

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.

The Music-Making Milieu: A Post-Phenomenological Study on Well-being Assemblages

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
in
Psychology
(Endorsed in Health Psychology)

at Massey University
New Zealand.

Michael Kenneth Cathro
2023

Abstract

Recent research suggests that people working as music-makers often experience poorer health outcomes compared to the general population. However, these studies neglect the socio-cultural and material contexts from which these health outcomes emerge, resulting in recommendations for interventions that are overly individually focused. This thesis calls for a radical new conceptualisation of well-being that can address the milieu from which music-maker experiences of well-being emerge.

The research addresses this gap via a post-phenomenological perspective, developing a conceptual framework informed by Deleuzoguattarian understandings of assemblage and affect to analyse conversations with seven professional and semi-professional music-makers in New Zealand. The study explores how their experiences of well-being are shaped by various social, material, and structural contexts.

The findings reveal that music-making is a source of well-being through the transformative processes of becoming-other, allowing music-makers to transcend rigid subjectivities and individualism. However, this capacity for well-being can be disrupted by affective forces of neoliberalism and capitalism which territorialise creative work, are incapable of sufficiently valuing creative labour, and impose significant pressures on music-makers.

The precarious nature of the music industry, the hyper-competitive gig economy, and the pervasive influence of alcohol emerge as significant factors affecting the well-being of music-makers. The study underscores the need for interventions that extend beyond individual-focused approaches, suggesting implementation of supportive structures and policies that are less reliant on capitalist models. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of well-being in the context of creative work, offering insights for future research and policy-making as well as contributing to the emerging literature on relational understandings of well-being.

Keywords: music making, well-being, post-phenomenology, Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage, affect, new materialism, post-humanism.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my supervisor, Professor Sarah Riley whose support, guidance, expertise, and gentle motivational nudges have been invaluable to me during the writing of this thesis.

Without the openness, generosity, rich descriptions, and experiences of those music makers who spoke with me, this research would be much less vibrant. They regale audiences with their music, and they regaled me with their insights.

I am eternally grateful to have been awarded the Massey University Master's Research Scholarship without which I could not have completed this research.

Music-makers and thesis writers are not individuals, but productions of and entry points into a wider ecological system. My partner Lucy, my son Finnian, and wee Fred who was born during the writing of this make up mine.

Cheers to my musical collaborators, affective forces in the production of musical moments together.

Nibble, Yyekk, and Mister Chicken Bok, thank you for the eggs.

“The moments that song [Back in My Body] describes...are largely from my first European tour in February 2017. I was doing so much press. It made me miserable. I remember I was in the middle of a video session in Paris and I walked outside to have a cigarette. I thought, ‘I have enough money to buy a plane ticket and I could get to the airport before people really realised where I went.... Then I was playing in London...and I’d finished a soundcheck and someone came up to me and asked why I hadn’t played ‘Alaska.’ I was like, ‘I play that all the fucking time’. And they said that the booker for Jools Holland was there and that I needed to do it. I was like, ‘Fine, I’ll play the game.’ And then halfway through the song I had a crazy panic attack and ran off the stage sobbing.”

Maggie Rogers (2019)

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
VALUING MUSIC MAKING IN NEW ZEALAND	2
LOSS OF SPACE: THE CASE OF DUNEDIN.....	5
DEFINING WELLBEING.....	8
RESEARCH GAP & RATIONALE	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
WELL-BEING IN WORKING MUSIC MAKERS.....	12
HEALTH, WELLBEING AND CONCEPTUAL TOOLS.....	20
<i>Conceptual Apparatus</i>	21
Opening the Tool Shed: Analytical Instruments.....	22
Immanence	23
Territorialisation, Deterritorialisation, and Lines of Flight.....	23
The Molecular and the Molar	24
Striations and Smoothing	24
Affect	25
Becoming-Other	26
Assemblage.....	27
<i>Space and Place</i>	30
<i>Ambulatory Research</i>	31
METHOD	33
DESIGN	33
MAPPING THE METHODOLOGY	33
<i>Psychology Research & Subjectivity</i>	34
<i>What's (the) Matter?</i>	35
<i>The Present Research</i>	37
Prefacing with Phenomenology	37
<i>Pursuing the Post-Phenomenological</i>	38
<i>Thinking Post-Qualitatively</i>	39
<i>A Line of Flight to Deleuze</i>	41
<i>Assemblage and Affect</i>	42
PARTICIPANTS	44
<i>Recruitment</i>	44
Julia.....	46
Kilgore	46
Des	46
Mark.....	46
Daniella.....	47
Malachi	47
Billy	47
INTERVIEW, EVENT, AND RESEARCH ASSEMBLAGE	47
<i>Facilitating the Interview Event</i>	49
PROCEDURE	50
<i>Procedural Ethics</i>	50
<i>Practical Ethics</i>	50

