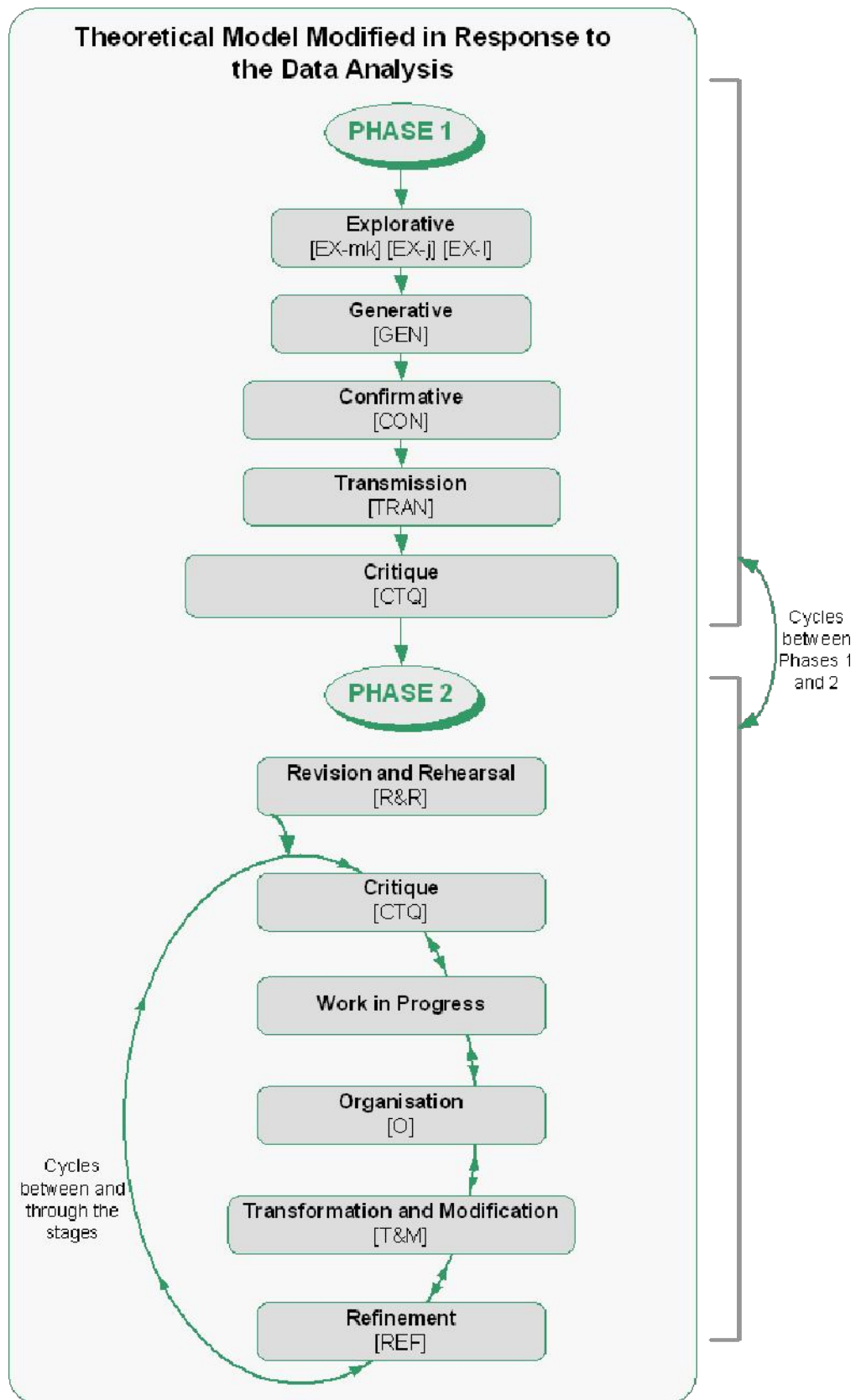
Therefore three subsets were added to the EX code: [EX-mk], [EX-j] and [EX-l]. Secondly, two of the bands were in an almost constant state of critique, which took the form of verbal comments and physical

gestures. *Critique* differs from *organization* or *confirmation* in that the discourse is an on-going aesthetic and stylistic monitoring and filtering of the compositional process, rather than the acceptance or rejection of an idea, or a structural discussion. Therefore a new code was added: [CTQ]. Thirdly, the rehearsal code was deemed unnecessary in that *rehearsal*, other than *work in progress*, was not part of the compositional process and therefore, the code [RH] was removed from the analysis.<sup>161</sup> Once these modifications to the theoretical model had been made, it soon became clear that these codes could be used effectively to account for what was observed in all eight observations, for all three bands (see Figure 3.3). While the flow-chart model was useful as a conceptual tool, the codes within the phases proved the most effective way of describing what was happening.

---

<sup>161</sup> *Rehearsal*, as a stage in the process, remained as part of Phase 3 of the model in order to give a complete picture of song writing, from exploration to performance.





**Figure 3.3: The theoretical model modified in response to the data analysis**

### 3.7.4 Coding and graphing the data

As predicted by the theoretical model, several compositional stages often happened at the same time. The participants were not offered an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the analysis and therefore it is possible, even probable, that some stages have been misinterpreted. Indeed, some aspects of this analysis are quite subjective. For example, while stages such as [TRAN] or [WIP] are quite obvious, whether other stages are occurring is less so. I had to ask myself, “are band members *transforming and modifying* an idea here or are they *jamming*, or is this, in fact, *refinement?*”, and make an informed guess. Sometimes organisational discussion regarding the structure of songs contained an element of *critique* or *confirmation*, or involved the subtle *modification* of an idea. All possible interpretations were included where it made sense to do so. The time allocations are not exact and fall within a rough margin of ten to thirty seconds. The intention of this analysis was to reveal what was happening within a song writing session in a broad sense and is not a microanalysis of the process second by second. It is very likely that there was more going on in the interactions of the members of the groups than could be perceived by an outside observer. However, during the process of coding the data, clear patterns began to appear and repeat themselves in ways that were consistent for all three bands, implying that the coding process was effective.

Once all of the observed and videoed sessions had been coded, this information was graphed across time for each observation. As observed by Fautley, limitations exist when complex processes are

presented as a two-dimensional flow chart. A graph allowed these data to be more clearly observed than the flow chart because it showed several stages occurring at once, proving that, in fact, the coding of the stages and phases of the model was more effective than the flow chart itself. The compositional stages were colour coded and plotted on the *y* axis. The order in which they occurred in the theoretical model was altered slightly due to the limitations of a two-dimensional flow-chart.<sup>162</sup> [WIP], [CTQ] and [O] are points of evaluation rather than creativity and it was therefore helpful to place these next to each other when working graphically. These were graphed against time on the *x* axis. [R&R] always occurred at the beginning of a song writing session and was placed at the top of the graph for ease of identification rather than an indication of when it occurred (see Figure 3.4).

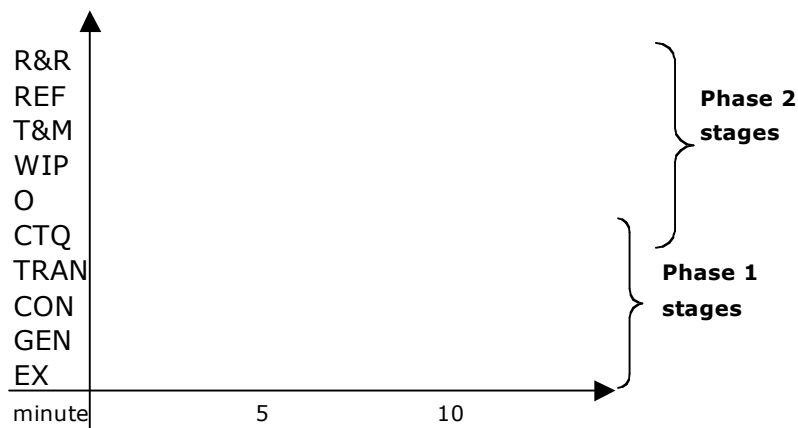


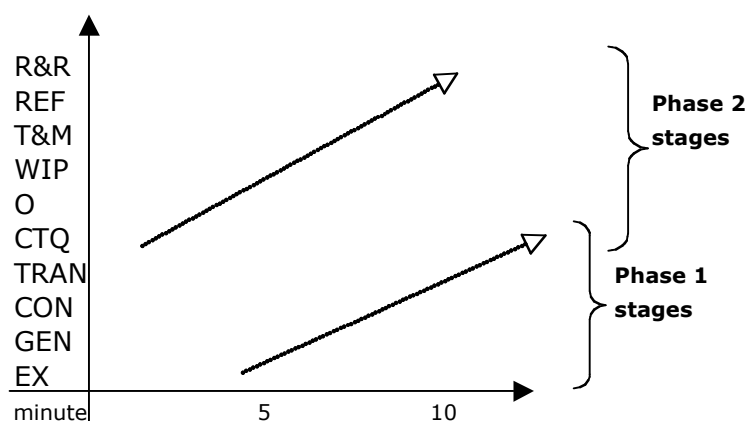
Figure 3.4: Graphing the coded data

The creative stages of Phase 1 are near the bottom of the *y* axis, with refinement and transformation/modification at the top and the evaluative stages of [WIP], [O] and [CTQ] in the middle. If the theoretical model was a valid way to describe the collaborative

---

<sup>162</sup> As already noted by Fautley in his study, this organic and cyclical process can only be partly represented diagrammatically.

compositional process, then it was predicted that the stages would move upward across the graph, from left to right, roughly in a wedge shape, moving from [EX], [GEN], [CON] and [TRAN] through [WIP] and [T&M] until [REF], [WIP] and [CTQ] predominated (see Figure 3.5).



**Figure 3.5: Predicted movement through the stages over time**

Once a series of graphs had been constructed for each band, these data were compared with what the participants had to say about their composing. The same process was applied to the teachers' interviews. Interview transcriptions were colour coded according to the theoretical model, laid alongside the graphed data, and compared.

### 3.7.5 Other Kinds of Data Analysis

The model was used to analyse each data set, resulting in a detailed description of the compositional processes of each band as a whole. Then the multiple ways in which band members communicated with each other were analysed. Following this analysis, the data for each band were examined from the other theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, that is, in terms of *positive interdependence*, Vygotsky's

*zone of proximal development* and *community of practice*. How this was achieved is explained in Chapter 4. Comparison between the three cases was used as a means of contrast – throwing similarities and differences into relief so as to gain a clearer understanding of what was happening for each case. This is covered comprehensively in Chapter 5.

### 3.7.6 Validity

Yin states that a major strength of case study data analysis is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence, offering multiple measures of the same phenomenon.<sup>163</sup> This process is called triangulation. Denzin identifies four protocols of triangulation that can demonstrate the commonality of an assertion:

- *data source triangulation* where data are drawn from a number of different sources and/or circumstances
- *investigator triangulation* where other researchers look at the same scene or phenomenon
- *theory triangulation* achieved through choosing alternative theoretical viewpoints
- *methodological triangulation*, principally observation, interview and document review.<sup>164</sup>

The data for this study were triangulated through theory triangulation (the theoretical model, educational theory, socio-cultural learning

---

<sup>163</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*. p.94.

<sup>164</sup> Norman Denzin, *The Research Act*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984, pp.45-47.

theory, communication) and methodological triangulation (observation and interview). Therefore, the conclusions drawn and arguments made subsequent to the data analysis can be regarded as sound, founded as they are upon analyses that have multiple perspectives.

### **3.8 Summary**

This study presents an investigation of the compositional processes of three bands, presented as three qualitative case studies. This chapter has shown how a theoretical model for collaborative composition was developed and how it can be used to describe and analyse the collaborative compositional processes within each of the three case studies. The means by which the data were collected have been described, as have the ways in which the data are analysed. The theoretical foundations and perspectives upon which the study is grounded have been outlined and their application to this study explained. With a theoretical model in place, Chapter 4 will present the results of the three case studies.

## Chapter 4

### Case studies

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and describes the compositional processes of three bands. The members of the groups played together because they had chosen to do so and they worked predominately in their own time rather than as part of a course of study. Some creative work happened at home, over the phone, and between smaller groups within the bands and could not be documented. The intention here is to show how the music was created within the specific contexts of the group rehearsals and the analysis is an attempt to capture the compositional process as it occurred spontaneously when the whole band was working as a group. All but one of the group rehearsal/song writing sessions occurred at school, usually at lunchtime or after school. One session occurred in the ubiquitous garage.

#### 4.2 Case study: *Junior*

The members of *Junior* were all in Year 10 and were the youngest participants in the study, hence their pseudonym. Their school is a state, co-educational Year 7 to 13 secondary school, located in a small town. The school population is drawn from a wide, although generally quite low, socio-economic range. The school has a new performing arts facility and a well-equipped music department. *Junior* is one of a number of student rock and hip-hop bands supported by the school.

The nucleus of *Junior* was Chrissy (guitar/bass/vocals), Dylan (drums/vocals) and Reese (guitar/vocals). They had independently formed the band a year before. In the second observation these three were joined by Peter (bass), who then left the band, and in the third observation, by Robbie (guitar/vocals).<sup>165</sup> They were strongly supported by their classroom music teacher who had been their teacher since their first year at the school, Year 7. In addition to this, an itinerant teacher had time allocated to work with the band. Chrissy, Reese and Dylan's guitar tutor (also an itinerant teacher) worked with them individually and in a small group. The Year 10 classroom music programme was predominately focussed upon playing and composing contemporary popular music. The members of *Junior* were able to rehearse during class time for up to four hours a week, having access to the music room at breaks, lunchtime and after school. Chrissy, Dylan and Reese played together on most school days but did not meet in the weekends as none of them owned their own instruments, amplifiers and microphones. The band had built up a modest local profile, having played at a number of outdoor community events. At the time of writing, *Junior* is still going strong.

#### 4.2.1 Set-up

Three observations of *Junior*'s band practices were made at the same time of the week, during a timetabled Year 10 Music class prior to the

---

<sup>165</sup> These names are pseudonyms. Peter, the bass player present in Observation 2, made minimal contributions to the creative process. He did not appear to say anything at all during band practices, he did not move around and his bass lines followed the chord progressions as they were created by the others. Perhaps it is not surprising that he was subsequently replaced by the much more proactive and creative Robbie on lead guitar. This meant that Chrissy had to move from rhythm guitar to bass and Reese from lead to rhythm guitar.



lunch hour, allowing about eighty minutes of relatively uninterrupted time in the music classroom. During all three observations the members of the band stood quite close together, facing inwards, with the drum kit as a central point of focus. There were two microphones on stands that were moved depending on who was singing (see Figure 4.1).

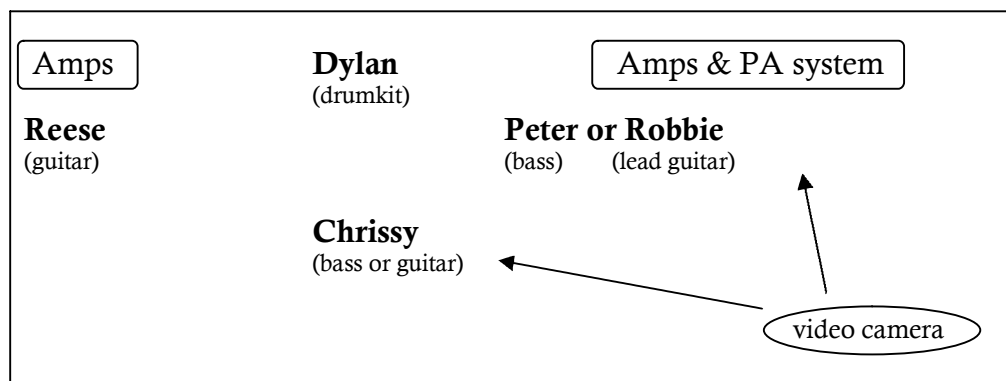


Figure 4.1: *Junior* positions when working together

#### 4.2.2 Songs worked on during the observations

Table 4 presents a broad outline of the content of each observation. The song, *Suicidal Love*, had been created during two previous sessions. Its basic structure was in place and the song was completed by the end of Observation 2. During Observations 1 and 2 the lyrics for the song were written and set to a melody, the singer was chosen, and the musical ideas were transformed, modified and refined until the members of *Junior* could perform *Suicidal Love* to their satisfaction, from beginning to end. Also, during Observation 1, Reese introduced a riff which was made into another song. By the end of Observation 2, this new song's basic musical structure was in place, ready for some lyrics to be added, and was comparable in its degree of progress with that of *Suicidal Love* at the beginning of Observation 1. The members

of the band were not observed playing this song again and whether or not it was completed and added to the band’s repertoire is not known. During Observation 3, other than having a brief jam session near the end of the session, the members of *Junior* worked exclusively on the provisionally named *Reese’s Song*. This song, based on another riff by Reese, had been created during a session prior to the observation. The seventy five minute session was very intense and the members of *Junior* were clearly exhausted at the end of it. However the song was complete and *Reese’s Song* was, in the words of Robbie, “officially done!”.

Observation	Time (approx. minutes)	Name of Song	Point in the comp. process	Band members
1	34	<i>Suicidal Love</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> session	Chrissy, Reese, Dylan
	8	New song based on a riff	Jam session	
	12	<i>Suicidal Love</i>		
2 (1 week later)	20	<i>Suicidal Love</i>	4 <sup>th</sup> session	Chrissy, Reese, Dylan and Peter
	20	New song from last week	2 <sup>nd</sup> session	
	22	<i>Suicidal Love</i>		
3 (6 weeks later)	50	<i>Reese’s Song</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> session	Chrissy, Reese, Dylan and Robbie
	5	Jamming to idea by Reese	1 <sup>st</sup> session	
	20	<i>Reese’s Song</i>		

**Table 6: *Junior*’s songs**

#### **4.2.3 Applying compositional model to the data: Phase 1**

While the three observations do not follow the collaborative composition of a single song from beginning to end, almost the entire compositional process was observed and the only part of the process not seen was the actual moment when an idea leading to the creation of a new song was generated. Members of *Junior* did, however, describe how the original riff for *Reese’s Song* was generated. Their description of the *generation* and

*confirmation* of an idea leading to the collaborative composition of a song can be described through the codes of Phase 1. (Note: VT is Vicki Thorpe).

- VT:** Can you show me the riff, Reese? [he plays]
- Reese:** Then it repeats it.
- VT:** So that's how the song started?
- Chrissy:** Oh, he was just mucking around [smiles from all] [EX-mk]
- Reese:** Yeah, I was just playing
- VT:** So what happened then? Could you talk me through how the song was put together?
- Chrissy:** We were playing his song [gestures to Robbie, meaning another song based on Robbie's idea] and then Reese started playing something [GEN] and I thought " Oh, that was cool" [CON] and he goes ... [shrugs sheepishly]
- Dylan:** And I started playing the chorus drumbeat but, like, simpler. [CON and EX-j]
- VT:** So it started off with Reese mucking around, while you were playing another song?
- All:** Yeah ! [laughter]
- VT:** And what did the rest of you say?
- Robbie:** That's cool. Let's make it into a song. [CON]
- VT:** Then what happened?
- Dylan:** Then we just memorised what he'd done. [TRAN] Then we continued playing the song [which they had been playing previously]. Once we'd done that song we were like, " Oh, yeah let's go back to Reese's idea" and then we, he played it and we just played along to it, trying to make it sound good. [EX-j]
- VT:** Hold on, let's go back a bit. So, he played it. What did each of you do?
- Reese:** Dylan was, like, thinking in his head about how to make up a drumbeat. [EX-j]
- Dylan:** Yeah.
- Chrissy:** And then I started working out what to play on the bass. [EX-j]
- Robbie:** And I was working out, like, a solo lead. [EX-j]
- Reese:** He [gestures to Robbie] started like, random, randomly picking.

VT: Over the top of the riff?  
 Chrissy: Yeah.  
 Dylan: An improvisation.

An analysis of the two occasions when the band was observed in the initial stages of Phase 1 reveals a similar sequence. When one compares the coding of the interview transcription above with the graphed data for a jam session, it seems that the process, and therefore the validity of the coding, holds for the other songs as well (see Figure 4.2). Note that Phase 2 stages begin to emerge as the song’s composition progresses.

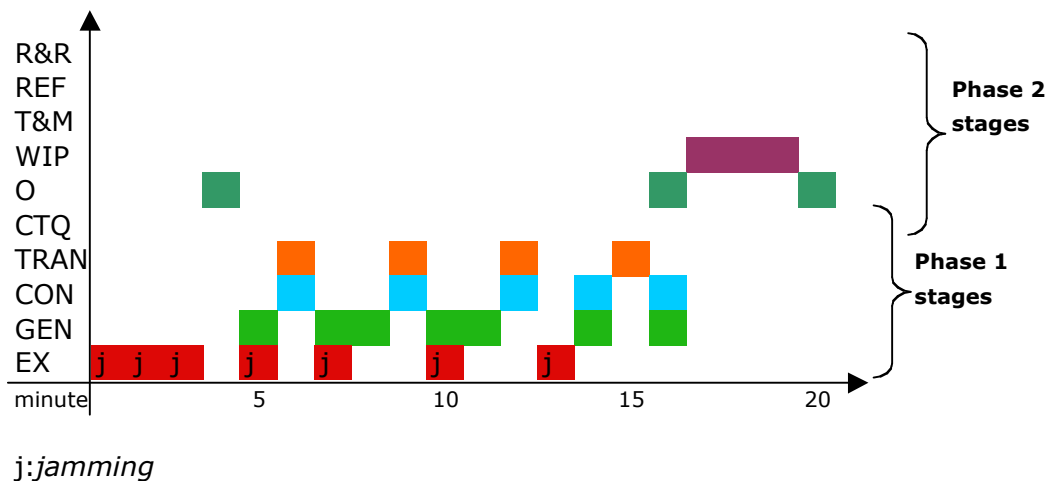
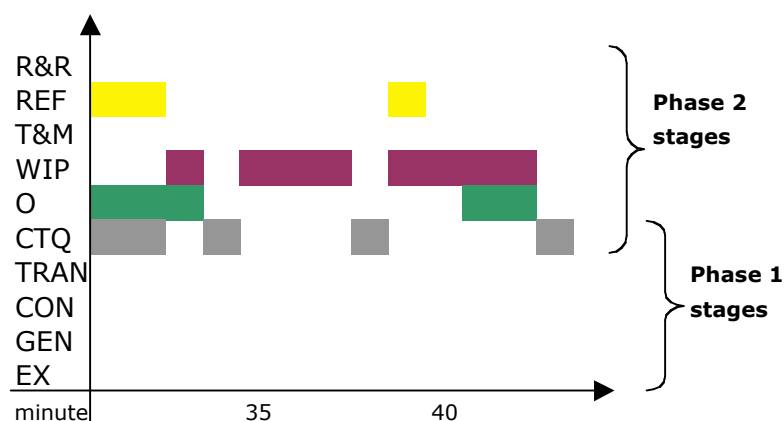


Figure 4.2: *Junior jamming to an idea by Reese, Observation 2*

#### 4.2.4 Applying the compositional model: Phase 2

Observations 1 and 2 involved sessions that were predominately concerned with the composition of one song: *Suicidal Love*. When the coded and graphed data from both sessions of work on this song are examined in sequence, it is possible to see the compositional stages for most of this song (see Appendix B). The song has already been roughly formed so the Phase 1 stages here are concerned with lyric writing and vocal lines. The rest of the data show a rapid cycling through Phase 2

stages: [WIP], [O] and [CTQ], interspersed with [T&M] and [REF]. The members of *Junior* moved away from experimenting, jamming and confirming the worth of their ideas to focus upon completing their composition (see Figure 4.3).



**Figure 4.3:**  
Phase 2 compositional stages of *Suicidal Love*, Observation 2

Consistent with the theoretical model, an analysis of Observation 3 data reveals a similar pattern to that of Observations 1 and 2, but here the interactions are even more frequent and complex. Based on a rough, pre-existing structure, an entire song (including lyric writing and vocal lines) was composed during this time. The compositional session moved through [EX-j], [GEN], [CON] and [TRAN], overlaid with a rapid cycling through [CTQ], [O], [T&M] and [WIP] until [O], [WIP] and [REF] predominated, leading to the rehearsal of the completed song. Appendix B shows the graphed data for the whole session.

Near the end of the third observation, the members of *Junior* began to “muck around” [EX-mk]. Mucking around has led to the generation of new songs for *Junior*, although whether this was subsequently the case here is not known. This notion of “mucking around”, and the possible

relationship this has to the creative process, will be discussed further in the next two chapters.

### 4.3 Case Study: *Senior*

The members of *Senior* were all Year 13 students in their final year of school, hence the pseudonym. They attended a Year 9 to 13, co-educational, state secondary school in suburban, 'middle New Zealand'. Members of *Senior* were Nick (lead guitar), Greg (drums), Emma (guitar/vocals), Sam (bass) and Andrew (vocals).<sup>166</sup> *Senior* had been formed the year before by Greg and Nick, who were close friends and who had been playing and composing informally together for a couple of years. The school music facilities were basic and there had been no senior music programme at the school since 1999. This meant that the members of *Senior* had had no opportunity to take classroom music since Year 10. However, a new principal and new music teacher re-energized the Music Department in 2006. The school had recently purchased a new PA system, new amplifiers and new straps for the guitars. A newly instituted NCEA Music programme meant that some members of the band were able to include Level 3 NCEA Music achievement and unit standards in their 2006 courses of study, basing this work on their informal playing and composing in the band, rather than formal music learning.

The classroom music teacher supported the band administratively, helped them with the gear, and provided opportunities for the students

---

<sup>166</sup> These are pseudonyms.

to perform at school functions and lunchtime concerts. She also gave them feedback on their stagecraft and general performance. The band had performed at a number of school events and also some private functions. *Senior* had a timetabled after-school rehearsal once a week in the Music Department's band room. Members also met at least once a week in a garage at Greg's house. Greg's father is an amateur rock musician and the garage had been converted into a band rehearsal space. Greg and Nick frequently met at each other's houses to play and compose on acoustic guitars.

#### 4.3.1 Set-up

*Senior* was observed three times, twice in the band rehearsal room after school and once in a garage at Greg's house. The members of *Senior* stood facing each other in roughly the same configuration each time, with the main focus being towards Nick. All five members of *Senior* were present at every observation (see Figure 4.4).

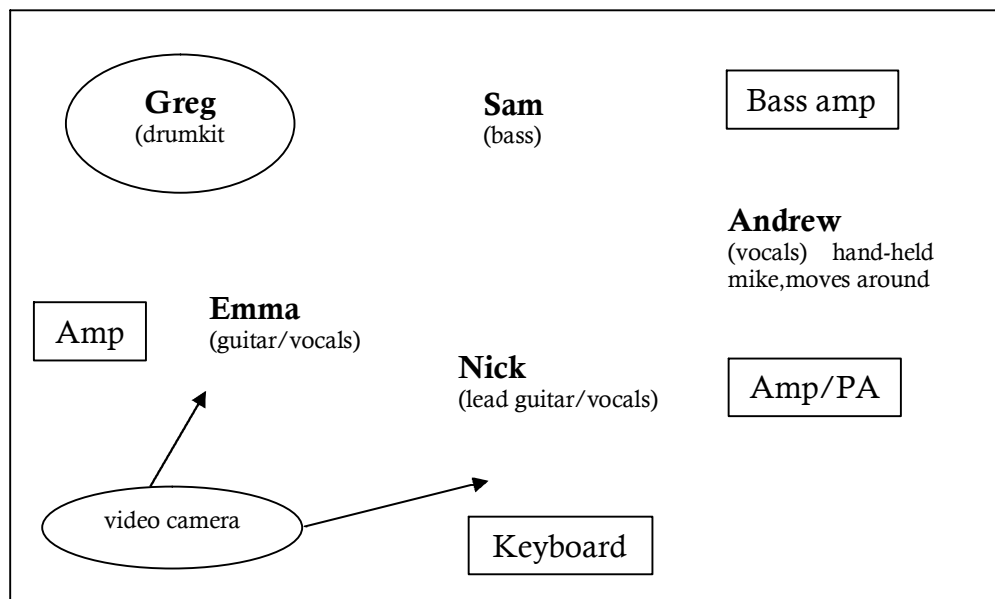


Figure 4.4: Set-up for *Senior*

### 4.3.2 Songs worked on during the observations

Table 7 shows a broad outline of the songs covered.

Observation	Time (approx. - minutes)	Song	Point in the compositional process
1	35	Rehearsal of repertoire – 4 songs	N/A
	14	<i>Giggly</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> session
	8	Riffs and related ideas by Nick and Greg	Jam session
	10	<i>Giggly</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> session
2 (1 week later)	16	<i>Giggly</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> session
	32	<i>Keys</i>	Unknown, probably 4 <sup>th</sup> session
	3	<i>Giggly</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> session
3 (4 months later)	22	Rejected song	2 <sup>nd</sup> session
	30	“That fluke, riff thing”	1 <sup>st</sup> session

**Table 7: Senior’s songs**

Analysis of the coded data captures most of the collaborative compositional processes through the band’s work on two songs (*Giggly* and *Keys*) in the first two sessions and two more songs (the rejected song and “That fluke riff thing”) in the third session. As with *Junior*, the only stage not observed was the actual moment when an idea was generated, leading to the composition of a new song. *Giggly* existed as a rough outline of ideas for the verse and chorus. During Observations 1 and 2 a vocal line and lyrics were added. Structural elements such as an intro, bridges and an ending were created until *Giggly* could be played from beginning to end. During Observation 2 the band spent some time creating a keyboard motif for another nearly completed song: *Keys*. They also took a brief break during Observation 1 to jam to a new idea.



Observation 3 saw the rejection of a half-completed song. This was followed by the composition of a new song, based on a riff generated by Nick whilst “mucking around” at the end of the band’s previous session. After some doubtful discussion, where the idea was referred to as “that fluke, riff thing”, the members of *Senior* listened to the riff, which Andrew had recorded on his mobile phone at the time. They confirmed its worth with sudden enthusiasm and, over the next thirty minutes, crafted it into a song. Appendix C shows the graphed data for all three observations.

### 4.3.3 Applying the compositional model to the data: Phase 1

On two occasions, the members of *Senior* were observed in the very early stages of composing a song: the short jam session in Observation 1 and the development of a new song in Observation 3. When the first ten minutes of each of these sessions are placed side by side on a graph, a progression through the Phase 1 stages is revealed (see Figure 4.5).

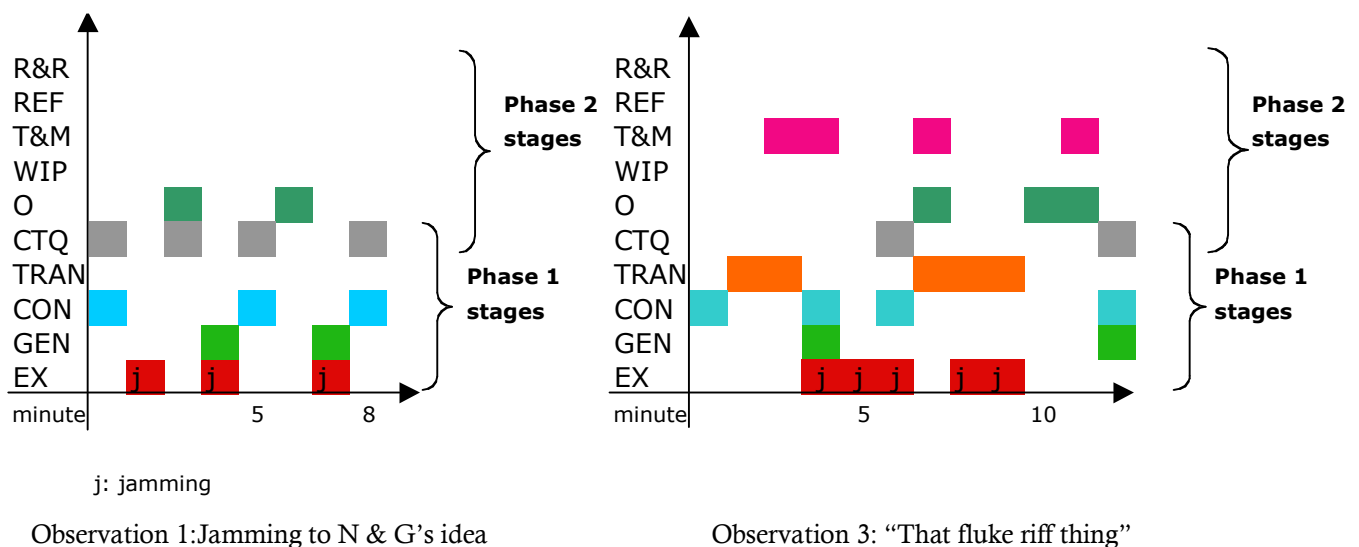


Figure 4.5: Phase 1 compositional stages

The Observation 1 example involves a brief play-through of Nick and Greg's ideas (a riff and some variations on it). The interactions are brief and the explored ideas are soon abandoned in favour of working on another song. The members of *Senior* do not stop to organise these ideas or add to them, although they do confirm and critique. On the other hand, the Observation 3 example shows the beginning of a longer session, ultimately resulting in the composition of a whole new song. This graph is more complex and the Phase 1 stages are overlaid with those of Phase 2 such as [WIP], [T&M] and [O]. As soon as the original riff is confirmed it begins to be transformed and worked on by the band members, who pause to critique and organise their ideas before going on to add new ones. This includes the vocal lines, for Andrew comments during this session that he already has some ideas for lyrics and a melody to go with them, although we do not hear what they are.

Interview transcripts confirm that *Senior's* songs tend to be generated "by accident" or "fluke" while "mucking around" and are based on an original guitar riff.

**Nick:** Nowadays we pretty much write them on the spot together.

**Andrew:** Yeah, someone's mucking around [EX-mk and GEN] and you say "Hey that's a cool riff". [CON]

**Sam:** That's pretty much it, eh. You'll go "How did you do that?" You'll stop playing and say, "Man, that was cool. Do that again".

**Andrew:** They [our songs] were all just someone playing a riff.

**Nick:** And we all joined in. [EX-j and possibly TRAN]

However members of the band go on to stress that this is a relatively recent phenomenon and that they used to begin composing their songs in a different way. This change in the manner in which they composed will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

#### **4.3.4 Applying the compositional model to the data: Phase 2**

An analysis of sessions from midway to near the end of the compositional process reveals a gravitation away from Phase 1 stages to a complex cycling through the Phase 2 stages, although these are occasionally overlaid by Phase 1 stages which are concerned with creation of either vocal lines or keyboard parts. The graphed data for Observations 1 and 2 clearly show a progression away from Phase 1 to Phase 2 stages. As the song reaches completion, the length of the stages increases, with a predominance of [WIP],[CTQ] and [REF] (see Appendix C).

A lot of the discussion during Phase 2 stages involves either the critique of the emerging ideas or structural organisation. Nick explains how this occurs:

**VT:** How do you come up with those different parts? How does that happen?

**Nick:** We sort of all just go ... oh we'll have 2 bars of heavy intro here and the vocals'll come in and then we'll keep it quiet for 2 bars and we'll do it like that. A basic structure.

The validity of the theoretical model is most clearly demonstrated during a session at the beginning of Observation 3, when a song is rejected (see Figure 4.7). Instead of a gradual movement up the graph

through [REF], [CTQ] and [WIP] to the successful completion of a song, the graphed data moves towards the middle. There is an emphasis upon the teaching, learning, transforming, organising and critiquing of idea after idea, each less satisfactory than the last, until the whole process grinds to a halt, the song is rejected and they move on to an idea for a new song.

- Sam:** It's going nowhere.
- Nick:** Yeah it does seem really forced.
- Sam:** It's forced and ...
- Nick:** And the more we try and play it, try to write something for it, the more thrashed it gets and the less we like it.
- Emma:** If it's not going to work then there's no point going on with it.
- Sam:** I reckon we should try that other idea we had last week.
- Andrew:** What? That fluke, riff thing? [He gets out his phone and plays them the idea]

An analysis of the graphed data at this point in the observation shows the stages moving towards the middle of the graph, not upwards towards [REF] and rehearsal (see Figure 4.6). The collaborative creative process has ground to a halt.

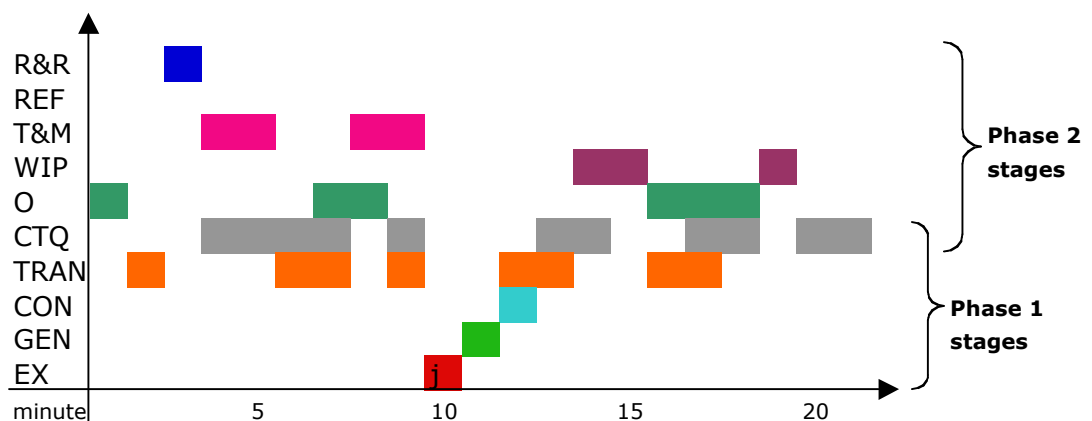


Figure 4.6: The song is going nowhere

#### 4.4 Case Study: *Boys*

The members of *Boys* attended an integrated (that is, semi-state funded and semi-independent) boys' school for Year 7 to 13 students. The school has a strong performing arts faculty and a very well-equipped Music Department. All members of the band owned their own, high quality instruments. They were Robert (lead guitar), James (drums), Alex (bass) and Liam (rhythm guitar), playing heavy rock. Chris, the vocalist was new to the band and to rock music in general, having joined *Boys* earlier in the year.<sup>167</sup> The boys were in Year 10 and the band was timetabled to rehearse once a week after school in the band room. They also met informally to rehearse at a local church in the weekends. Occasionally Liam or Alex would meet up with Robert at home to play acoustically. Their classroom teacher supported them administratively, helping them with their RockQuest applications, ensuring that they had access to the room and keeping an eye on the gear. From time to time he also gave them feedback on their stagecraft and playing. Robert's father, who has played in bands himself, acted as an informal tutor. The members of *Boys* had been playing together for two years and had performed at RockQuest in 2004 and 2005, going on to the regional finals on both occasions. They had also played at a number of school events.

##### 4.4.1 Background to the data

As explained earlier, this group broke up soon after the second observation. It was clear during the first observation that relationships amongst the band members were somewhat strained, particularly

---

<sup>167</sup> These are pseudonyms.

between Robert and James. James was not present during the second observation and, as he was the drummer in the band, this had quite a limiting effect upon the others' ability to play through their songs as an ensemble. There was no interview and the data for this case study are therefore incomplete. Any analysis of the collaborative compositional process must take this into account because, while it is quite possible that the first observation is representative of how the band works together, the second is not. Even so, *Boys* was the only band observed at the point where a new idea for a song was generated and the interactions between members of *Boys* differ from those of both *Senior* and *Junior*. The band worked in quite a different way and therefore the data are worth presenting here as a point of contrast.

#### 4.4.2 Set-up

*Boys* was observed during two after-school rehearsals, one in a classroom and one in the school band room. During Observation 1, Robert, Alex, Chris and Liam stood in a rough circle, facing each other, with the focus towards Robert most of the time. James sat at the drum-kit facing the others (see Figure 4.7).

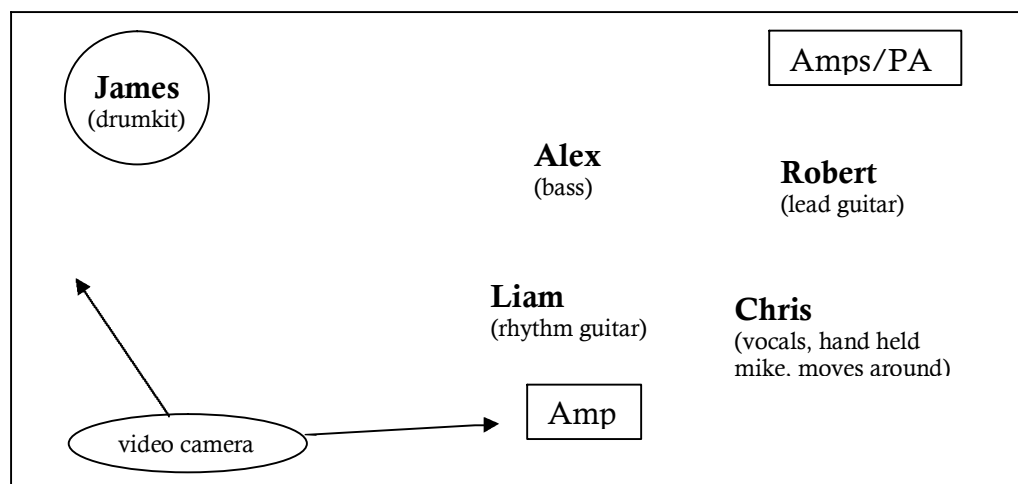


Figure 4.7: The set-up of *Boys* during Observation 1

## 4.5 Songs worked on during the observations

Table 8 is a broad outline of the observations. Other than the rehearsal of completed repertoire, only one song, *Cross the Line*, was worked on. The times are approximate and, for each observation, include about 10 minutes of off-task time.<sup>168</sup>

Observation	Time (approx. - minutes)	Song	Point in the compositional process
1	13	Rehearsal of repertoire – 2 songs	N/A
	4	New song idea generated while ‘mucking around’	1 <sup>st</sup> session
	2	Back to rehearsal of earlier song	N/A
	45	New song (named <i>Cross the Line</i> during this session)	1st session
2 (1 week later)	50	<i>Cross the Line</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> session (James absent)

Table 8: *Boys’ songs*

### 4.5.1 Applying the theoretical model to the data: Phase 1

Near the beginning of Observation 1, Robert played a riff while “mucking around”, waiting for Liam and Alex to set up. James immediately responded to this idea and played along. He called out to Robert, “I reckon we should make that a song, man. It sounds real phat”. Robert continued playing and eventually, after several encouraging comments from James, this led to the confirmation of the riff by Alex and Liam. Robert taught the idea to these two and, once they were able to play it, they all jammed to the idea, with Chris’ lips moving silently as he sought ideas for a vocal line. When the

---

<sup>168</sup> The members of *Boys* spent quite a lot of time talking about matters unrelated to the work they were doing. See 5.2.1.

interactions are graphed according to the theoretical model, a clear progression through the Phase 1 stages is revealed (see Figure 4.8).