<i>Informed Consent</i>	51
<i>Right to Withdraw</i>	52
<i>Privacy and Confidentiality</i>	52
<i>Participant Safety</i>	53
<i>Cultural Considerations</i>	53
<i>Manaakitanga</i>	54
<i>Whakawhanaungatanga</i>	54
ANALYTICAL PROCESS	55
EVALUATING THE RESEARCH.....	56
<i>Quality Criteria</i>	56
<i>Orientation to Affecting Social Change and Provoking New Understandings</i>	57
ANALYSIS	60
BECOMING-OTHER: BENEATH AND BEYOND THE SELF	62
BECOMING-ORCHESTRAL: BUBBLES IN THE OCEAN ON SOLARIS	66
DESIRE: MOTIVATOR/DISRUPTOR.....	71
NEOLIBERALISM: BETWEEN MOLARITY AND FLIGHT	75
<i>Citizen! Agent! Affect!</i>	75
<i>Corporeality Incorporated / Quantifying Quality</i>	78
<i>Talent, Myth, and Endless Hours: “Paid in Piss and Food”</i>	82
TECHNOLOGIES OF ALCOHOL	86
DISCUSSION	91
REFLEXIVE CHAPTER	97
CONCLUSION	102
REFERENCES	104
APPENDICES	1
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet	1
Appendix B: ‘Maria’ Draft Analysis.....	4
Appendix C: Mind-map example of thematic development.....	7
Appendix D: Transcript Release Authority	8
Appendix E: Participant Consent Form	9
Appendix F: Example Excerpt of Coded Transcript	10
Appendix G: Original Interview Schedule	11

Introduction

While much of the scientific literature purports music making to be a source of well-being (Freeman, 1998; Perkins et al., 2016), worse health outcomes and poorer subjective well-being are associated with working as a music maker (Dickens, 2018; Gross & Musgrave, 2016; Gross et al., 2018; Loveday et al., 2022; Musgrave, 2022; van den Eynde et al., 2014). Narratives around the tortured artist, the indulgent rock star, and the mad genius pervade understandings of this creative work, reinforced by scholarly research such as Bellis et al.'s (2012) retrospective study of pop and rock stars that found they had shorter life expectancy, associated with adverse childhood experiences. Research into health and well-being in music makers has focused on individual health behaviours and cognitions, informed by findings around self-reported experiences of adverse outcomes such as psychological distress, substance use problems, and suicidal ideation (Visser et al., 2022). This has overwhelmingly resulted in recommendations for interventions and therapeutic treatments to be delivered at the individual level (e.g., Ackermann et al., 2014; Barbar et al., 2014; Bonde et al., 2018) to the neglect of the broader determinants contributing to these outcomes. It is certainly necessary to alleviate the immediate distress of individual music makers through increased access to resources supporting well-being. However, a focus on individually orientated interventions fails to critically consider how to address the socio-material conditions produced by macro-level, structural factors contributing to poor well-being outcomes.

As a music maker and a member of music making communities, I am drawn to exploring what people's experiences of doing this creative work are like, considering the poorer health and well-being outcomes implied in the research that are explored in more depth in the literature review. Through the present research therefore, I aim to address how socio-material and structural contexts scaffold the experiences of well-being in music making work through interviews with working music-makers. I seek to conceptualise alternatives to the overwhelmingly individualistic orientation of the existing research. To develop novel insights into these experiences, I use a theoretical framework and conceptual tools that draw from post-phenomenology and the philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In the following sections, I will outline current research into well-being in music makers, review research

drawing on Deleuzian concepts in health and well-being studies, and propose an integrated approach for a broader, contextual understanding of well-being in working music makers.