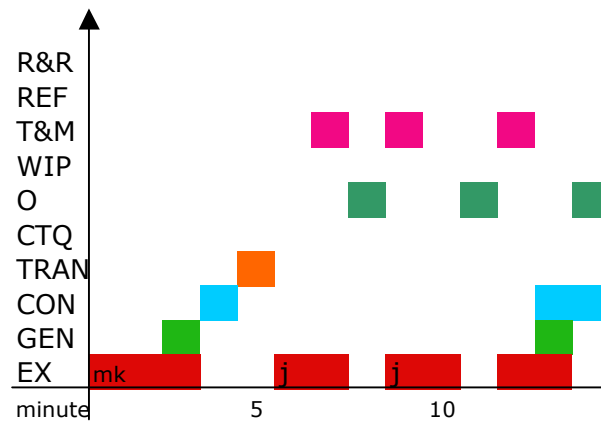


Figure 4.8: Phase 1 stages of *Cross the Line*

All of the ideas are basically Robert's. James responded rhythmically to the feel of the riff, Alex's bass line followed the general harmonic structure and Liam played it exactly as was taught to him by Robert. Robert began to transform and modify the idea during the jam session, adding new lead guitar ideas over the top of the riff once Liam was able to play along. All of the [O] stages during this sequence involved Robert instructing the others on what to play, how to play it and when to play it. However, when jamming, James added licks and fills to indicate links between sections, and the rest of the band responded. This could be because this is his role as a drummer in a rock band but it could also be that he was attempting to shape the song as it went along. On several occasions James made verbal suggestions as to how the others could modify an idea or add to the musical structure. These suggestions were not acknowledged by the others and were occasionally subject to outright rejection by Robert. Other than during the initial confirmation



stage, there was no critique and Robert's ideas were accepted by Alex, Chris and Liam without question.

It became clear during these Phase 1 stages that Robert was the composer of the song as it existed so far, despite James' attempts to influence the compositional process. This led me to question whether this process was, in fact, collaborative or if it was actually the work of a sole composer. Further investigation of what happened next, and subsequently during Observation 2, revealed that, at least on these two occasions, this was the case.

#### **4.6 Applying the theoretical model to the data: Phase 2**

An examination of the graphed data for the whole session (Observation 1) reveals a progression through the Phase 2 stages, with [REF] stages beginning to appear near the end of the session (see Appendix D). There is one sequence of Phase 1 stages when Robert sent Liam, Alex and James out of the room so that he could work with Chris on a vocal line. Although Chris came up with some ideas, these were then shaped by Robert.<sup>169</sup> What is striking about these graphed data is the large amount of time spent in [TRAN] stages during which Robert taught his instrumental ideas to Liam, Alex and James, and showed Chris how to write lyrics for the song. Another striking feature is how few [CTQ] stages there were, particularly in the last ten minutes of the session. These occurred exclusively during verbal interactions

---

<sup>169</sup> This interaction is examined in more detail in Chapter 5.

between Robert and Alex in response to Robert's ideas, and were not usually subject to transformation or modification by the others. Any [T&M] or [REF] stages were Robert's domain. He would occasionally accept some suggestions from Alex but not those from other members of the band.

As the song gradually took shape, Robert began to direct the others on how it was to be structured. Here is an example of a typical [O] stage exchange between Robert, James and Alex:

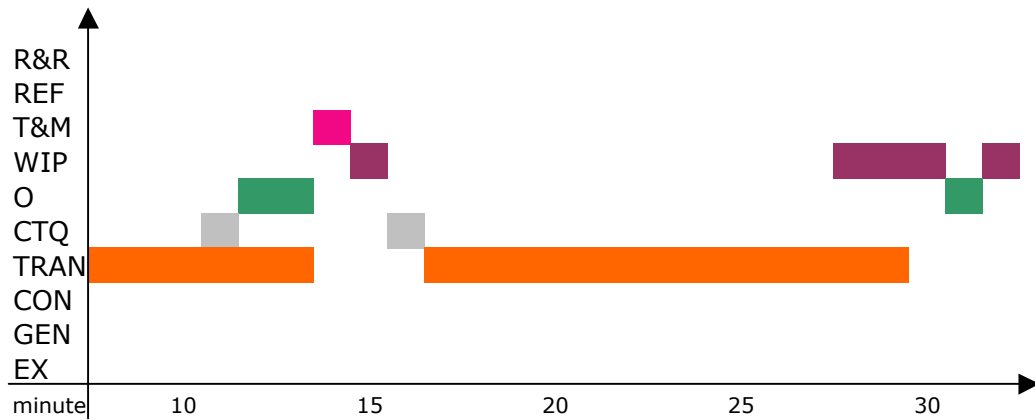
**Robert:** Hang on, hang on [authoritative pointing gesture]. Hey shut up, I mean, shut up [to James who is talking to Liam]. For the verse, no, for the intro. We'll do the intro, then after we finish the intro you'll do [gestures drumming to James] like, a drum chord and everyone stops playing and then they can slowly come in.

**Alex:** With the bit I make up.

**Robert:** Hmm, I dunno about that. OK, we'll just go from there. [gestures to the others to begin playing]

#### 4.7 Analysis of Observation 2 data

Without a drum part, due to James' absence, there was a lack of musical flow and rhythmic direction to the group's playing during this session and this is probably not a typical session for this group. Nevertheless, an analysis of the Observation 2 data reveals a similar pattern of Phase 2 stages but with an even more obvious lack of [CTQ], and a dominance of [TRAN] stages. Here is the graphed data of a 25-minute sequence in the middle of the session (see Figure 4.9).



**Figure 4.9: The middle of Observation 2**

Robert spent more than half of this session teaching Liam how to play the riff and its modifications. He also worked intensively on the composition of vocal lines with Chris, sending the others out for a break while he did so.<sup>170</sup> He and Alex conferred briefly on refinements to Alex’s bass part and these are the only stages involving critique. A transcription of a brief conversation (the seventh minute of the graph in Figure 4.9) is the only one of its kind during the two observations. It shows that it is possible that Alex and Robert sometimes worked together more collaboratively than the data might suggest:

- Alex:** I reckon, you know, with that first riff...
- Robert:** The bass line sounds good with [indistinct] You know... when we ...[He gestures, seeking Alex’s agreement]
- Alex:** So the first time we all go...[plays]
- Robert:** And I start harmonising with what you do.
- Alex:** And the second time we... [plays]
- Robert:** [indistinct comment]
- Alex:** The second time I reckon we should ... if I go... [plays] and if you do something different. [looks up at Robert]

<sup>170</sup> Robert did the same thing during Observation 1.

**Robert:** And if I just keep going... [plays a new idea]

**Alex:** And we alternate, doing different things. [gestures]

**Robert:** Yeah, yeah. So every second, oh... like... every third ... [his gestures are the same as Alex: a forward arm movement]

**Alex:** So the first time I'll go, like ... [plays]

[Robert nods]

#### **4.8 The theoretical model of collaborative composition and *Boys***

This analysis has shown that the theoretical model is an effective tool to use when describing not only collaborative but also other kinds of group compositional processes. It describes not *collaborative*, but *group* composing, where the song was created by a sole composer through the direction of a group of players.

Other than one brief exchange between Robert and Alex, the members of *Boys* were not observed composing collaboratively, although it is possible that on other occasions they did so. What is clear is that the analysis reveals that on these two occasions a sole composer, Robert, realised his personal, creative vision through the playing of others. How the members of *Boys* communicated, and what teaching and learning occurred within the group are examined further in the next chapter.

## 4.9 Comparing the analysed data across the three cases

### 4.9.1 The early stages in the composition of a song

The members of both *Junior* and *Senior* tended to begin the composition of their songs in similar ways. Sometimes one person presented a previously composed idea that was then accepted (or rejected) by the group as being worthy of forming the basis of a new song. What usually happened, however, was that a song would begin when a riff was generated “accidentally” whilst “mucking around” and then, in the words of Robbie, “turned into a song”. The members of *Boys* were also observed generating a song in this way, although the riff was Robert’s and not that of another member of the band. For all three bands this acceptance of a riff was invariably followed by the transmission of an idea from the creator to the others. A jam session always ensued, during which the basic structure of the song would begin to emerge through improvisation and experimentation.

The two teachers interviewed confirmed this as the main way in which the members of both *Senior* and *Junior* generated their ideas.<sup>171</sup> They both went on to outline their impressions of how this process led to the composition of a song. Here is an extract from the interview with Miss A about how the members of *Junior* compose together. The stages of the compositional model have been added to show how consistent her observations are with the theoretical model.

---

<sup>171</sup> The Head of Music at *Boy*’s school was not interviewed.

- Miss A:** Usually they form a song around a riff with some drumbeats. [EX, GEN, CON, TRAN] Yeah, from what I've seen they would generally come up with some kind of guitar riff, like, over some chords. Then they'd work out a chord progression. So it would start out with that small seed really. Then they'd play around with it. [EX-j and T&M] So it would start out with guitar then one of them would put drums with it. [EX-j and T&M] They'd work out a bass line to go with that. Their bass lines tend to be quite fast, sort of picking-type bass lines over the root of the chord. [EX-j and T&M] The way I saw it was that they'd bring in the lyrics after that. Then either Dylan or Chrissy would go and write some lyrics and bring them back. [EX-l, GEN, CON, TRAN] From there they'd work out how the verse/chorus was going to go. Then they'd start arranging it and working out intro, outro, the order of the verse, chorus etc and perhaps a bridge or instrumental. [T&M, O, REF]
- VT:** When they get to the polishing-up stage what do they do? Play it over and over?
- Miss A:** Yeah, they've been in every lunchtime doing that. [WIP, R&R]

Mrs J, the Music teacher at *Senior's* school, describes a very similar process to that of *Junior*:

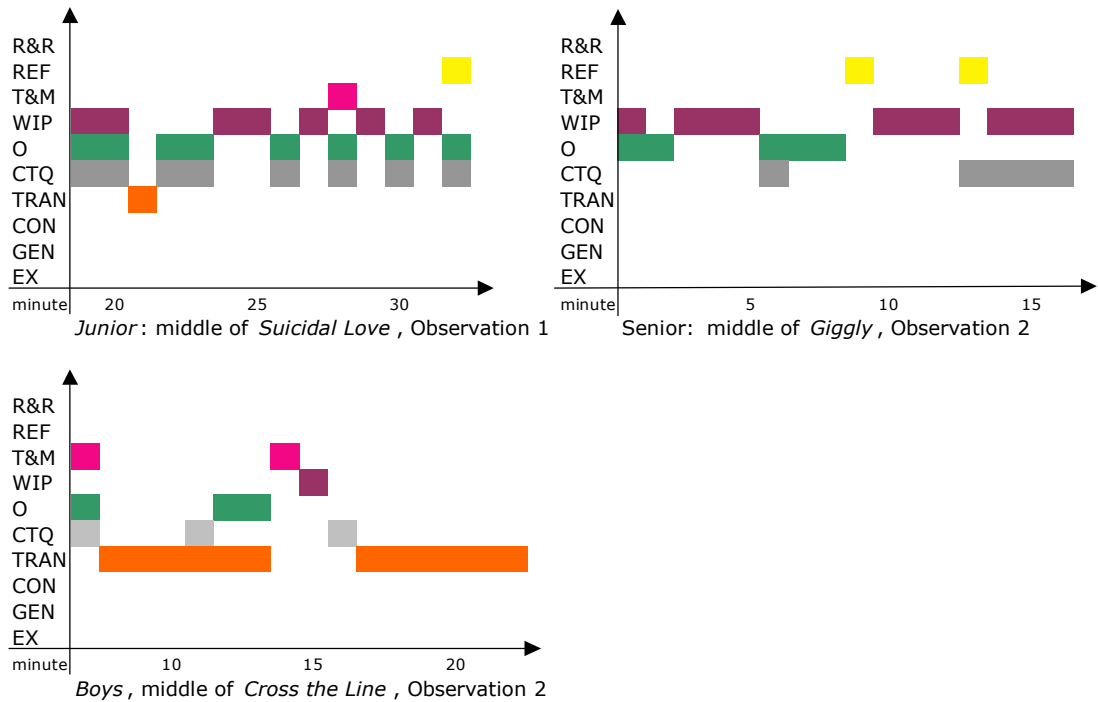
- Mrs J:** Sometimes they'll start with a riff. You know, "Hey that's a cool riff, play that again". [EX, GEN, CON] They'll build the riff up. Or sometimes it's just a couple of chord sequences and they'll think, "Hey this is nice". [CTQ] They'll put a bass line with that, then they'll find a nice drum rhythm, add rhythm to it. [T&M] Then they'll start thinking about structure, "is this a verse/chorus thing?" [O] Quite often they put lyrics in last. Yeah, they seem to follow that kind of structure.

This is consistent with what the members of both bands have to say about how they compose and it also tallies with the analysis using the theoretical model. It is also consistent with how the members of *Boys* began a new song, even though the interactions that followed were not essentially collaborative.

#### 4.9.2 The middle stages of a song's composition

When the sequences of interaction observed in the *middle* of a song's composition are compared, the differences between the process of *collaborative composition* and that of *solo composition within a group* are revealed. The members of *Junior* and *Senior* spent most of this period of composition in a complex cycle of [O], [CTQ] and [WIP] stages, interspersed with [T&M] and [REF], occasionally moving into Phase 1 stages to work on vocal lines. Each stage tended to last only a short time (one to three minutes) and the communication amongst the members of both bands was characterised by a high degree of cooperation and mutuality. They spent the least amount of time in the Phase 1 [TRAN] stage because, on the whole, each member of the band worked on his or her own part, subject to critique by the others.

On the other hand, the members of *Boys* spent most of this “middle of the song” period in [TRAN] stages where Robert showed the others his creative intentions and taught Liam and Alex how to play them. These stages were much longer than those of the other two bands, lasting up to thirteen minutes, and took up more than 50% of each session. A comparison of a nine to eleven minute section of the graphed data, for each band's interactions in the middle of a song's composition is shown graphically in Figure 4.10.



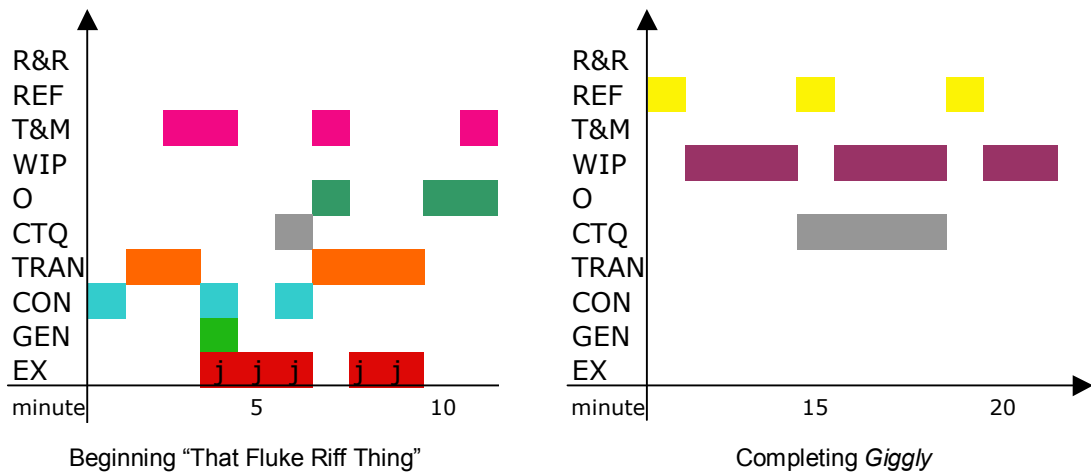
**Figure 4.10: Comparing the middle of a song's composition**

All three bands moved through the Phase 2 stages as they worked on a half completed song. However, in the case of *Boys*, all [O] stages involved Robert instructing the others, whereas [O] stages for the other two bands involved the free exchange of ideas between all members, alternating with [WIP] and accompanied by [CTQ]. Any [T&M] or [REF] stages in the *Boys* example were the work of Robert alone, whereas these stages in the other bands' examples were achieved by most or all players.

### 4.9.3 Comparing the end of a song's composition with how it began

When graphed data of the last eleven minutes of a session with *Senior*, involving the completion of a song (*Giggly*) are placed beside that of the first twelve minutes of the creation of a song ("that fluke, riff thing"), the difference between Phase 1 and Phase 2 interactions is clear (see Figure 4.11).





**Figure 4.11: Comparing early Phase 1 with late Phase 2 stages (*Senior*)**

This comparison shows that the initial stages in the collaborative composition of a song are complex, change every minute or so, and involve a great deal of communication and interaction. In contrast, Phase 2 stages that occur near the end of a song’s composition are longer and more straightforward. Most of the work has been done and the band is polishing up their ideas and becoming familiar with how the song goes. An analysis of the last five minutes of Observation 3 reveals that the members of *Senior* were already moving toward these kinds of interactions by the end of their session on the new song. However, given what we know about how the band worked on other half-completed songs, it is reasonable to predict that there would be a renewed complexity once lyrics, vocal lines and new instrumental ideas were brought to the next session. When the early and late stages in the compositional process of *Junior’s* songs are examined the same is found to be true.<sup>172</sup> See the graphed data for Observations 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix B.

<sup>172</sup> *Boys* was not observed in the final stages of a song’s composition.

#### 4.9.4 Time spent in phases and the act of creativity

For all three bands, Phase 1 stages occurred near the beginning of the observation and once or twice again as each observation progressed. The members of *Junior* and *Senior* stopped working on a particular song from time to time and briefly jammed or worked on another idea.<sup>173</sup> This seemed to be a way of releasing tension and shifted the session from analytical problem solving to looser and less focussed activities. Sometimes during these phases, they swapped instruments and tended to play these in a more light-hearted and less focussed way.<sup>174</sup> This resonates with Claxton's account of what happens in the brain during the act of creativity.<sup>175</sup> Claxton cites a number of important studies into neural activity that have shown that creativity favours a relaxed mind where brain activity is diffuse, and that this results in a very low focus across a large part of the brain. On the other hand, Claxton asserts that problem solving and the conscious application of intellect are associated with high levels of arousal in specific centres of the brain. If, therefore, creativity is associated with just letting the mind drift along until something "pops up", then it could be that the members of *Junior* and *Senior* were able to sense when it was necessary for them to move out of problem solving modes and re-establish more creative behaviours, the life-blood of their song writing. These kinds of activities certainly seemed to be refreshing for them.

---

<sup>173</sup> See Appendices B and C.

<sup>174</sup> The members of *Boys* were less focussed and most breaks in the compositional process were either because Robert needed one-to-one time with Chris and so sent the others out of the room or, more frequently, due to mobile phone calls or texts received by all five members of the band every few minutes.

<sup>175</sup> Guy Claxton, *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind. How Intelligence Increases When You Think Less*. New York: Harper Collins, 1997, pp.149-152.

The members of both *Junior* and *Senior* spent between twenty to forty five percent of their time in Phase 1 stages involving the teaching and learning of each other's musical ideas. These stages almost never occurred without critique and/or organisation and were also closely related to work-in-progress. Clearly, communication between members of both groups was a crucial factor in the successful collaborative composition of a song and this will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

#### 4.9.5 Lyrics and vocal lines

Analysis of the data for all three bands reveal a series of Phase 1 stages where the group was engaged in the composing of vocal lines. These stages occurred at the same time as Phase 2, once the basic structure of the song was in place. This was because, on each occasion, some band members looped a section of the song while one person worked on the vocal line or lyrics.<sup>176</sup> For the members of *Boys*, this involved Robert telling the others to leave the room while he worked with Chris. For the members of both *Junior* and *Senior*, this stage was accompanied by careful negotiation and organization. What followed was the modification, transformation, refinement and critique of both the emerging vocal line and the existing instrumental parts. Whilst the lyricist was coming up with ideas for a vocal line, the “looper/s” continued to elaborate upon the parts they were playing. Andrew, the vocalist from *Senior*, explains how this happens:

---

<sup>176</sup> In the case of *Boys* this involved Robert playing the riff over and over for Chris.

- VT:** So when you came up with those lyrics did you do that when you were all playing or did you do them at home on your own?
- Andrew:** No, while I was playing. Just sat there with a piece of paper and a pen
- VT:** While they were playing?
- Andrew:** Yeah. They had to do a lot of looping. [the others smile]

Lyrics were usually written by one person at the request of the others, although occasionally someone else would take away existing lyrics to edit and add to them. Chrissy explains how she “came up with” the lyrics for one of *Junior’s* songs:<sup>177</sup>

- VT:** Have you got lyrics to this yet? [Reese’s song]
- Robbie:** Yeah we do.
- Chrissy:** Yeah we’ve got verse and chorus I think.
- VT:** So where did they come from? When did they turn up?
- Chrissy:** Last night.
- VT:** When you were at home by yourself?
- Chrissy:** Ah, yeah. I was listening to a Killing Heidi song.<sup>178</sup>
- VT:** You told me earlier that listening to Killing Heidi songs kind of ‘zones you out’. Was that happening then?
- Chrissy:** Yeah it was a real soft, weird one. I asked them yesterday [gestures to the others] ‘cause they asked me to write the lyrics and I asked them what they wanted it to be about and I had an idea about a soldier and he’s died, I mean, nearly dying [gestures] and he’s watching people walk past. I got it off the news. You know, that war that’s going on? [Iraq?] And I just made him be one of those soldiers. I also got this idea from a Doors song and it’s called ‘Unknown Soldier’ and it’s about some soldier getting hit and no one knows who he is and he’s watching him as he dies and he asks for help and no one’s coming. So I wrote that. I based it on that.
- VT:** Do you have a melody for those lyrics yet?

---

<sup>177</sup> Chrissy has been writing song lyrics for several years and carries a large and very full book of them around with her.

<sup>178</sup> *Killing Heidi* is a popular Australian rock band, formed in 1996 by sister and brother duo, Ella and Jesse Hooper. The name was chosen as being indicative of the eclectic character of the group’s music: *Killing* -hard, and *Heidi* - soft.

**Chrissy:** No, I was going to do that today.

**Robbie to Reese:** So will you sing today? [he will compose the melody]

**Reese:** Yeah.

**Dylan:** Yeah Reese, you should sing it.

**Chrissy:** Yeah, I want him to get the tune. [gestures to Reese]

Words might be changed in order to fit a melodic line but were not observed being subject to critique by any of the bands. For both *Junior* and *Senior* the role of lyric or melody writer was shared around between members of the group.

**VT:** Is the person who sings the lyrics usually the one who comes up with the tune?

**Chrissy:** Ah no, not usually.

**Robbie:** Everyone ...

**Chrissy:** Like, in our other song, he [gestures to Dylan] got it for me.

**VT:** How do you do that? How do you get lyrics?

**Robbie:** Oh, just good vibrations. Say it doesn't work, the lyrics, we'll change the beat of the lyrics.

**Chrissy:** Yeah transfer it, cut words out, put words in.

They seem to be saying here that fitting the lyrics into the fabric of instrumental parts takes precedence over their meaning, and that they are a means to a musical end. Sam's comments about lyric writing during the interview also imply that lyrics are not of primary concern to *Senior*. "They're just words, only words". Sometimes vocal lines (and other ideas) were changed so much that there was virtually none of the original ideas left by the time the song was complete:

**Nick:** We'll take that and use that [gestures], and get rid of the crap [big arm gesture] and completely change it. Like we've done to Emma's new song. [rueful laughter from Emma]

**VT:** What happened to your new song, Emma?

**Emma:** Well it was, sort of, like really dark, eh.

**Nick:** It was too dark.

**Emma:** [in tones of mock outrage] Yeah and now it's all funky and happy. [laughter from the others]

**Nick:** It's just dark and funky.

**VT to Emma:** Did you have lyrics and everything?

**Nick:** Yeah, she had lyrics but we got rid of them. [Emma laughs]

**VT:** So what's left, Emma? Any vestige of your original ideas?

**Emma:** There's pretty much one little riff left but that's all. [Rueful laughter from the others]

#### 4.10 Summary

The theoretical model of collaborative composition has been shown to be an effective way to analyse how the members of all three bands constructed their songs. All three bands employed a similar process: they began a composition with the generation of a single riff, moving through Phase 1 to Phase 2 stages as the composition was created. Vocal lines were worked on later in the process, frequently supported by others who looped a section, playing it over and over, while the lyrics were written on the spot. The analysis has shown that *Junior* and *Senior* were highly collaborative groups, whose compositional stages were characterised by a high degree of communication and mutuality. On the other hand, *Boys* was not a collaborative group because the songs were the work of one person and most of the interactions were one-way and instructional. In the next chapter the ways in which the members of the three groups communicated with one another, and the teaching and learning that occurred, will be examined and interpreted in more detail.

## Chapter 5

# Interpretative Findings

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents interpretations of the analysed data from perspectives that are broader than those of Chapter 4. The band members' interactions are examined in detail and this is accompanied by a discussion of the different ways and means of communicating with each other as they compose. How they teach each other and learn from each other is described and these descriptions are analysed in terms of *positive interdependence* and Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development* (ZPD).<sup>179</sup> Each band is also examined as a *community of practice*.<sup>180</sup>

### 5.2. Communication

A striking aspect of the compositional processes of both *Junior* and *Senior* is the constant thread of communication running through every session. As described in Chapter 4, an examination of the graphed data for both bands reveals a pattern of rapid alternation between [TRAN] [WIP], [CTQ] and [O], and various compositional interactions such as [T&M] and [REF]. While these data show *when* these kinds of interactions took place, they do not show *what* these interactions were or *how* they contributed to the collaborative compositional process.

---

<sup>179</sup> Johnson and Johnson, 'Cooperative Learning and Achievement', pp.27-28; and Vygotsky, *The Mind In Society*, p.86.

<sup>180</sup> Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, p.262.

Moments of particularly intense communication between band members were identified using the graphed data. The field notes, video and audio recordings and their transcripts, and the interview transcripts were then re-examined to investigate the kinds of communication that took place. From this analysis three kinds of significant communication emerged:

- Musical: the playing and vocalising of ideas
- Verbal: discussion, organization, critique and encouragement etc
- Gestural: facial expression and eye contact, nodding, pointing and larger arm movements, and moving to stand facing each other in order to demonstrate an idea, gesturing with instruments etc.

### **5.2.1 Verbal communication**

The graphed data reveal that members of *Senior* and *Junior* spent a large part of the sessions talking about the music they were composing. An analysis of the verbal communication within *Senior* shows a tendency by its members to adopt particular roles when talking together. Nick was frequently consulted by the others in matters of style or interpretation, Sam often took the lead in the acceptance or rejection of new ideas, while Emma and Andrew seemed more diffident. Greg is obviously a quiet person, but when he did speak up his ideas were taken very seriously by the others and usually implemented. Sam often took on a managerial role, reminding the others to stay on-task as the date of the RockQuest performance grew closer. Verbal communication was usually brief, led by Nick, and interspersed with work-in-progress trials of the ideas. Negative



feedback could be to the point or more subtle, depending who had suggested it. For example, Sam took criticism with robust good humour. However, it was clear that Emma was the least confident of the five members of *Senior* and the boys were careful to accompany any negative feedback with positive encouragement. Here is an example: the band had been working on some new lyrics for *Giggly*. Andrew and Emma called Nick over to show him the new ideas. He recited these back to Sam and Greg.

**Sam:** Well? Is it sorted? [looks from Emma to Nick]

**Andrew:** Yeah, it could work.

**Nick:** Hmmmm, maybe. Pretty lame rhyme though [looks at Emma – they are her lyrics] ... really... [She turns away from him]

[Pause – an impasse?]

**Sam:** [breaking the tension] Give it a go?  
[They play, with Andrew singing into the mike and Emma trying her part without one]

**Greg to Emma:** Sounds like you got it, eh?

**Sam:** Have we got it?

**Emma:** Hmmmm, yeah, well except for the last chorus.

**Sam:** It's OK.

**Andrew to Nick:** What do you want me to do?

**Nick:** A little, do little, um ... [He makes a crazy face, crazy gestures - the last lines are "it's not much fun in the funny farm". He goes on to describe aspects of a performance by the band *Incubus* which impressed him. He wants more showmanship and more animation from Andrew.]

They played, with Emma singing more confidently (into the mike) and Andrew singing with more crazy animation, almost declaiming the

lines and looking to Nick for confirmation.<sup>181</sup> There was no further comment and they moved on to new tasks. It seemed that the ideas had been both modified and accepted. Members of *Senior* also spent quite a lot of time in good-natured banter and in self-depreciatory “joking around”. Sam, in particular, kept up a constant level of humour, letting out whoops and funny noises as he played, accompanied by humorous gestures and facial expressions. This was particularly noticeable when the energy dropped or there were differences of opinion. He was clearly working hard to keep open the lines of communication within *Senior*.

Verbal communication between members of *Junior* tended to be more frequent and prolonged than those of *Senior*, particularly during periods of refinement and work in progress, with less joking around. An analysis of their verbal interactions reveals a high degree of equality amongst the members of *Junior*. Unlike *Senior*, there was no leader or role-play during verbal discussions and there tended to be a complex mix of the gestural, musical and verbal communication. A transcript of the first 25 minutes of the second observation of *Junior* reveals an intense series of interactions which include all of the kinds of communication under discussion. During this period, the members of *Junior* added refinements to a section of a bridge leading into a chorus. Dylan invited Chrissy and Reese to critique some small refinements to

---

<sup>181</sup> Emma was the only girl in a band that played in the male-dominated genre of heavy rock. Gender may possibly have been an issue here. This is outside of the scope of the current study but worth further consideration. See Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp.167-189, where Green highlights some of the issues for adolescent girls who play and perform rock music.

the drum kit part and a suggested idea from Reese was then subject to critique and subsequently modified by Dylan and Chrissy.

**Dylan:** So when we're going into the chorus should I go?  
[plays] Should I do one of my rings? [plays cymbal]

**Reese and Chrissy:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dylan:** Aw... I'll try not to do it too hard, I'll just do ...  
[plays]

**Chrissy:** Fine.

**Dylan:** That? Hard, or softer? [plays]

**Reese:** That's it.

**Chrissy:** About it, yeah.

[They play through the bridge section]

**Reese:** I reckon I should slide into it.

**Chrissy:** Yeah.

**Dylan:** [vocalises what he thinks Reese should play,  
gesturing with one arm and pointing]

**Chrissy:** You should ... [she moves so that she is facing  
Reese and mimes playing, whilst vocalising the idea  
and then, afterwards, moves back to stand alongside  
him]

**Reese:** Yeah, I go ... [he moves so that he is facing Chrissy  
and plays, moving back when he has finished]

**Dylan and Chrissy:** Yeah, that's it. [they look at each other for  
confirmation then look at Reese for confirmation  
from him]

**Chrissy:** But you could do it the other way.

**Reese:** What? Like [plays] that? [looks from Chrissy to  
Dylan for confirmation]

**Chrissy:** [forward arm gesture] Yeah, coz it goes ... [vocalises  
the end of the verse and beginning of the chorus]

**Dylan to Reese:** She means out of the bridge and into the chorus.  
[alternating arm gesture]

[Reese nods, plays]

**Chrissy:** Yeah, [rapid hand gesture, pointing forward] that's a  
good start.

[R plays the idea again]

In this extract Chrissy, Reese and Dylan play and sing their ideas to each other, and talk about them with accompanying arm, hand and facial gestures. They move face-to-face if they need to learn how to play something or need clarification of an instrumental idea. They talk about structure, critique each other's ideas and encourage each other. Of all three bands, *Junior* is the most communicative, spending at least half of every session in this way.

Verbal communication between members of *Boys* was dominated by Robert's instructions to the others. As noted earlier, all musical decisions made during the two observations, other than the initial adoption of Robert's idea, were made by him. The boys talked a lot but most of the conversation was about other matters to do with their social lives and school. Even at the point where the new idea for a song was created, James had to repeat himself several times before Robert acknowledged his suggestion that the idea had merit and could form the basis of a new song. The verbal communication associated with song writing almost exclusively involved Robert teaching the other members of the band to play his ideas.

### **5.2.2 Musical and Gestural Communication**

For all three bands, the placement of the players on the floor is an indicator of what kind of communication was taking place. For example, when teaching and learning a new idea, one member of a band would move to stand close to another, so that they faced each other, watching each other's playing intently. One player would

sometimes stand beside rather than in front of another player in order to provide support and encouragement. In *Senior*, Nick would often move closer to another member of the band when asked his opinion on an idea she or he was working on. Sometimes this request would be just a raising of an eyebrow, a look or a gesture with an instrument. Nick would move back to his playing position when asking for the opinions of the rest of the band and lift his guitar ready to play, indicating that he was happy with the idea and ready to move on.

In contrast to this, exploratory phases, involving “mucking around”, are characterised by a *turning away*, with the members of all three bands seeming to move into a much more individual space as they did so. When new ideas were introduced whilst playing, the members of both *Junior* and *Senior* confirmed these as having value by raising the head, smiling and making eye contact or turning towards the creator of the suggested idea. Sometimes a new idea would be confirmed by being played back to the creator by another member of the band. The adoption of a riff, leading to the composition of a new song for *Senior*, provides a striking example of how effective this kind of musical communication can be within a group when composing collaboratively. During Observation 3, the members of *Senior* worked on a song that they eventually rejected. At the end of this session the players sat slumped down and dejected-looking; their song had gone nowhere.<sup>182</sup> Sam pointed to Andrew, asking him to take out his mobile

---

<sup>182</sup> This point in the compositional process is examined in detail in the previous chapter.

phone. Andrew leant forward to play the recording to the others and on hearing it, the body language of everyone changed instantly. They all suddenly sat up and exchanged smiles, laughs and glances before looking down to his or her instrument to play the idea. From time to time they all looked up at each other as they played. Soon Nick introduced a new idea and looked up for confirmation. The others immediately raised their heads to make eye contact with him, confirming that they approved. Nick laughed and continued to play his new idea until the others played their own versions of it back to him. This was accompanied by nods, smiles and gestures with instruments. Within an hour a new song was well on the way.

The members of *Senior* tended to either talk about or play their ideas to each other. Unlike the members of *Junior*, they rarely vocalised or mimed playing their ideas and it was usually only Nick who did so. However, according to their teacher, they did occasionally swap instruments in order to demonstrate what they meant:

**Mrs J:** An interesting thing about this group is that they are multi-instrumentalists so that if, say, Nick had an idea about how he wanted a particular drumbeat to sound, he would actually jump on the drums and show Greg how he wanted him to play it. The same with Greg and Emma too.

For all three bands, discussion was often musical rather than verbal. Questions were asked and answered, ideas were suggested and accepted, even jokes were made, through playing, without a single word being exchanged.

## 5.3 Teaching and Learning

### 5.3.1 *Senior*

The data analysis reveals that members of *Senior* both taught each other and learned from each other. This process is described by their teacher:

**Mrs J:** They were able to accommodate the learning experience for each other. I noticed this quite a few times. They'd teach each other the part. The personalities within the group are such that they will learn from each other. And, this is really important, they are able to accept criticism from each other. No tantrums, no tears ... the learning in that ... the human learning is phenomenal. That's the teacher's most important role with these groups, to create an environment where that kind of learning can happen and that kind of composition [collaborative] can take place.

The analysis also shows that the members of *Senior* created songs from a riff or chord sequence that appeared spontaneously during a composing session. However, during informal discussions and the group interview, Nick, Sam, Emma, Greg and Andrew said that they used to compose songs differently. Here is an account of how an early song was composed:

**VT:** How did *In This Space* come about? Can you remember?

**Sam to Nick:** That was yours wasn't it?

**Andrew:** Yeah. It was just after Sam joined the band.

**Nick:** Yeah it was just after he joined the band and I wrote the guitar, bass, drums... [looks at Andrew] ... and the lyrics.

**Emma:** Pretty much everything really. [laughter]

**Nick:** And I showed it to the band. And I had an idea for the drums as well so I pretty much had it.

**Andrew:** It was your brainchild.

**VT:** But what about [sings a motif from the song]? Didn't you write that Emma?

**Emma:** Yeah, but it was mostly based on the guitar [Nick's idea] and I had to come with something I could play you see.

- VT:** What else did you add? Did anyone add anything else to the song?
- Sam:** Well, I couldn't play the bridge [laughter, "oh yeah!"] so I just played a scale.
- Nick:** It sounded wicked though. It sounded like a little solo.

In the interview extract above, both Sam and Emma imply that they were obliged to modify Nick's ideas because they both found them too difficult to play. It is clear that this was with Nick's encouragement.

- VT:** So for this song most of the ideas came from you, Nick?
- All:** Yeah, yeah.
- Nick:** I had the entire song.
- VT:** So does this often happen?
- Andrew:** That often happened at the very beginning.
- Nick:** Very beginning, yeah.
- Andrew:** That was pretty much what we had for all of our songs.
- Nick, Greg and Sam:** Yeah, yeah. [Emma nods]
- Nick:** But nowadays we pretty much write them on the spot together.
- Andrew:** Yeah, someone's mucking around and you say "hey that's a cool riff".
- Sam:** A more group-based song, eh.

The band's way of composing together has changed over time.

- Nick:** Now we all just add our own parts. We all do our own part now, pretty much. So it might be someone else doing the chorus.
- Sam:** The reality is that all those songs that were written [in the early days] we'd all, like to, like, re-fix. They clearly need fixing.
- VT:** So what's your idea of a typical song of yours? Is there a typical structure?
- Sam:** We used to have one, eh. But now a typical structure has gone out the window. It tends to be more group-based now.



It appears, then, that the other members of *Senior* have learned to compose through working with Nick and that his skills have also improved. Interview data reveal that Nick, Sam, Andrew, Greg and Emma believe their newer songs to be better compositions than the early songs that had been composed almost entirely by Nick. This change in the way the group has interacted could be described as that of individuals learning from a more able peer, within Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development*.<sup>183</sup> It can also be described in terms of a *community of practice* where novices have learned their craft from a more expert practitioner, through legitimate peripheral participation within a mutually supportive social structure.<sup>184</sup> It is also clear that Nick has relinquished the role of creative leader, despite the fact that he is often the generator of the initial riff or idea for a song.

**VT:** When you first started, had Nick and Greg done more song writing than Sam, Andrew and Emma? Were you two more experienced song writers?

**Andrew:** I think it was mainly Nick.

**Nick:** I always used to write songs anyway.

**Andrew:** Yeah, He'd have nine song ideas going on at any one time.

**VT:** Do you think that in working on Nick's ideas, you four, that you've learned how to do it yourselves?

[All five heads are suddenly raised. Lots of eye contact and smiles. Vehement agreement. Strong sense of shared awareness/agreement]

**Sam:** Oh yeah. Definitely.

**VT:** So, is this how you've learned to compose?

[General agreement, nodding]

**Sam:** It used to be, like ...

---

<sup>183</sup> Vygotsky, *The Mind in Society* p.86.

<sup>184</sup> Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, p.262

- Andrew:** It used to take us up to three months to write one.
- Nick:** And it was still shit! [laughter]
- Sam:** It's everyone's ideas that keeps your music good. You can't keep on saying that one person's gonna haul us up.

Mrs J identifies this kind of collaborative learning as crucial to the compositional process:

- Mrs J:** Each member is respected and valued and their skills are valued as well. So how it works in practice is that every member is able to contribute something without fear of being put down.
- VT:** Even the ones who are less skilled?
- Mrs J:** Yes, that's the critical part of the whole process, to have a healthy group dynamic. When it doesn't work is when one person turns it into a solo composition and directs everyone else so that it loses the group process.<sup>185</sup>

This leads one to question whether or not the members of *Senior* learned to compose through formal classroom learning. Given that these Year 13 students had not had the opportunity to study Music since Year 10, and that this kind of study had only been resumed at the school the year before, this seems unlikely. However some members did, on a number of occasions, use technical musical terms when working together.

- VT:** Do you use music theory to find those ideas?  
[shuffling, shifting in seats, clearly they all find this idea uncomfortable]
- Nick:** Yes, well, maybe a very little of that.
- Greg:** It's general knowledge really.
- Andrew:** Well, maybe we **think** we know a little about it.
- Sam:** Like, I've read on the internet that you can play that, with that, with that. [repeats, gesturing as if on a screen]

---

<sup>185</sup> This description of solo composition within a group applies to the interactions observed amongst the members of *Boys*.

**VT:** So... what chord goes with what?

**Nick:** But we know that from experience though.

**Sam:** Yeah, yeah.

**VT:** So have you found that information yourselves rather than having it taught to you?

[General agreement]

**Sam:** Yeah, I've never had a teacher teach me that stuff.

**Andrew:** We had that little bit in 3<sup>rd</sup> form music where they taught us, you know, but you don't remember it.

Their classroom music teacher (new to the school in 2006) defines her role:

**Mrs J:** They work really well as a unit and would probably work well without me. But mostly my role has been in encouraging them, just being a presence, just popping in when they are practising, having a listen to what they are doing, making suggestions, which they usually disagree with. [laughs] But that's fine because in the process of disagreeing, this is a really interesting thing, they actually come up with something else. They're still teenagers, still kids. Having someone from the outside coming in reinforces them, it encourages them.