Valuing Music Making in New Zealand

Creative New Zealand (the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa) is “a national arts development agency funded by the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board and the New Zealand Government to encourage, promote and support the arts in New Zealand” (*Creative NZ Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa*, n.d.). Survey research commissioned by the Arts Council in 2020 found that New Zealanders placed a high value on locally produced art. Specifically, art’s contribution to our personal well-being, its role in social cohesion and connection, and its means for expressing national identity and cultural diversity were highlighted. This research found that arts contributed to New Zealanders’ well-being including by helping them cope through COVID-19 restrictions. Four in ten New Zealanders indicated that the arts were particularly important to their well-being while a quarter of New Zealanders indicated the arts had taken on a deeper meaning since COVID-19 arrived in New Zealand. New Zealand On Air, a government agency providing funding grants for broadcast content, commissioned survey research in 2022 that reported 75% of New Zealanders believed it was important to fund local music and artists, and 74% liked funded content (Langley & Bryant, 2022).

As part of the New Zealand Treasury’s development of the Living Standards Framework, a 2019 discussion paper titled *Culture, Wellbeing, and the Living Standards Framework: A Perspective* was prepared to explore economic understandings of how culture and its impacts for well-being might be incorporated into the framework (Dalziel et al., 2019). In the Living Standards Framework, there are four capitals identified (human capital, social capital, financial capital, and physical capital) with the paper suggesting that culture should be introduced as a fifth capital. Cultural capital is conceptualised as a resource for current and future well-being, a generational taonga (treasure) that is inherited by a community’s children, and as an asset that improves well-being outcomes through expanding people’s capacities to live valuable lives. They argue that environments need to be created that attract skilled members of the creative classes to enhance the cultural vibrancy of New Zealand.

The framework defined six types of direct and indirect economic value generated by culture. Notably, the prospect of a seventh category is discussed: non-monetary return to producers: “The satisfaction artists enjoy by displaying their artistry, or the reception their artistry receives from the audience (including being honoured with artistic awards)” (p. 28). While indeed a potentially significant by-product of producing creative works, this categorisation risks undermining the unique financial challenges experienced by creative workers that are outlined elsewhere in the report (see p. 24). Work satisfaction is not exclusive to creative workers; a policy analyst, for example, could experience satisfaction from producing policy that provides social benefits. The underlying structural issues in the creative industry warrant more in-depth examination.

A 2018 joint report from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and New Zealand On Air (Fuller & Po Ching, 2022) on creative professionals indicated that only a quarter of creatives were able to live comfortably from their income. While the mean income of creative professionals overall was \$37,000, people working in music and sound reported a mean income of \$28,800. The authors reported the gig economy had more downsides than benefits for creatives and while 71% of creatives considered themselves part of the gig economy, this number was 82% for people in music and sound. Further, 94% of those people reported difficulties securing mortgages, predicting future income, and challenges around the lack of sick and holiday pay. Career dissatisfaction revolved around this lack of income along with difficulty accessing funding, and a feeling of lack of recognition for their work.

In 2022, while the Labour government announced an increase in support for arts and cultural events impacted by COVID-19 from \$22.5 million to \$70.7 million, Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Carmel Sepuloni acknowledged that this funding was a short-term solution for what are underlying issues around sustainable career paths for creative workers. Sepuloni supported government consideration of a universal basic income for artists (*Covid-19: Government Provides More Support for Arts and Culture Sector*, 2022).

Distribution of funding to creators through existing government channels is not currently fit for purpose. New Zealand On Air for example, suggest they are limited in how they can influence incomes of individuals, but state that by continuing to fund music production, music video production, and promotion, that artists will gain income from sales (Fuller & Po Ching, 2022).

A report from music licensing and collection body Recorded Music New Zealand (RMNZ) however, indicated that in 2022 it distributed \$2.6m of public performance royalties to 2,845 Aotearoa recording artists (Recorded Music NZ, 2022). While there is no data available on individual entitlements to either broadcast royalties or for wholesale revenue, this would be a median of \$800 per artist. As I will discuss below however, this estimated median is likely heavily skewed by a few dominant outliers.