### 5.3.2 Teaching and Learning: *Junior*

The [TRAN] stage of the theoretical model reveals that Chrissy, Reese and Dylan (and Robbie in Observation 3) frequently taught each other how to play various musical ideas.<sup>186</sup> Chrissy, Reese and Dylan appear to have equal input into the collaborative process. They are all equally at home on guitar, bass or drums, they all learned to play at the same time, and they had the same teacher. Whilst Dylan sometimes seemed to take a leadership role, whether he was in fact the leader of the group is by no means clear. He seemed no more capable than any of the

---

<sup>186</sup>

As explained in Chapter 4, Peter, the bass player present in Observation 2, made minimal contributions to the creative process and is not included in the analysis.

others as both a player and a songwriter. However, as demonstrated earlier, members of the band frequently helped each other out when one group member was struggling to play an idea or was unsure of how to proceed. Therefore, describing the interactions between members of the group as occurring within a zone of proximal development is not particularly useful. A high level of both mutuality and equality existed within *Junior*. Johnson and Johnson's notion of *positive interdependence*, as a function of cooperative learning, more aptly describes the group's interactions.<sup>187</sup> Members of *Junior* showed considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction and took personal responsibility to achieve the group's goals. There was frequent use of relevant interpersonal and small-group skills accompanied by periodic and frequent group processing.<sup>188</sup> The band's songs could not have been composed by individuals and the members of *Junior* needed each other's input to achieve the goal of performing their own material in a rock band. Chrissy describes what this means to her:

**Chrissy:** I'd be able to help every member of the band, because every member has helped me so I know how things run, so I know how to help another person.

This aptly describes a community of practice. When asked "who taught you to write songs?" Chrissy replied that she learned about composing in the classroom, from her classroom Music teacher. However, Dylan and Reese, her class members, did not believe they learned how to compose in class and claimed that they learned from

---

<sup>187</sup> Johnson and Johnson, 'Cooperative Learning and Achievement', pp.26-69.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

the other members of the band. Dylan commented that he learned some things from his older sister who is also a songwriter. The band had also been mentored for a few days by a member of the professional band *Stereogram*, through the New Zealand Music Commission's *Music Mentoring in Schools* programme.<sup>189</sup> Here is what they have to say about his teaching:

**Chrissy:** The guy from *Stereogram* came and he made up a cool chorus. But we all liked the bridge.

**VT:** Hold on, let's go back. The guy from *Stereogram*, did he help you write songs?

**Chrissy:** He did the chorus.

**VT:** That was helpful?

**Robbie:** Very.

**Chrissy:** Yeah cause the song was alright but with that chorus that made it perfect. And then when we moved the old chorus, which is that real fast one that Reese played - that just made it even better.

It seems that members of *Junior* regarded any input from outside of the band as an opportunity to pick up some useful musical material rather than to learn about song writing. This is confirmed when asked about the input they received from the two itinerant teachers (Miss C and Mr J, both very experienced professional performers) who also worked with the band:

**Chrissy:** Miss C is the one who says you are going too fast in some spots and you're playing the wrong note there.

**Robbie to Reese:** Didn't she do that .....?

**Reese:** She made up this. [plays a riff]

---

<sup>189</sup> This mentoring scheme is described in Chapter 1.

**Dylan:** This is an old song.

**Robbie:** But he [Dylan] changed it.

**Reese:** That song goes [plays the riff – *Suicidal Love*]. Miss C made up the bridge which goes like this. [plays]

**Chrissy:** Miss C said “You should sing to it” and it was going to be, like, the chorus. But we changed it.

**Chrissy:** And there’s Mr J. He helps you out with your songs. [gestures to Dylan]

**Dylan:** Well, he hasn’t helped with songs but he’s given us ideas.

**Chrissy:** He’s given me some ideas too.

If the members of *Junior* were taught how to write songs by their teachers, they seem unaware of it. They regarded the opportunity to gain access to the music classroom as the single most important aspect of adult input or support:

**Dylan:** But Miss A, [their classroom teacher] she’s been the best though ‘cause she has control over all this, in this room. [gestures to the gear].

**Robbie:** Not letting other people come in, and letting us use the gear and stuff.

**VT:** So the best help has been letting you have access to this room?

**Robbie:** If we didn’t have access to this room we wouldn’t, wouldn’t be ...

**Chrissy:** What we are.

**All:** Yeah.

The questionnaire data reveal that Chrissy, Reese, Robbie and Dylan all came from homes where at least two family members play the guitar, the piano or are singers.<sup>190</sup> Chrissy’s uncle is a professional rock musician. The notion of making music in a group was something all

---

<sup>190</sup> See Appendix E.

four had grown up with. Chrissy, Dylan, Robbie and Reese listened to music of the same heavy rock genre in which they composed.<sup>191</sup> A thirty-minute car journey to the recording studio was a fairly silent one for me, with each band member listening intently to heavy rock through headphones of their individual MP3 players, pausing occasionally to share headphones and songs with each other. Any conversation involved a highly focussed critique of what was being heard and it was clear that the members of *Junior* shared a common understanding of the music to which they were listening. *Junior* existed even when its members were not actually playing or song writing together because the band is a knowledge-based social structure that owes its existence to a shared reality amongst its members. As outlined in Chapter 2, Wenger defines a *community of practice* as existing when a group of people share a passion for something, deepening their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis for as long as there is an interest in doing so.<sup>192</sup> This certainly describes what has been observed of interactions amongst the members of *Junior*. It is therefore valid to suggest that the band members have learned how to compose mainly through the kinds of informal music learning described by others in Chapter 2. The members of *Junior* learned to write songs through the shared experience of listening to, and playing, the same kind of music and through composing similar songs within the playing, singing, listening and composing community of practice that is *Junior*.

---

<sup>191</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>192</sup> Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, pp.4-5.

#### 5.4 Teaching and Learning: *Boys*

The members of *Boys* were not interviewed and, as has been explained earlier, it is quite possible that at least one, if not both, of the two observations were of atypical sessions. Therefore, it is not possible to know what teaching and learning had occurred over time for Robert, Alex, James, Chris and Liam. What is clear, however, is that a feature of both observations was the large amount of time spent in [TRAN] stages. Robert was the leader of the band as well as its composer. In order to realise his intentions he had to spend a lot of time formally teaching the other members of *Boys* what to play.

Robert also acted as a teacher in another capacity. Chris was new to the band and to rock music in general, and has had considerable experience performing as a solo singer in musical theatre. Transcriptions of the interactions during the lyric writing sessions reveal that Robert spent a considerable amount of time and effort in teaching Chris the basics of song writing. He explained how the verse and chorus were to fit into the song and then proceeded to loop the riff on guitar while Chris tried out some ideas. He was quietly encouraging and accepted Chris' ideas for lyrics without criticism. He then called the others back with "Hey, you guys need to hear this" and encouraged Chris to sing through his ideas for a vocal line while he played. Chris was able to achieve something he would have been unable to do on his own. Working with Robert within a zone of proximal development enabled him to learn about song writing. Therefore, learning did occur amongst the members of *Boys*, although what was observed was not



necessarily cooperative learning, given that Robert was very much the one in control. Why he was prepared to share his expertise with Chris and not the others in the band is not clear and he may well have done so on other occasions. What is clear is that the song composed during the observations of *Boys* could have been created by any group of five similar players, providing Robert was the leader. He needed the others to realise his creative ideas but it is quite possible that he could have been able to achieve this through the efforts of another four boys.

However, when one examines *Boys* as a community of practice the learning processes within the band are more clearly revealed. I suggest that the band was a *playing* but not *composing* community of practice. In order to achieve legitimacy as a rock band (and to perform in the high-profile RockQuest), the members of *Boys* had to perform the band's own, original songs which were the efforts of one composer, achieved through the willing participation of the other boys. James, Liam, Alex and Chris were able to act as legitimate members of that rock-music-playing community of practice, participating peripherally in Robert's creativity. However, experienced band members who clearly had knowledge and experience, such as James, were unable to contribute meaningfully to the creative process, which had been claimed as a solo process by Robert. It is quite possible that James did learn to compose through his association with the more confident and knowledgeable Robert, and that his discomfort and frustration was a result of his being unable to use the knowledge and skills he had acquired. No other members of *Boys* were observed teaching or even encouraging each

other, whereas this was very much Robert's role. An investigation of the teaching and learning that occurs within bands such as *Boys*, where a solo composer works within a group, is worthy of further consideration.

## 5.5 Ownership of the compositions

When asked "who is the composer of your songs?" the members of all three bands, including *Boys*, replied that they all were.<sup>193</sup> Here is a transcript that is typical of an exchange between the members of *Junior*. The interview transcripts reveal similar responses from the members of *Senior*.

- Chrissy:** We all ...
- Reese:** We all make the song work.
- Dylan:** We all do.
- Robbie:** Say I was away, you guys would still make it work and keep the peace for when I get back.
- Chrissy:** We can all write lyrics – coz he [gestures to Dylan] can help me with the song we did at RockQuest. I read some of his lyrics [gestures to Robbie] when he joined the band, I wrote some lyrics and, like, you [gestures to Reese] were doing some the other day.
- Robbie:** It was really slack in my band before because I was the only one doing it. I was the only one writing the song, writing the riffs, writing the drumbeats. It really doesn't work as a team. It was just me doing it and it's one of the reasons why I left.
- VT:** So overall who writes the songs?
- Chrissy:** All of us.
- Dylan:** It'd be all of us. We all contribute.
- Chrissy:** There's not one song where there's just one of us that wrote it.

---

<sup>193</sup> Robert, James and Alex stated, at the beginning of Observation 1 that "we all write the songs, they're the band's songs".

For the members of both *Junior* and *Senior*, group ownership is a valid assumption to make about the songs composed collaboratively. One might be surprised by the members of *Boys'* assertion that they have collective ownership of the band's songs. However, when one views the band as a community of practice this can be seen as quite reasonable. In order to achieve validity as a rock band, at RockQuest for example, *Boys* must perform original material. If every member of the band is accepted as legitimate member of that rock-music-playing community then, through legitimate peripheral participation, every member of that community can take ownership of the band's songs. Even though an individual might have had only minimal opportunities, experience or abilities to contribute to the composition of the song, the song could not have been composed without him and he can therefore take valid ownership of it.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter has described the ways in which the members of the three bands have interacted when composing within the group. Communication (musical, verbal and gestural) has been shown to be a crucial part of the process, revealing *Boys* as a *group composing* but not *collaboratively composing* band. The members of *Junior* and *Senior* have been shown interacting with a high degree of mutuality and positive interdependence, within the safety of mutually supportive, highly focussed and respectful communities. The less skilled and less confident members of *Senior* have been supported over time to become equal partners in the collaborative compositional process. As a result,

members of a *group composing* band have learned how to become members of a *collaboratively composing* band. *Junior* has been shown to be a strong song writing community of practice from the start, enabling its members to acquire the skills and knowledge they needed to achieve their goals and realise their collective passion for playing and song writing together.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

#### 6.1. The compositional processes of *Senior, Junior and Boys*

This study has aimed to describe, analyse and interpret the collaborative compositional processes (song writing) of three teenage rock bands by answering two questions:

- How are songs composed collaboratively within a teenage rock band?
- Can a theoretical model be used to identify and describe how songs are composed within a group?

When the theoretical model was deemed insufficient to fully account for how the songs were composed, two more questions were asked:

- How do the members of a group interact when composing together?
- Do group members learn from each other and, if so, how does this occur?

Using a theoretical model, the analysis of the compositional processes within the three cases has shown that it is possible to successfully analyse how music is composed within a group, even if it is not a collaboratively composing group. In the first phase of the model, all three bands have been shown to compose their songs in similar ways, through the generation and confirmation of a riff that is then used as

the basis of a song. When the second phase of the model was applied to the data, two of the bands (*Junior* and *Senior*) were shown to create whole compositions collaboratively, through a series of intense and complex interactions that required a high degree of mutuality. One band, *Boys*, was revealed as composing mainly under the instruction and direction of one person -- a *group composing* rather than *collaboratively composing* band. For all three cases the theoretical model of group composition has been used successfully to show graphically how the songs were composed. Through the graphic method of recording the data, one can clearly observe at which phase and stage of composition a group is engaged. Comparisons of early, middle and later periods of song writing for all three bands show clear patterns emerging, even though the group dynamic for each of the bands is unique.

Analysis using the theoretical model does not identify the ways in which the members of the bands interacted with each other when composing, nor does it reveal what part each individual has to play in the composition of a song. It also does not show how the members of the bands learned to compose together, nor how (or if) they learned from each other. In order to gain a more complete understanding of how the songs were composed, the interactions within each group were viewed from the perspectives of socio-cultural and educational theory. The interactions among members of all three bands were assessed in terms of Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development*, and Johnson and Johnson's notion of *positive interdependence*, analysing and describing

the ways in which learning occurred. Using these two learning theories it has been shown that, for *Junior* and *Senior* the high degree of mutuality and co-operative behaviour within each group has meant that both skilled and un-skilled individuals have been able to learn from and with each other, becoming better players and songwriters in the process. While *Boys* has been shown to be a less collaborative compositional group, it is possible to speculate, based on the analysis of an incomplete data set, that the boys in this band may also have learned how to compose from each other, even though they were not permitted to do so by the principal composer.

Wenger's concept of *community of practice* was particularly useful in describing the learning processes within each group. As demonstrated earlier, the rock band is, by definition, a community of practice; that is, "a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis".<sup>194</sup> Two of the three bands, *Junior* and *Senior*, were revealed as both *playing* and *composing* communities, where band members learned to compose through participating, to a greater or lesser extent, within a community where every member contributed meaningfully to the song writing. The members of both *Junior* and *Senior* learned to compose within a playing and composing community of practice and were not formally taught how to write songs by their classroom teachers or, it seems, from anyone else. The third band, *Boys*, was revealed as being a community

---

<sup>194</sup> Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, pp.4-5.

of practice mainly concerned with the *playing* of rock music, legitimised as a heavy rock group by the performance of original material, achieved through the legitimate peripheral participation of players under the instruction of a leader/song writer. Even so, teaching and learning was observed as having an important part to play in the way the band functioned.

The third way in which the contributions of individuals within a composing group were analysed was through communication by verbal, musical and non-verbal/gestural means. Communication between members of the bands was very intense and subject to constant change, particularly amongst members of *Junior* and *Senior*, the two collaborative bands. Analysis of verbal communication revealed a range of roles taken by band members, many of which were related to the organisation or critique of musical ideas and also to the maintenance of positive and mutually supportive relationships within the band. Whilst some members of the bands contributed less than others in terms of creative or musical input, their abilities as managers, motivators, critics and/or arbitrators meant that they made a significant contribution to the successful completion of an effective composition. Similarly, non-verbal communication, such as body language and positioning, looks, nods and smiles were a crucial part of the communication between band members when working on a song, and frequently linked to either verbal or musical conversations. Musical conversations between members of the bands were often the principal means by which musical ideas were generated, confirmed,



shared, taught, learned, modified and refined, and were a striking feature of every song writing session. Analyses of how the group members communicated with each other were used to successfully add to what was already known about each group as a learning community. This in turn informed the theoretical model analysis of each group's overall composing processes, building up a rich description of how each group composed their songs.

## 6.2 Informal and formal music learning

Informal music learning processes, both within and without the music classroom, have been the topic of much discussion in recent times. In Chapters 1 and 2 it was shown that the work of those such as Green, Allsup and Folkestad has highlighted a shift of focus in music education, away from music *teaching* to music *learning*. This shift necessitates an acknowledgement, as North and Hargreaves study has shown, that for many young people some of their most meaningful music experiences occur outside of school.<sup>195</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, earlier work by Campbell and Fornas *et al.* suggests that young people playing in rock bands are highly engaged in playing (and sometimes composing) music with which they identify strongly, within a community within which they find acceptance, meaning and identity. Furthermore, Wenger's metaphor of a community of practice emphasises that learning comprises a sense of belonging as well as intellectual exercise. Campbell's observation that the participants in her

---

<sup>195</sup> Adrian North and David Hargreaves, 'Music and Adolescent Identity', *Music Education Research*, Vol.1, no.1, 1999, pp.75-90.

study had formed their bands even before they had instruments, or could even play them, emphasises the assertion here that a rock band can be a highly effective community of practice wherein its members learn through making meaning and constructing identities.<sup>196</sup>

The work of the young people in the three case studies presented here reveals that they were highly engaged in creative endeavours that were very meaningful to them.<sup>197</sup> They learned to compose valid and complete works through interacting with each other, rather than through formal instruction in the music classroom. Green and those involved in the *Musical Futures Project* have recognised that informal ways of music learning associated with popular music have the potential to raise the level of engagement within the music classroom, particularly at junior secondary level.<sup>198</sup> If one acknowledges that informal learning processes are an effective means of learning to compose music in the New Zealand classroom, then this leads one to examine the kinds of conditions that might foster this kind of learning.

### **6.2.1 Conditions needed to support collaborative rock bands**

The members of both *Junior* and *Senior* identified being able to access instruments and equipment such as microphones and a PA system as crucial to their success. This is particularly the case for those students who did not have access to these outside of school. Similarly, having

---

<sup>196</sup> Campbell, 'Of Garage Bands and Song Getting', p.14.

<sup>197</sup> For example, on one occasion the members of *Junior* worked until they were so exhausted that they could hardly play their instruments. This two and a half-hour session was held during recess, followed by a mid-morning music class backing onto lunchtime. All four left for afternoon class (Maths) having not had time to eat lunch, but with their song "officially done".

<sup>198</sup> Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, pp.214-216; and the *Musical Futures Project*, available from <http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk>, accessed 18 March, 2007.

uninterrupted and extended periods of time in an appropriate working space is also important, particularly for students like the members of *Junior* who not only did not own their own instruments but did not have an alternative venue for band practice. As they put it:

**Robbie:** If we didn't have access to this room we wouldn't, wouldn't be ...

**Chrissy:** What we are.

**All:** Yeah.

All of the participants in this study, including their teachers, talk about “mucking around” when describing the moment when an idea for a song is generated. During the only observed instance of this occurring during the research, the members of *Boys* were most certainly “mucking around”. The room was filled with the chaotic sounds of electric guitars and a very loud drum kit, energetically played. The boys were turned away from each other, fooling around with various fragments of songs, including the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. If this had taken place within, say, a Year 10 Music class, as opposed to an after-school session, the temptation for a teacher might have been to quieten them and remind them that they were there to get on with some composing. This leads one to wonder if the riff that was subsequently generated and developed into a song would have made its appearance if the boys had been interrupted at this point. Claxton's neuro-scientific description of the conditions required for the “flat brain” state during periods of creative exploration also points to the importance of unfocused

and seemingly random activity in the early stages of creativity.<sup>199</sup>

What may look like time-wasting to an outside observer may be, in fact, a precursor to composition.

The members of *Junior* and *Senior* were, for the most part, fairly dismissive of any teaching they had received in the music classroom. It is significant, however, that both of their teachers acknowledged that supporting the group was the most crucial part of their role. As the music teacher at *Senior's* school puts it:

**Mrs J:** That's the teacher's most important role with these groups, to create an environment where that kind of learning can happen and that kind of composition [*collaborative*] can take place.

Jorgensen's notion of "eduction", where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a director of learning, is certainly evident here.<sup>200</sup>

However, from the researcher's perspective, there were some aspects of music learning with which the members of two bands were seen to be struggling and where they seemed unable to help each other very much. One of these was setting the lyrics to a melody. As a genre, heavy rock is not a particularly melodic one and none of the bands seemed to place very high importance upon creating a catchy or effective vocal line, as opposed to a catchy guitar riff, for example. Chris, the most inexperienced member of *Boys*, ran into a dead end when searching for a melody for his lyrics because he was unaware

---

<sup>199</sup> Claxton, *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind*, pp.149-152.

<sup>200</sup> Jorgensen, *In Search of Music Education*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997, p.24.

that it should sit above, and in contrast to, the underlying guitar riff which he was relentlessly singing. If he had known something about the way vocal lines work within a rock song he may have been able to apply this knowledge to more successfully create an effective vocal line. During the group interview of *Senior*, Sam the bass player spoke of searching the internet for information about chords (“what chord goes with what”) and was frequently observed discussing the tonality of the music as it was being composed. As he put it, “I’ve never had a teacher teach me that stuff”. *Senior*’s school had only just re-introduced Music at senior level with the appointment of a music specialist in 2006, Sam’s final year at school. It was too late for him to take part in formal music learning in the classroom. One wonders how engaged he might have been had he had the opportunity to explore tonality and harmony within the context of his own music, in an elective music classroom, and whether this exploration might have been useful for him when composing collaboratively in the band.

Both of the instances described here are points in an individual’s learning where the support of a teacher and an appropriate classroom curriculum might have enabled the young composers to work more effectively.

### **6.3 The formal assessment of collaborative composition**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the catalyst for this research was a question asked by a teacher of students who were members of collaboratively composing bands. The teacher asked, “Where are the unit standards

for assessing kids' work when they've composed music as a group?". He went on to comment on the high degree of engagement and learning that was taking place within these bands. As discussed in Chapter 1, it is currently not possible to assess collaboratively composed music through the achievement and unit standards of the NCEA.

Some NCEA Music achievement standards assess the musical performance of individuals within a group or ensemble.<sup>201</sup> Some NCEA Music unit standards assess the contribution an individual makes holistically to an ensemble, from rehearsal to performance.<sup>202</sup> Others are overtly aimed at the rock musician, such as US 20747 'Perform music based on research of recorded compositions', and US16553 'Make a significant contribution to a music performance ensemble'.<sup>203</sup> Some of the unit standards mentioned here involve a requirement that the student reflect upon, and keep records of, his or her contribution to the ensemble in more than just musical terms. Students are assessed in such things as mentoring, leading, initiating, and being reliable, encouraging and punctual. The teacher is able to assess this contribution to an ensemble through reflective journals and logs kept by the students, through observing and videoing rehearsals and performances, and through interviewing the students. Indeed, two members of *Senior* were undertaking NCEA assessment through some

---

<sup>201</sup> These are AS90013, AS90265 and AS90526. Ministry of Education, available from <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea>; accessed 17 October, 2007. See Appendix A.

<sup>202</sup> For example, see US 10666, 'Demonstrate Ability to be an Effective Performing Member of a Music Performance Group.' Ministry of Education, available from <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea>; accessed 17 October, 2007. See Appendix A.

<sup>203</sup> Ministry of Education, available from <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea>; accessed 17 October, 2007.

of these standards during the period of the research in 2006 and kept reflective journals. How this impacted upon their work within the band is unknown.<sup>204</sup>

This research has shown that it is possible to analyse the ways in which a collaboratively composing group works and to show how the music is created. When one adds to this the group performance assessment tools already in widespread use within the secondary school music community in New Zealand, then the formal assessment of each individual's contribution to the creation of collaboratively composed music seems quite feasible. A combination of interview, observation, journaling and analysis using a theoretical model could provide sufficient assessment data to effectively assess a collaboratively composed work in terms of an individual's contribution, particularly if one includes the kinds of multiple perspectives used in this study.

However, one could question whether it is desirable, or even wise, to pull apart intensely social interactions that contain a high degree of mutuality and trust in order to award grades to individuals. The only reason that the music has been able to be composed at all is because the members of the band, experienced or less experienced, knowledgeable or ignorant, confident or diffident, have all worked together to make music which has meaning and identity. In the case of the three bands examined here, a group composing band, whether or not it is truly collaborative, is one where the music could not be created

---

<sup>204</sup> An investigation into the influence this type of reflection might have upon group composing is worthy of further consideration.

by any other means and where those who are less skilled, and possibly less creative, are accepted into a community of practice through legitimate peripheral participation, which can place them on a trajectory of learning where they can become confident and effective composers. Although these band members may not be the principal contributors to the composition, the composition could not be created without their participation. To formally assess work for a national qualification such as the NCEA one must decide who passes or fails and who, in the case of achievement standards, achieves the grades of *not-achieved*, *achieved*, *merit* or *excellence*. To apply this process to a collaboratively composing band may be like pulling the wings off a butterfly in order to find out how it flies.

#### **6.4 Discussion**

The contribution this study has made to what we know about music learning has been to show that it is possible to apply a theoretical model to successfully examine the compositional processes within a group. It has also revealed just how profound, complex and meaningful the creative learning can be for the members of three rock bands when they play and compose together. When one adds to this what is already known about the needs of the adolescent and about how young people learn, it may be worth taking a closer look at how young people in bands make music together and also to examine whether work of this kind could, or should, be assessed as part of a national qualification. What is clear is that the members of *Junior*, *Senior* and *Boys* were highly engaged in self-directed music learning,



finding meaning and identity in the process. Wenger's metaphor of a community of practice is one that has applied particularly well to this study. The young people who participated in it were powerfully motivated to learn and to achieve their goals, with minimal input from others. How and why this occurs is worthy of further investigation. As Sam, the bass player in *Senior* put it, "It's other people's ideas that keeps your music good".

*Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari ko taku toa he toa takitini.*

My success is achieved not just through my own efforts,  
but through the efforts of others.

Māori whakatauki, or proverb

## Bibliography

### BOOKS & ARTICLES

- Allsup, Randall Everett. 'Mutual Learning and Democratic Action in Instrumental Music Education'. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.51, no.1, 2003, pp.24-37.
- Barab, Sasha A. and Duffy, Thomas M. 'From Practice Fields to Communities of Practice', in David Jonassen and Susan Land (eds.), *Theoretical Foundations of Learning Environments*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000, pp.25-50.
- Braatvedt, Sue. 'A History of Music Education in New Zealand State Primary and Intermediate Schools 1878 – 1989', Ph. D. diss., University of Canterbury, 2002.
- Bresler, Liora. 'Traditions and Change Across the Arts: Case Studies in Arts Education', *International Journal of Music Education*, Vol.27, 2000, p.31.
- Burnard, Pamela. 'How Children Ascribe Meaning to Improvisation and Composition: Rethinking Pedagogy in Music Education', *Music Education Research*, Vol.2, no.1, 2000, pp.7-23.
- Burnard, Pamela and Younker, Betty Anne. 'Problem solving and Creativity: Insights from Students' Individual Composing Pathways', *International Journal of Music Education*, Vol.22, no.1, 2004, pp.59-76.
- Campbell, Patricia Shehan. 'Of Garage Bands and Song-Getting: The Musical Development of Young Rock Musicians', *Research Studies in Music Education*, Vol.4, 1995, pp.12-20.
- Clandinin, D. Jean and Connelly, F. Michael. 'Personal Experience Methods', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage, 2003, pp.413-427.
- Claxton, Guy. *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind. How Intelligence Increases When You Think Less*, New York: Harper Collins, 1997.
- Cohen, Louis and Manion, Lawrence. *Research Methods in Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New York: Croom Helm 1980, p.56-57.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, New York: Harper Collins, 1996.
- Crotty, Michael. *Foundations of Social Research*, St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1998.
- Denzin, Norman. *The Research Act*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984.

- Denzin, Norman and Lincoln, Yvonna. 'The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage, 2003, p.2.
- Dewey, John, 'My Pedagogic Creed', in Larry A. Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander (eds.) *The Essential Dewey*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998, p.229.
- Dillenbourg, Pierre, 'What Do You Mean By Collaborative Learning?', in P. Dillenbourg (ed.) *Collaborative-learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches*, Elsevier: Geneva, 1999.
- Fautley, Martin. 'A New Model of the Group Composing Process of Lower Secondary School Students', *Music Education Research*, Vol.7, no.1, 2005, pp.39-57.
- Folkestad, Goran. 'Formal and Informal Learning Situations or Practices vs Formal and Informal Ways of Learning', *British Journal of Music Education*, Vol.23, no.2, 2006, pp.135-145.
- Folkestad, Goran., Hargreaves David., and Lindstrom, B. 'Compositional Strategies in Computer-Based Music Making', *British Journal of Music Education*, Vol. 15, 1998, pp.83-97.
- Fontana, Andrea and Frey, James. 'The Interview', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage, 2003, pp.695-728.
- Fornas, Johan., Lindberg, Ulf., and Sernhede, Ove. *In Garageland. Rock, Youth and Modernity*, trans J. Teeland, London: Routledge, 1995.
- Gilbert, Jane. *Catching the Knowledge Wave? The Knowledge Society and the Future of Education*, Wellington: NZCER Press, 2005.
- Green, Lucy. *How Popular Musicians Learn. A Way Ahead for Music Education*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001.
- Green, Lucy. *Music, Gender, Education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Green, Lucy. 'The Music Curriculum as Lived Experience: Children's "Natural" Music-Learning Processes', *Music Educators Journal*, Vol.91, no.4, 2005, pp.27-32.
- North, Adrian and Hargreaves, David. 'Music and Adolescent Identity', *Music Education Research*, Vol. 1, no, 1, 1999, pp.75-90.
- Hickey, Maud. 'The Computer as a Tool in Creative Music Making', *Research Studies in Music Education*, Vol.8, 1997.

- Johnson, David and Johnson, Roger. 'Cooperative Learning and Achievement', in Shlomo Sharan (ed.), *Cooperative Learning*, New York: Praeger, 1990.
- Johnson, David and Johnson, Roger. 'Positive Interdependence: Key to Effective Cooperation', in Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz and Norman Miller (eds.), *Interaction in Cooperative Groups*, 1992.
- Jorgensen, Estelle. *In Search of Music Education*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.
- Kennedy, Mary. 'Listening to the Music: Compositional Processes of High School Composers', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.50, no.2, 2002, pp.94-111.
- Kratus, John. 'A Time Analysis of the Compositional Processes Used by Children Ages 7 to 11', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.31, no.1, 1989, pp.5-20.
- Lave, Jean and Wenger, Etienne. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- McCarthy, Sarah and McMahon, Susan, 'From Convention to Invention: Approaches to Peer Interaction During Writing', in Rachel Hertz-Lazarowitz and Norman Miller (eds.), *Interaction in Cooperative Groups*, 1992, pp.1-35.
- McGillen, Christopher and McMillan, Ros. 'Co-operative Song writing: Adventures in Anarchy and Engagement with Adolescents', *Australian Journal of Music Education*, Vol.1, 2003, pp.25-38.
- Merriam, Sharan B. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998, p.5.
- Miell, Dorothy and McDonald, Roger. 'Children's Creative Collaborations: The Importance of Friendship When Working Together on a Musical Composition', *Social Development*, no.3, 2000, pp.348-369.
- Miles, Matthew and Huberman, A. Michael. *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994.
- Ministry of Education, *Music Education: Early Childhood to Form 7: Syllabus for Schools*, Wellington: Learning Media, 1989.
- Ministry of Education, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, Wellington, Learning Media, 2000, pp.52-69.
- Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, Wellington, Learning Media, 1993.

- Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum*, Wellington, Learning Media, 2007, pp.20-21
- Ministry of Education. 'School Certificate Music 060', *School Certificate Prescription*, Wellington, Learning Media, 1993.
- Olesen, Virginia. 'Feminisms and Models of Qualitative Research', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage, 2003, pp.235-279.
- Roberts, Peter. 'A Critique of the NZQA Policy Reforms', in M. Olssen and Kay Morris Matthews (eds.), *Education Policy in New Zealand: The 1990s and Beyond*, Palmerston North: Dunmore, 1997.
- Savage, Jonathon. 'Informal Approaches to the Development of Young People's Composition Skills', *Music Education Research*, Vol.5, no.1, 2003, pp.82-85.
- Seddon, Frederick and O'Neil, Susan. 'Creative Thinking Processes in Adolescent Computer-based Composition: An Analysis of Strategies Adopted and the Influence of Instrumental Music Training', *Music Education Research*, Vol.5, no.2, 2003, pp.125-137.
- Slavin, Robert E., *Cooperative Learning*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.
- Sloboda, John. *The Musical Mind: The Cognitive Psychology of Music*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Soderman, Johan and Folkestad, Goran. 'How Hip-Hop Musicians Learn: Strategies in Informal Creative Music Making', *Music Education Research*, 2004, Vol.6, no.3, pp.131-326.
- Stauffer, Susan. 'Connections Between the Musical and Life Experiences of Young Composers and Their Compositions', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.50, no.4, pp.301-313.
- Swanwick, Keith and Tillman, June. 'The Sequence of Musical Development: A Study of Children's Composition', *British Journal of Music Education*, Vol.3, no.3, 1986, pp.305-339.
- Stake, Robert. 'Qualitative Case Studies', in Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage, 2003, pp.443-466.
- Stake, Robert. *The Art of Case Study Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998.
- Tringham, Kate. 'How the Mentor Scheme Works', in *New Zealand Education Gazette*, Vol.85, no.10, 2006, pp.4-6.
- Vygotsky, Lev. *The Mind In Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

- Wallas, Graham. *The Art of Thought*, London: Jonathon Cape, 1926.
- Webster, Peter R. 'Conceptual Bases for Creative Thinking in Music', in J. Peery, I. Peery and T. Draper (eds.), *Music and Child Development*, New York: Springer Verlag, 1987.
- Wenger, Etienne. *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Wenger, Etienne., McDermott, Richard., and Snyder, William. *Cultivating Communities of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Wiggins, Jacqueline. 'Children's Strategies for Solving Compositional Problems with Peers', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, Vol.42, no.3, 1994, pp.232-252.
- Yin, Robert. *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003.

## INTERNET SOURCES

'About Play it Strange', available from [www.playitstrange.co.nz/about](http://www.playitstrange.co.nz/about); accessed 20 September, 2007

Ministry of Education, 'Coke Smokefree RockQuest 2003', available from <http://www.tki.org.nz/r/art/music/rockquest>; accessed on 3 March, 2007.

Ministry of Education, *Achievement Standards 90013, 90265 and 90526*, available from <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea>; accessed 17 October 2007.

Ministry of Education, *Unit Standards 10654, 10666, 20747, 10666 and 16553*, available from <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea>; accessed 17 October 2007.

Ministry of Education, 'NCEA Music/Arts Related Standards Levels 1 to 4', available from [http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resource-exchange/view\\_resource.php?res=303](http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resource-exchange/view_resource.php?res=303); accessed 18 October, 2007.

Price, Kirsten Grant. 'In Art There's Just No Right or Wrong', *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*, Vol. 1, available from <https://www.Arts-Journal.com>, accessed 22 August, 2007.

The *Musical Futures Project*, available from <http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk>, accessed 18 March, 2007.

## INTERVIEWS

Dorothy Buchanan, Interview in Wellington, 14 January, 2007.

Merryn Dunmill, Interview at University of Canterbury, 2 March, 2007.

## Appendix A: NCEA Music/Arts Related Standards Levels 1-4 <sup>205</sup>

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	<b>AS90267</b> 2.4 Create an instrumentation  Int (2 credits)	<b>AS90527</b> MS 3.6 Arrange music  Int (4 credits)	
		<b>US 10663</b> Arrange three music pieces for three or more instruments  (5 credits)	
<b>AS90013</b> 1.2 Perform music as a member of a group  Int (3 credits)	<b>AS90265</b> 2.2 Present a music performance as a member of a group  Int (2 credits)	<b>AS90526</b> MM 3.1 Present a performance of a programme of music as a member of a group  Int (4 credits)	
<b>US 10666</b> Demonstrate ability to be an effective performing member of music performance group  (3 credits)	<b>US 10652</b> Demonstrate music performance skills before an audience through three pieces of contrasting style  <i>excludes AS 90264</i> (8 credits)	<b>US 16553</b> Make a significant contribution to a music performance ensemble  (10 credits)	

<sup>205</sup> Ministry of Education, available from Artsonline: [http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resource-exchange/view\\_resource.php?res=303](http://arts.unitec.ac.nz/resource-exchange/view_resource.php?res=303); accessed 18 October, 2007.



Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>AS90012</b> 1.1 Perform contrasting music as a featured soloist  Int (6 credits)	<b>AS90264</b> 2.1 Present contrasting performances as a featured soloist  Int (5 credits)	<b>AS90776</b> MM 3.7 Prepare and present performances of music as a featured soloist  Int (8 credits)	<b>US 10664</b> Conduct music to a rudimentary standard  (5 credits)
<b>US10651</b> Demonstrate music performance skills through two pieces of contrasting style  <i>excludes AS90012</i> (8 credits)	<b>US10652</b> Demonstrate music performance skills before an audience through three pieces of contrasting style  <i>excludes AS90264</i> (8 credits)	<b>US10653</b> Demonstrate music performance skills before an audience through a selection of extended pieces  <i>excludes AS 90776</i> (8 credits)	<b>US10665</b> Improvise music to a rudimentary standard  (5 credits)
<b>US16549</b> Demonstrate music performance skills by two pieces of contrasting style on a second instrument  (8 credits)	<b>US16550</b> Demonstrate music performance skills before an audience through three pieces on a second instrument  (8 credits)	<b>US16551</b> Demonstrate music performance skills before an audience by extended pieces on a second instrument  (8 credits)	<b>US20749</b> Demonstrate skills to improve musical performance through rehearsal  (20 credits)
<b>AS90014</b> 1.3 Compose pieces of music  Int (6 credits)	<b>AS90266</b> 2.3 Compose effective pieces of music  Int (5 credits)	<b>AS 90775</b> MM 3.6 Present a portfolio of musical composition  Int (8 credits)	<b>US20748</b> Research and perform music compositions with stylistic variety  (20 credits)
<b>US10654</b> Demonstrate music compositional skills through two short music compositions  <i>excludes AS90014</i> (6 credits)	<b>US10655</b> Demonstrate developing music compositional skills through three music compositions  <i>excludes AS90266</i> (6 credits)	<b>US10656</b> Demonstrate developed music compositional skills through two or three compositions of substance  <i>excludes AS90775</i> (8 credits)	<b>US14681</b> Explain and show the use of creative musical improvisation for therapeutic purposes  (10 credits)
		<b>US20747</b> Perform music based on research of recorded compositions (10 credits)	

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>AS90015</b> 1.4 Aurally identify, describe and transcribe music elements from simple music  Ext (3 credits)	<b>AS90268</b> 2.5 Identify, describe and transcribe elements of music through listening to a range of music  Ext (3 credits)	<b>AS90777</b> MM 3.8 Demonstrate aural skill across a range of musical styles and genres  Ext (4 credits)	
<b>US18816</b> Demonstrate aural recall skills to an elementary level  (3 credits)	<b>US 18818</b> Demonstrate developing musical aural recall and sight-reading skills  (3 credits)	<b>US10659</b> Demonstrate developed knowledge of music materials, and ability to read, write, and listen to music  (5 credits)	
<b>AS90016</b> 1.5 Identify and describe fundamental materials of music  Ext (2 credits)	<b>AS90269</b> 2.6 Demonstrate an understanding of the materials and processes of music in a range of scores  Ext (2 credits)	<b>AS90530</b> MS 3.5 Demonstrate an understanding of harmonic and tonal procedures in a range of music  Ext (3 credits)	
<b>US18815</b> Sight-read music to an elementary level  (3 credits)	<b>US18817</b> Demonstrate knowledge of music through explanation of music materials  (3 credits)	<b>US10659</b> Demonstrate developed knowledge of music materials, and ability to read, write, and listen to music  (5 credits)	
<b>AS90017</b> 1.6 Demonstrate knowledge of music works  Int (4 credits)	<b>AS90270</b> 2.7 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of music works  Int (5 credits)	<b>AS90498</b> MS 3.3 Compare and contrast music works  Ext (8 credits)	

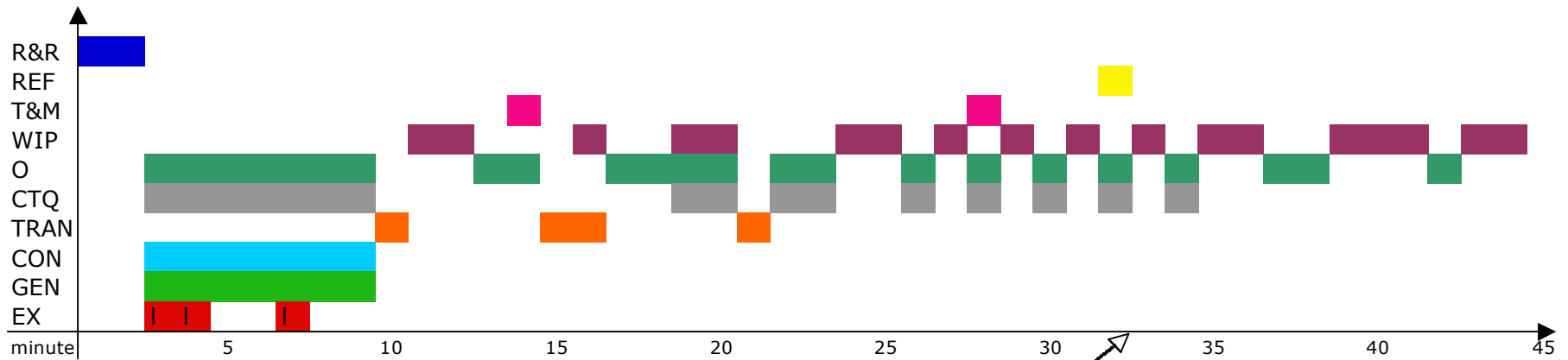
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>US10660</b> Describe and examine three music works of varying genre  (5 credits)	<b>US10661</b> Describe and examine four music works, and explain evaluations of performances  <i>excludes AS90270</i> (5 credits)	<b>AS90497</b> MS 3.2 Examine the contents that influence the expressive qualities of music  Int (3 credits)	
	<b>US20747</b> Perform music based on research of recorded compositions  (10 credits)	<b>AS90499</b> MS 3.4 Research and present a music topic  Int (6 credits)	
		<b>US10662</b> Describe, analyse, and compare six music works, and evaluate public music performances  (5 credits)	
<b>US12831</b> Demonstrate rudimentary knowledge of New Zealand music  (3 credits)	<b>US12832</b> Demonstrate knowledge of New Zealand music industry  (3 credits)	<b>US20750</b> Demonstrate knowledge and skills for self-management and use resources for progressing in music  (7 credits)	<b>US14685</b> Demonstrate rudimentary knowledge of retailing in the music industry  (6 credits)
<b>US 12822</b> Explain rudimentary principles of sound and electronics in relation to performing arts technology  (2 credits)	<b>US12823</b> Set up and disassemble small public address and recording systems for a performing arts situation  (2 credits)	<b>US12825</b> Operate and maintain a public address system for a performing arts situation  (2 credits)	
	<b>US12827</b> Demonstrate knowledge of MIDI system, and how to set up for a performing arts situation  (2 credits)	<b>US12826</b> Operate a recording system for a performing arts situation  (2 credits)	

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
		<b>US12824</b> Describe the operation of public address and recording systems for a performing arts situation  (2 credits)	
		<b>US12828</b> Operate a MIDI system for a performing arts situation  (3 credits)	
			<b>US14685</b> Demonstrate rudimentary knowledge of retailing in the music retail industry  (6 credits)
			<b>US12818</b> Demonstrate basic knowledge of law in relation to performing arts  (4 credits)
			<b>US12817</b> Demonstrate knowledge of financial management in relation to performing arts  (4 credits)
			<b>US12820</b> Demonstrate knowledge of how to plan for a performing arts tour  (4 credits)
			<b>US12819</b> Demonstrate knowledge of promotion and marketing in relation to performing arts  (4 credits)

## Appendix B: Graphed data of *Junior's* Composing Processes

### *Junior* Observation 1

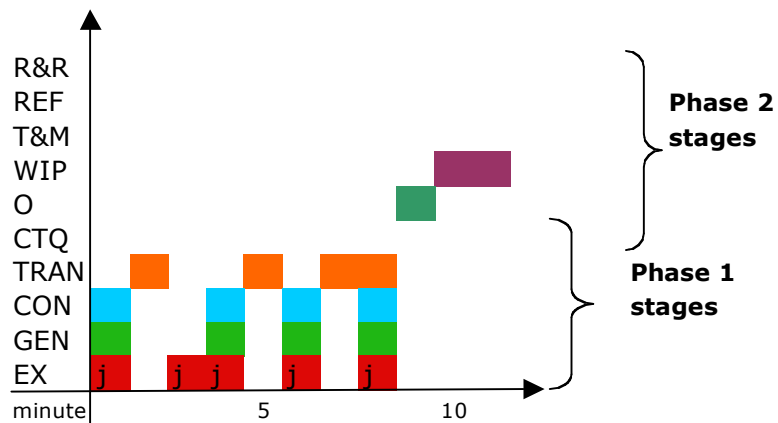
***Suicidal Love***: midway through its composition



l: lyrics

break here to work on a new idea for a song

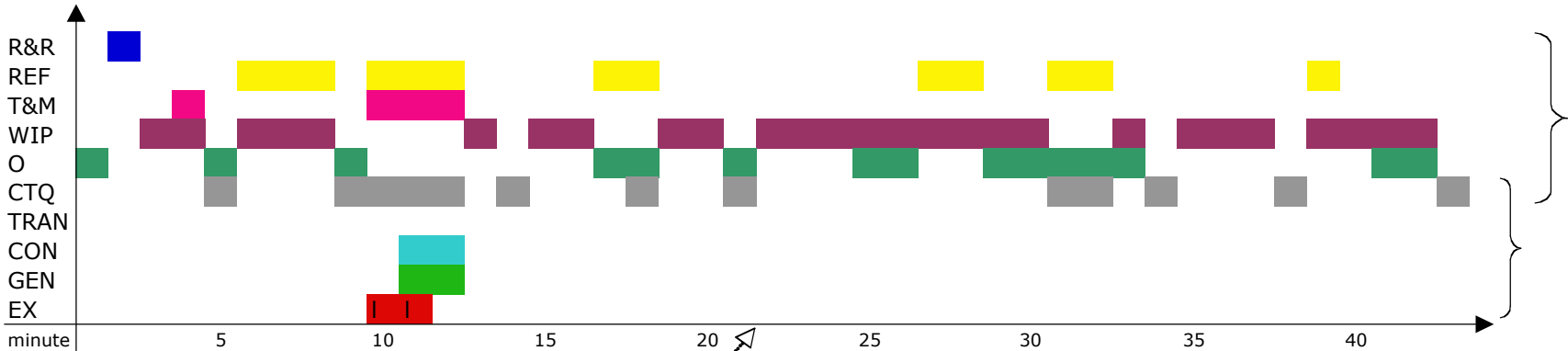
### Jamming to a new riff



j: jamming

# Junior Observation 2

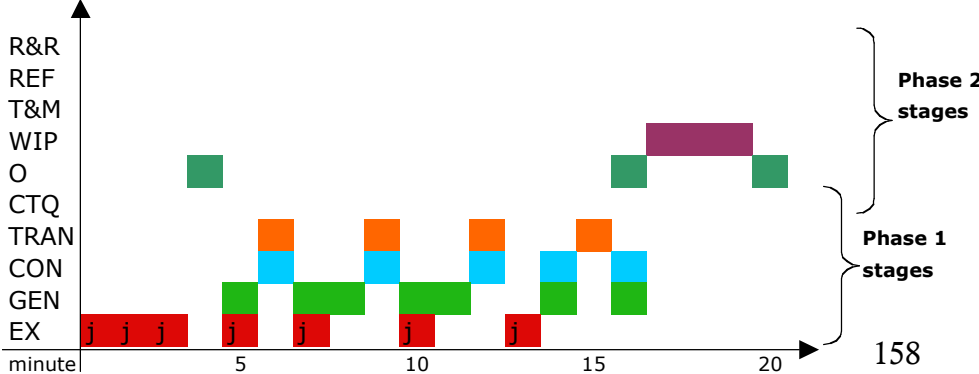
**Suicidal Love:** Near the end of the song's composition



l:lyrics

take a break here  
to work on the new song

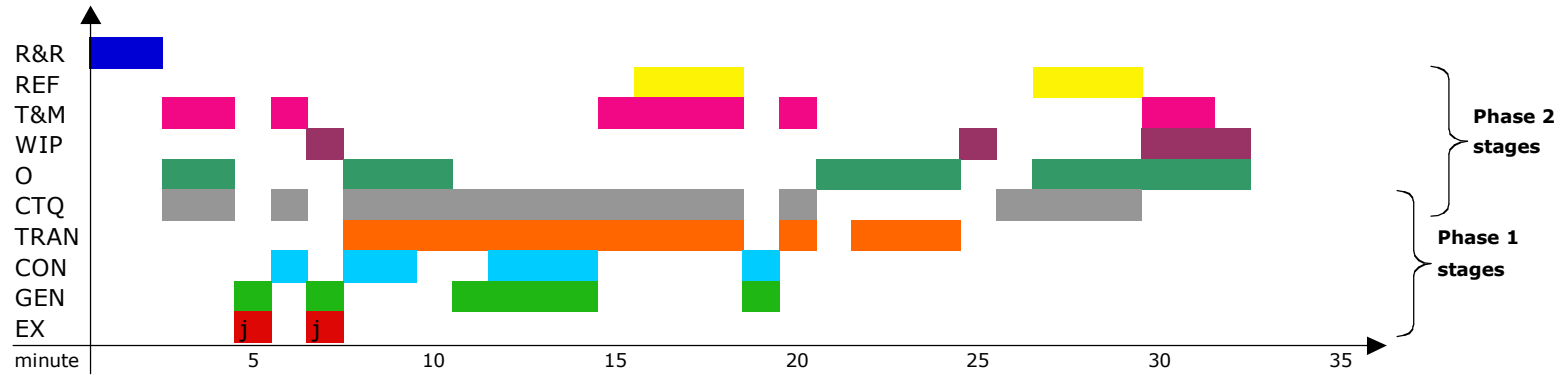
## New song derived from jamming during Observation 1



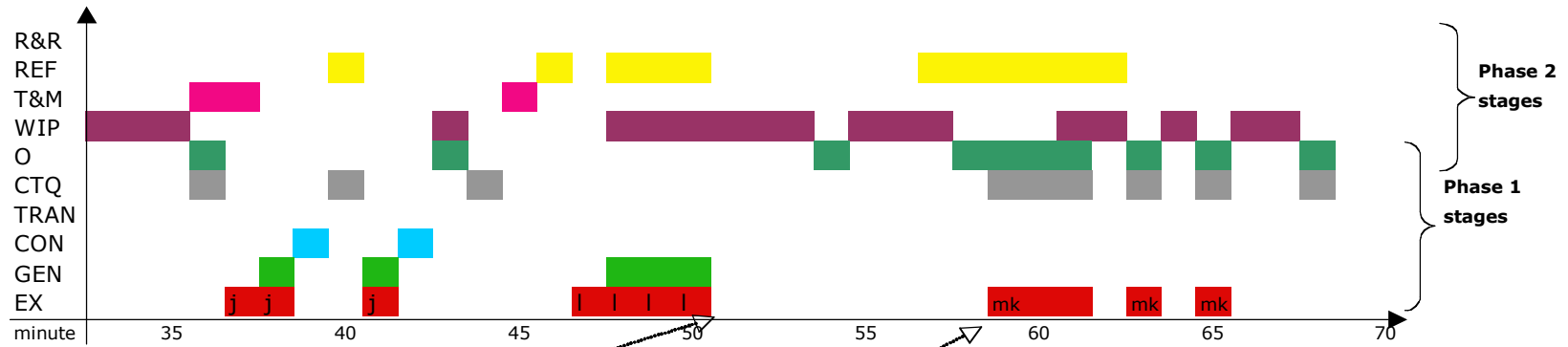
j:jamming

# Junior Observation 3

**Reese's song: the song is completed**



**Reese's song: the song is completed (continued)**



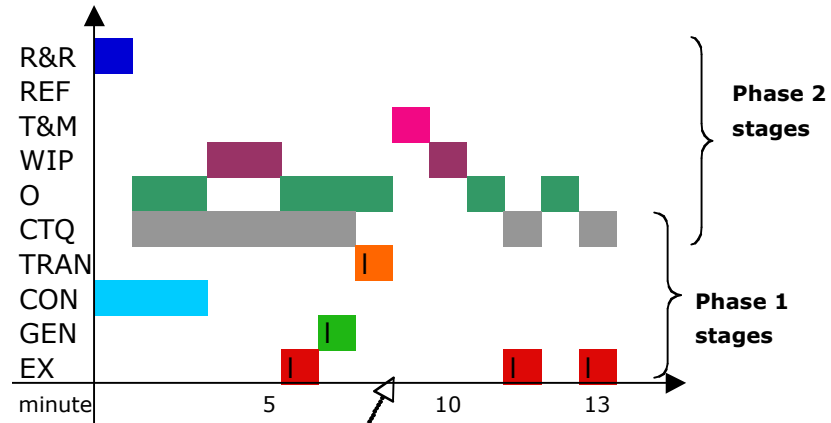
Stop at this point to jam to ideas for a new song

At this point various members of the band began to 'muck around' and play things seemingly unrelated to the song they were working on

## Appendix C: Graphed data of *Senior's* Composing Processes

### *Senior* Observation 1

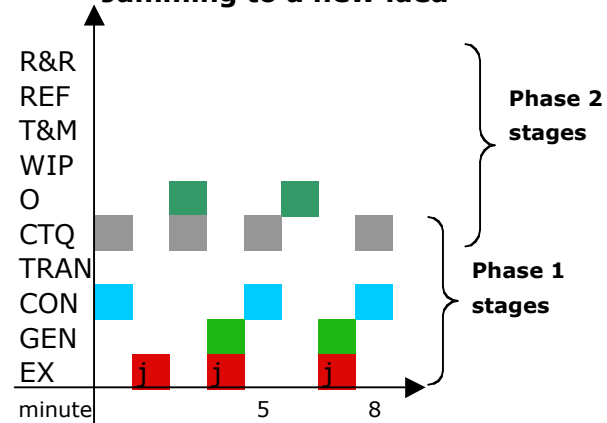
**Giggly:** 26 minutes into the session



I: lyrics

here the band breaks for 8 minutes to work on a new idea

#### Jamming to a new idea

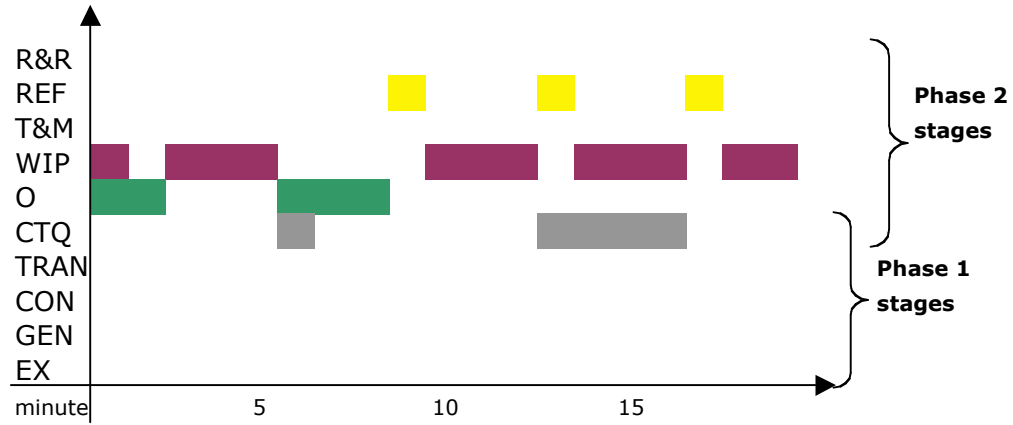


j: jamming

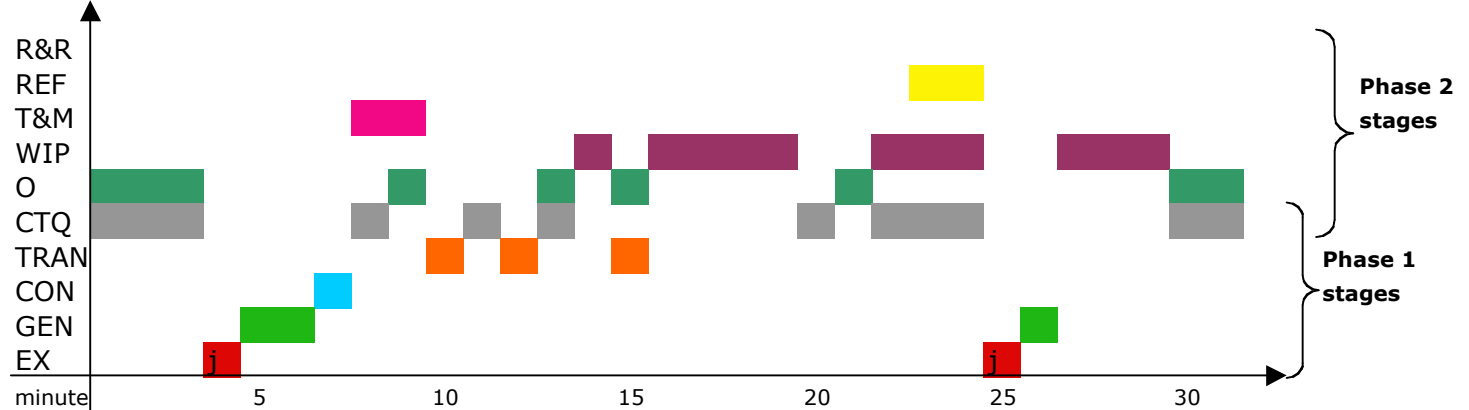


## Senior Observation 2

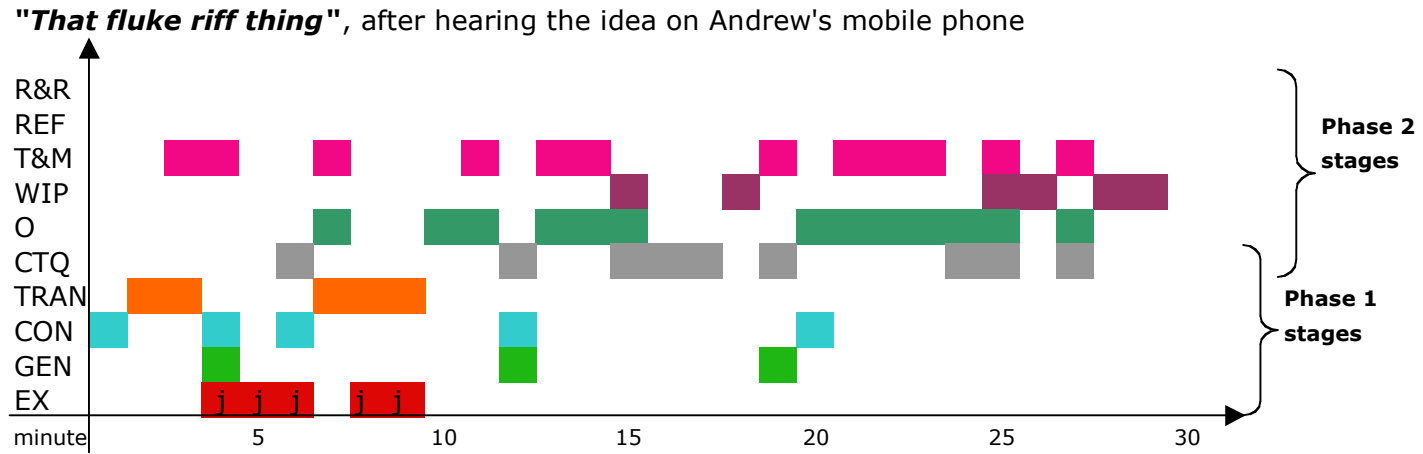
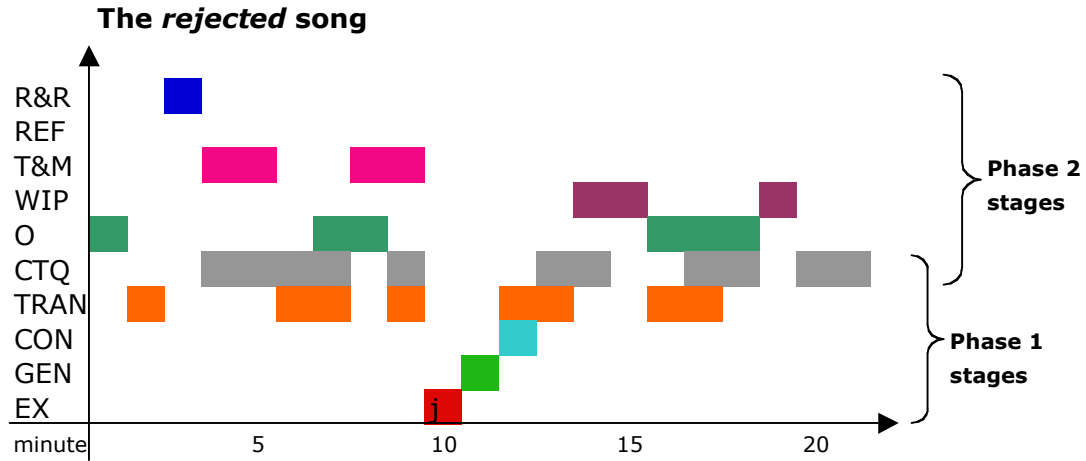
**Giggly:** Adding to the work done during Observation 1



**Keys:** following work on *Giggly*. Midway through the composition.



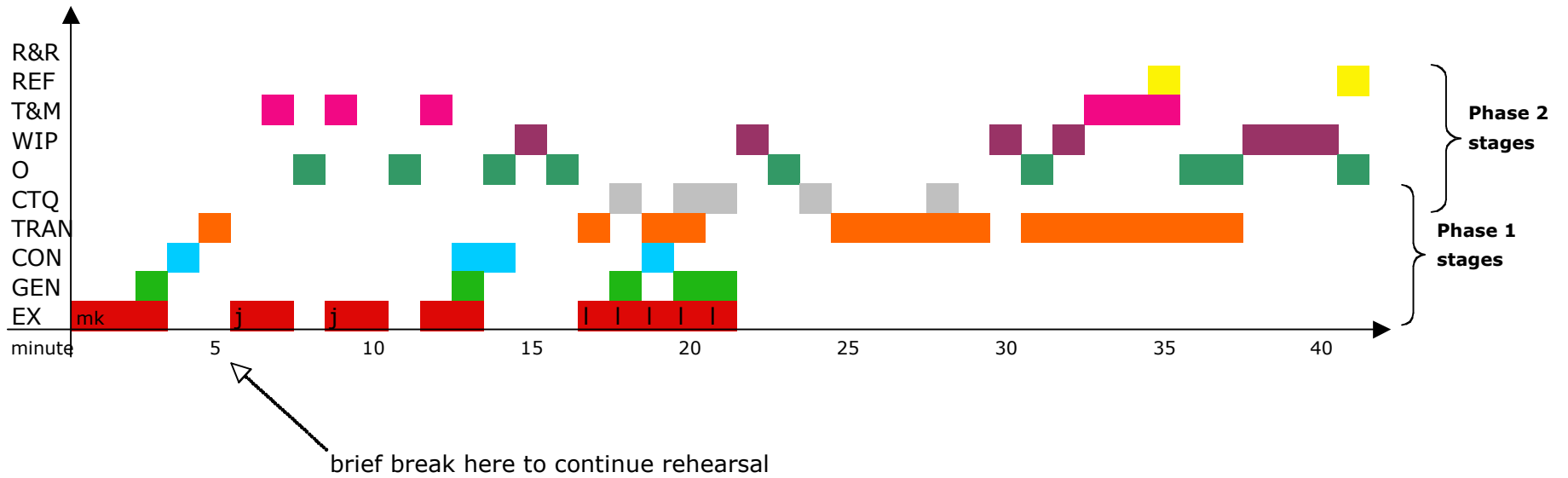
### Senior Observation 3



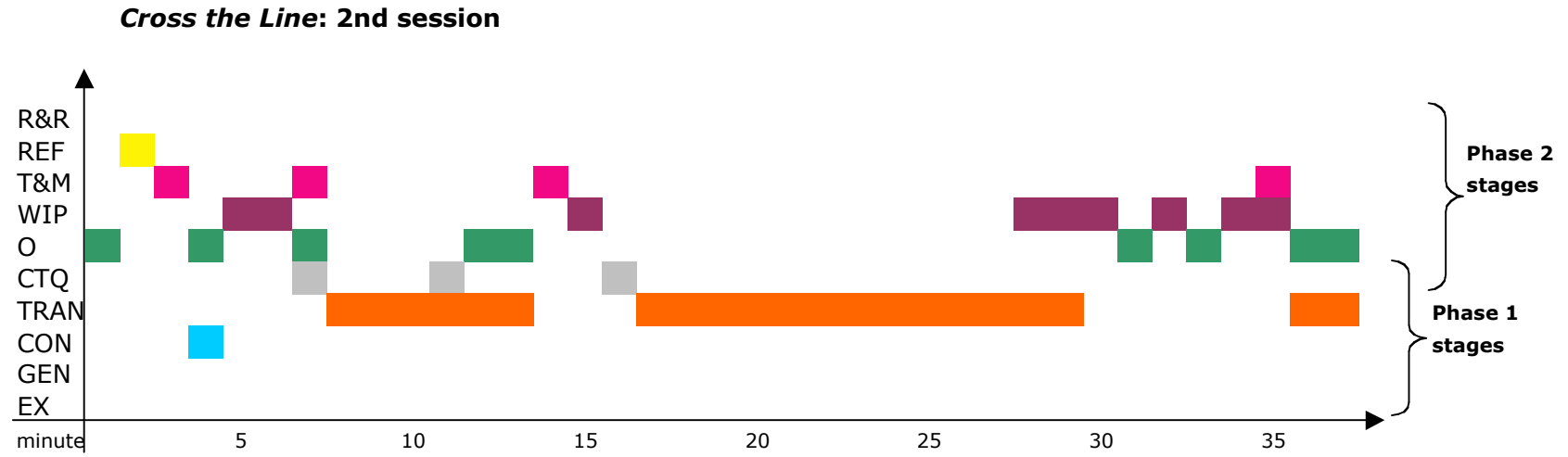
# Appendix D: Graphed data of *Boys'* Composing Processes

## *Boys' Observation 1*

### *Cross the Line: its generation and composition*



## Boys Observation 2



## Appendix E: Participant Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Band: \_\_\_\_\_

**These questions help me to know something about you and your background as a musician**

1. (a) **Do any other members of your family or whanau play or sing?**
  - (b) **If they do play or sing who are they?**  
Write down their names and your relationship to them (for example *my sister Annie, my uncle John*)
  - (c) **Have you played music with other members of your family or whanau? If you have, then put a \* beside their names above.**
  - (d) **Does anybody else in your family or whanau compose music?**
  - (e) **If they do compose, who are they?**  
Write down their names and your relationship to them (for example *my sister Annie, my uncle John*)
2. (a) **What instrument/s do you play? (this includes singing)**
  - (b) **Beside the name of the instrument/s write how long you have been playing it/them**
  - (c) **Who first taught you how to play?**
  - (d) **Are you having lessons now?**
  - (e) **If you are having lessons then who teaches you?**
3. (a) **What music are you listening to at the moment?**
  - (b) **What music do you think influences your playing?**
  - (c) **What music do you think influences the band's song writing?**
4. (a) **Have you ever been taught how to compose songs?**  
Yes / No (circle)
  - (b) **If so, who taught you?**

5. (a) Have you been in any other bands? If so, list them and write beside them

- the kind of music you played,
- the instrument you played
- the year you were in the band

*Optional question below – answer this one if you feel comfortable doing so*

(b) Why aren't you playing in that band or bands now ? (list some reasons)

Vicki Thorpe  
NZ School of Music

### Summary of Questionnaire Data

Name	Family member plays	Plays with family member	Composer in family
(Senior) Nick	Father (drums)	No	No
(Senior) Emma	Father Mother Brother Sister	No	No
(Senior) Greg	Grandfather (piano)	No	No
(Senior) Sam	No	No	No
(Senior) Andrew	Sister (guitar)	No	No
(Junior) Chrissy	Uncle (guitar – professional)	No	Uncle is a song writer
(Junior) Dylan	Father guitar Uncle guitar Sister sings, piano	Uncle Sister	No
(Junior) Reese	Mother Brother	No	No
(Junior) Robbie	Father, uncle, cousin - guitar	Father, uncle	No

	<b>Instrument/how long played</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> teacher</b>	<b>Learning now / teacher</b>
<i>(Senior)</i> Nick	Guitar 4 years Drums 3 months Bass 6 months	Private teacher	No
<i>(Senior)</i> Emma	Guitar 3 years Piano 10 years Bass 6 months Vocals 6 years	Piano teacher	Itinerant teacher
<i>(Senior)</i> Greg	Guitar 8 years Drums 1 year	Private guitar teacher	No
<i>(Senior)</i> Sam	Bass 2 years Piano 2 years	Private piano teacher	No
<i>(Senior)</i> Andrew	Singing 1 year Bass guitar 3 years	Itinerant teacher	Yes - singing
<i>(Junior)</i> Chrissy	Guitar 8 years Drums 2 years Piano 8 months Bass 2 months Vocals 3 months	Uncle Itinerant teacher	Yes, guitar Itinerant teacher
<i>(Junior)</i> Dylan	Keyboard –all my life Guitar 3 years Drums 1 year Bass 1 year Vocals 6 months	Family Itinerant teacher	Yes, guitar Itinerant teacher
<i>(Junior)</i> Reese	Guitar 2 years Drums 2 years Bass 1 year	Itinerant teacher	Itinerant teacher
<i>(Junior)</i> Robbie	Guitar 2 years Vocals 3 months	Uncle	Itinerant teacher

	<b>Listening to now</b>	<b>Personal music influences</b>	<b>Band musical influences</b>
(Senior) Nick	<i>Idiot Pilot</i> <i>Guns n Roses</i>	Rock/alternative Experimental <i>The Mars Volta</i> <i>Open Hand</i> <i>Incubus</i> <i>A Perfect Circle</i>	<i>Supergroove</i> <i>Red Hot Chilli Peppers</i> <i>Open Hand</i>
(Senior) Emma	Rock/alternative, funkrock <i>Muse</i> <i>The Dresden Dolls</i>	Rock/alternative <i>Godsmack</i> <i>Tool</i> <i>Primus</i> <i>The Dresden Dolls</i>	<i>Queen of the Stoneage</i> <i>Primus</i> <i>Open Hand</i> <i>Supergroove</i> <i>Red Hot Chilli Peppers</i>
(Senior) Greg	<i>Primus</i> Funkrock	<i>Primus</i> <i>Supergroove</i> <i>Red Hot Chilli Peppers</i> <i>Van Halen</i>	Newer rock like <i>A Perfect Circle</i>
(Senior) Sam	<i>RHCP</i> <i>Pluto</i> <i>Incubus</i> <i>Blindspot</i>	<i>RHCP</i> <i>Presidents of USA</i>	<i>RHCP</i> <i>Supergroove</i>
(Senior) Andrew	Alternative rock <i>Idiot Pilot</i> <i>Bloc Party</i> <i>Jimmy Eat World</i> <i>A Perfect Circle</i>	<i>Supergroove</i> <i>Red Hot Chilli Peppers</i>	<i>Supergroove</i> <i>Red Hot Chilli Peppers</i> <i>Primus</i>
(Junior) Chrissy	<i>Killing Heidi</i> <i>Greenday</i> <i>Fleetwood Mac</i> <i>The Doors</i>	<i>Killing Heidi</i> <i>Atlas</i>	<i>Killing Heidi</i>
(Senior) Dylan	Metal Rock Punk	<i>Slipknot</i> <i>Blindspot</i> <i>Falter</i> <i>Breaking Benjamin</i> <i>Bleeders</i>	
(Senior) Reese	<i>Slipknot</i> Heavy metal Soft rock	Rock heavy and soft	<i>Breaking Benjamin</i>
(Senior) Robbie	<i>Metallica</i> <i>Children of Bodm</i> <i>Disturbed</i> <i>Red Hot Chilli Peppers</i>	<i>Pantera</i> <i>Metallica</i> my own songs	<i>Metallica's lyrics</i>



<b>Name</b>	<b>Taught to compose</b>	<b>Other bands</b>	<b>Why not in previous band</b>
<i>(Senior)</i> Nick	No		
<i>(Senior)</i> Emma	No		
<i>(Senior)</i> Greg	No		
<i>(Senior)</i> Sam	No	Bass in 2005	Lack of commitment, no motivation, waste of time
<i>(Senior)</i> Andrew	No		
<i>(Junior)</i> Chrissy	Yes – classroom music teacher Other band members		
<i>(Junior)</i> Dylan	Yes - sister		
<i>(Junior)</i> Reese	No	No	
<i>(Junior)</i> Robbie	No	Rock band in 2005	

## Appendix F: Interview Questions

### *Junior 27 July 2006*

- VT: Could you play that new song for me?
- VT: Thanks for playing me that song. Have you got a name for it yet?
- VT: So why is it 'Reese's Song' Reese?
- VT: So is this song different in that you usually write songs together?
- VT: Can you show me the riff, Reese? [he plays]
- VT: So that's how the song started?
- VT: So what happened then? Could you talk me through how the song was put together?
- VT: So it started off with Reese mucking around, while you were playing another song?
- VT: And what did the rest of you say?
- VT: Then what happened?
- VT: Let's go back a bit. So, he played it. What did each of you do?
- VT: Over the top of the riff?
- VT: Dylan, you were picking out a drumbeat for the song. That sort of thing contributes a lot to the overall groove of the song. How do you know it's the right one? How do you know that the others like it?
- VT: OK, so Dylan you're coming up with a drumbeat that works. What are you doing Chrissy?
- VT: So, Chrissy what did you base the bass part on?
- VT: So you'll save it for something else then?
- VT: Does that sort of thing happen often?
- VT: So, Robbie, you were doing your thing over the top of that. Was that an impro? A lead guitar line?
- VT: Have you got lyrics to this yet?
- VT: So where did they come from? When did they turn up?
- VT: When you were at home by yourself?
- VT: You told me earlier that listening to *Killing Heidi* songs kinda 'zones you out'. Was that happening then?
- VT: Do you have a melody for those lyrics yet?
- VT: Is the person who sings the lyrics usually the one who comes up with the tune?
- VT: How do you do that? How do you get lyrics?
- VT: I've noticed that sometimes, often when someone leaves the room you swap instruments. So what's that about?
- VT: Do you come up with new ideas when you swap instruments?
- VT: Do you find that sometimes you come up with new ideas when you swap instruments?
- VT: So you've talked about how the song you played before was written. Are there any other songs that were put together differently?
- VT: So what happened with that one?
- VT: So have you learned about writing songs while you've been doing this?
- VT: What have you learned about writing songs together?

VT: So Robbie coming into the band stirred you up?  
 VT: So how do you solve arguments?  
 VT: Going back to song writing – Robbie– you said earlier not to make it so hard to do – does that mean that you have to come up with ideas that other people can play?  
 VT: What else have you learned about song writing?  
 VT: How do you help another person?  
 VT: Do you tell them or show them?  
 VT: How much help have other people been?  
 VT: So the best help has been letting you have access to this room?  
 VT: Hold on, let's go back. The guy from *Stereogram* – did he help you write songs?  
 VT: That was helpful?  
 VT: Who's the composer of your songs?  
 VT: How important is it that the other person feels OK? Is it OK to say to the other person “ I don't like that idea”?  
 VT: But that's something I noticed about you guys – you're really polite to each other  
 Dylan: Just imagine NZ Idol judges, but with better manners!  
 VT: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

**Informal Interview (about 5 minutes) following Observation 1 (members of *Junior* wanted to look at the video of themselves)**

VT: It was really interesting to hear you do that second song – you know, when you just kind of made something up?  
 VT: How do you know? Do you hear it, feel it or do you see it as well?  
 VT: So you can kind of hear it? Is it a bit like focussing a camera?  
 VT: Then what happens?

**Informal Interview following Observation 2 (an impromptu discussion, initiated by band members where they talk about how a teacher helps them, about 5 minutes)**

VT: So was there anything she picked out that you have changed since I saw you last Thursday?  
 VT: So what was her input then?  
 VT: So you took her idea and changed it to suit what you wanted?  
 VT: So will it sound different from what I heard last week?

**Senior Interview 27 July 2006**

VT: I'm going to play you a video recording of your performance of *In This Space* at *RockQuest*.  
 VT: Tell me about that song. How was it put together?  
 VT: How does it start?  
 VT: So when did you start to do that intro?  
 VT: So it was an 'accident' having that foot pedal sound?  
 VT: So you put it in?  
 VT: So how did you start off with that song? How did *In This Space* start? Can you remember?  
 VT: So for this song most of the ideas came from you, Nick?

VT: So that [sings a melodic fragment that Emma sings in the song] Did you make that up?

VT: What else did you add? Did anyone add anything else to the song?

VT: So Nick came up with the song in rough form and the rest of you polished it up?

VT: So does that often happen?

VT: Was *Giggly* done like that?

VT: So tell me about *Slide*. Can you remember how you put that together?

VT: To sit under the 3 chords?

VT: So how did you come up with those different parts? How do you think that happens?

VT: It sounds like you might be using music theory to find the notes for those. Do you apply it to that?

VT: So have you found that information yourselves rather than having it taught to you?

VT: With a song like *Slide* who is the composer?

VT: And say, *Pork* – the same thing?

VT: But does that get you going in different directions though?

VT: So it sounds to me as if you're not just working on lots of different ideas, you're also working together to structure them? The shape?

VT: So what's your idea of a typical song of yours? Is there a typical structure?

VT: So... a standard rock song structure?

VT: So does this mean that the structures of the songs you are writing now are more subtle than they used to be?

VT: In the past who came up with the ideas?

VT: So did you have defined roles back then?

VT: When you first started had Nick and Greg done more song writing than Sam, Andrew and Emma? Were you two more experienced song writers?

VT: Do you think that in working on Nick's ideas, you four, that you've learned how to do it yourselves?

VT: So....is this how you've learned to compose?

VT: How long have you been together?

VT: Do any of you write songs just for yourselves?

VT: So am I hearing that some of you wouldn't be composing if you weren't in the group?

VT: Does song writing have to have a purpose?

VT: Was it the same for you Emma? Are you still writing songs on your own?

VT: What's the best thing about writing songs?

VT: What's the worst?

VT: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

**Informal discussion during Observation 1, initiated by the band who wanted to know if I was “getting what I was after” (10 minutes).**

VT to Andrew: So are the lyrics pretty much your responsibility?

VT: So you've got one line still to go – is that right?

VT: So the little thing you just played Emma, was that new?

VT: Is that how your songs get put together? Or is this unusual?

VT: So is that how it happens? Does someone come up with the original ideas, the initial ideas?

VT: How do you know when it's going well?

**Informal discussion during and after Observation 3, initiated by the band members who asked me if I wanted to ask them anything (8 minutes).**

VT: Could you tell me, maybe show me, how you wrote that last new song?

VT: And did you have lyrics?

VT to Greg: So was the song the same as at the beginning? Were your intentions the same once the band has played it through?

VT: What usually happens?

VT: What happened to your new song, Emma?

VT to Emma: Did you have lyrics and everything?

VT: So what's left, Emma? Any vestiges of your original ideas left?

VT: Where do the lyrics come from usually?

VT to Andrew: Do you think you learned how to write songs/lyrics from Nick and Emma?

VT: Were you consciously watching what they were doing?

VT: When you first start working on a song how do you know how it should be? How do you know what's good and what's crap?

VT: Are most of your songs in that sort of structure?

VT: What sorts of ideas do you base a song on? What do you start with?

VT: Is that usually a riff?

VT: Here's a really hard question. How much time do you need mucking around before you come up with a good idea?

VT: Would having had some more music learning have helped you in your song writing?

**End of Observation 3: a brief conversation with Andrew about lyric writing**

VT: So when you came up with those lyrics did you do that when you were all playing or did you do them at home on your own?

VT: While they were playing?

VT: So, for example, you might say "I need to hear the chorus" and they'd play it over and over again for you?

## Appendix G: Letters of Introduction and Information

Dear \*\*\*\*\*(student participant)

My name is Vicki Thorpe and I am a Masters student at the New Zealand School of Music. For the thesis part of my degree I would like to research the way in which you and the members of your band compose songs together.

I decided to choose this as the topic for my work when I realised that there are no NCEA standards that assess composition in groups, unlike playing in groups for example. So currently you can't achieve NCEA credits for music composed by a group. Also, not much is known about what happens when secondary students get together to compose music in a group. In order to find out more I would like to work with you and the other members of your band.

If you agree to take part in this research this will mean that:

- I will give you a questionnaire to fill in about your musical background and influences
- I will observe and make video recordings of band rehearsals/composing sessions
- I will make notes during these observations
- I may take digital photographs of you and the other members of the group
- I will interview you as part of the group. I will make audio recordings of these interviews and then write them up
- I will make audio recordings of the music you compose

I will then analyse this information and present my findings as a thesis. I may also present my research at a conference and write a paper about it that might be published in a journal. If you wish, you may have a copy of the final report.

I will be visiting you at xxxx College on a number of occasions from May to October this year and will arrange this with you directly.

If you have any questions about this research please contact me on (04) 463 9629 or email [vicki.thorpe@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:vicki.thorpe@vuw.ac.nz).

Many thanks for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,

Vicki Thorpe

xxxxxx

Head Music  
xxxx College

Dear xxxx

My name is Vicki Thorpe and I am a Masters student at the New Zealand School of Music. For the thesis component of my degree I would like to research the way in which students in rock and pop bands compose music together. I have had a long involvement in music education both as a secondary teacher and more recently as an adviser and lecturer at the VUW College of Education.

My decision to research collaborative composition arose out of my work with teachers and their students in the Wellington region. It began when a number of teachers asked me whether or not there was an opportunity within the NCEA to assess composition that had been created by a group of students rather than just one person. Currently there are no standards that assess collaborative composition, unlike playing in groups for example.

This study will gain some insight into what happens when particular groups of secondary students compose songs collaboratively. There is very little international and New Zealand research into what happens when teenagers make music together and still less about what happens when they compose. If an individual's contribution to a collaborative composition is to be assessed, this decision must be informed by knowledge of how this has come about. It is hoped that this study will contribute to this process and assist teachers to more successfully facilitate the group compositional process for their students.

My intention is to gather data on the collaborative processes of two bands currently playing together in the Music department at XXXX College. I would also like to interview you about your perceptions and observations of the collaborative compositional processes of your students.

If you agree to participate this will mean that:

- I will interview you and make audio recordings of the interview which will later be transcribed

If the students agree to participate this will mean that:

- I will give the students questionnaires to fill in
- I will observe and make video recordings of band rehearsals/composing sessions
- I will make field notes during these observations
- I may take digital photographs of the setting and the students
- I will interview the students collectively
- I will make audio recordings of the music the students compose

You will be given a summary of the final report. Please be assured that the identity of your school, your identity and the students' identities will remain confidential.

In order to collect research data I will be visiting your school on a number of occasions from April to October this year. I will ensure that the school administration is notified of my presence in the school on arrival each time I visit xxxx College. I will ensure that I am as flexible and unobtrusive as possible and will make every effort not to intrude upon the school routine. I do not envisage that I will need to see students in class time (unless it is during their music classes) as the students in the bands meet at lunchtimes, breaks and after school.

Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee has approved this research project. It is to be supervised by Dr Richard Hardie, phone (04) 463 5861. If you have any questions regarding this research please don't hesitate to contact me on (04) 463 9629 or email [vicki.thorpe@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:vicki.thorpe@vuw.ac.nz).

Many thanks for considering this request.  
Yours sincerely,

Vicki Thorpe



## Appendix H: Consent Forms

### Assent: student participants

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Band: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree to take part in research undertaken by Vicki Thorpe  
YES  NO
  
2. I understand that Vicki Thorpe will be gathering information about my band's song writing. I agree that she may do so through the methods below:  

Questionnaire	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Field notes (observation notes)	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group Interview	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio recording	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video recording	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital photographs	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
  
3. I understand that I have the right to pull out of the research at any stage.  
YES  NO
  
4. I would like a summary of the final report  
YES  NO

I have read the information letter about this research and I understand that by signing this form I agree to take part.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Consent: Music Teacher**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I give consent to participate in research undertaken by Vicki Thorpe  
YES  NO
2. I give consent to be interviewed and understand that this interview will be recorded and transcribed.  
YES  NO
3. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent to take part in this research at any stage.  
YES  NO
4. I understand that I have the right to withdraw approval for the use or publication of any particular data at any time  
YES  NO
5. I would like a summary of the final report  
YES  NO

I have read the information relating to this research and I understand that by signing this form I give my consent to take part in this research.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_