RMNZ undertook an extensive consultation process with its members and the wider music community in 2022 to obtain feedback around its operation and activities. One of the outcomes of this consultation was a change to how the Official NZ Music Charts are organised, where singles or albums that are over 18 months old are ineligible for the Top 40 charts and shift to a Catalogue chart (Recorded Music NZ, 2023). This move was in response to the stagnancy of the Top 40 charts as it was being dominated by a few older releases by a couple of the most successful acts. The report stated that:

over 75% of survey respondents felt it was important for the charts to be dynamic and regularly reflect new music, with stagnancy in the main charts being widely noted as a huge frustration. We heard that the slow-moving nature of the main chart and the very limited opportunities for emerging artists and new music from Aotearoa to feature has had the effect of disengaging many in the music community from the charts. (p. 15)

Indeed, the top nine spots of the Top 20 albums by New Zealand artists in 2022 were shared between two acts, Six60 (five albums) and L.A.B. (four albums) (*New Zealand Top 50 Albums of 2022*, 2023). The number one album of 2022 (Six60) was released over a decade ago in 2011. Only two of those top nine albums were released during 2021 and 2022 (*L.A.B. V* and *Castle St*). Similarly, the top six spots of the Top 20 singles of 2022 by New Zealand artists were held by a single band, L.A.B., and the number one song released in 2019.

While the Catalogue chart is a responsive, important, and easily implemented change given the feedback, it is similarly important to acknowledge that these changes risk papering over the realities of a music industry that not only mirrors the increasing income inequalities of wider society, but amplifies them.

It is notable that various music bodies including those representing labels, managers, and other industry elements offer varying levels of artist advocacy services, however, there is a lack of collective voice and action to accurately represent the interests solely of music makers. Advocacy services that come from elsewhere are necessarily constrained by their (at times inevitably conflicting) interests and cannot sufficiently account for the nuanced experiences of music makers. The Music Managers Forum for example, is understandably unlikely to advocate for music maker rights that undercut the interests or income of its music manager members.

The Musicians' Union in the United Kingdom is a 33,000-member organisation advocating on an array of work, legal, wellbeing, and development issues for its musician members. One of their policies is advocating for a universal basic income for music makers in the UK (Musicians' Union, n.d.). These kinds of policies either exist or are being explored in other countries such as Ireland where a three-year pilot programme is currently being undertaken by the Government of Ireland to research the impact of a basic income for the arts in which 2000 artists and creative workers are participating (Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, 2023). In Germany, the Artists' Social Insurance Act (KSVG), ensures that self-employed artists enjoy similar protections from the statutory social security system as employees. Self-employed artists and publicists pay half of the contributions due out of their own pockets for health insurance, statutory pension, and long-term care insurance which is topped up by a subsidy from the federal government (20%) and from social security contributions (30%) from companies that exploit art and journalism (*The Artists' Social Security Fund*, n.d.).

In New Zealand, a New Zealand Musicians' Union was in operation from 1937 until 1991 when it was absorbed into the Service and Food Workers' Union (New Zealand Musicians' Union records, n.d.). In 2015, the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union, the Service and Food Workers Union, and the Flight Attendants and Related Services Association merged into a wider union, E Tū, which states promisingly on its website that “2023 is going to be a massive year for workers in Public and Commercial Services, with...health reform, [and] the rebuilding of the Musician's Union” (*E Tū*, n.d.).

Loss of Space: The Case of Dunedin

In my hometown of Dunedin, a music scene that developed in the 1980s around bands variously informed by DIY punk and independent music was dubbed the ‘Dunedin Sound’. While this loose musical homogeneity originated in Dunedin, it later extended to aesthetically similar bands in other regions. The ‘Dunedin Sound’ tag was eventually picked up by national and international press which led to increased interest and buzz (Mills, 2020). Contemporary Dunedin bands however, have found themselves in positions needing to either submit to or resist associating with this tag when describing their own musical identities (see Wilson & Holland, 2020).

These contemporary Dunedin music makers are increasingly finding themselves shuffled along and having to reorganise as the spaces around which they compose, practice and perform, and generate income, are developed without consideration for the existing usage of the area (e.g. inadequate inner-city noise-proofing building regulations) or left in disrepair (Francis, 2022; Gilmour & Monk, 2022; McNeilly, 2021). In Dunedin, the last 10 years has seen the loss of original music venues like ReFuel, Chicks’ Hotel, Sammy’s, Backstage, Starter’s Bar, Arc Café, and The Dog with Two Tails. These are spaces in which music makers learn and perform their craft, create community and cohesion, build their audiences, and sustain their incomes. Now with only a couple of small-mid size music venues still in operation, one of those, The Crown Hotel has recently learned it is facing the threat of an apartment development right next door to the noisy inner-city venue which has been hosting gigs since 1989 (Francis, 2022).

The city of Dunedin meanwhile, acknowledging the international attraction and touristic benefits of reproducing a ‘Dunedin Sound’ narrative, proclaims in its advertising material to have a “vibrant independent music scene that rose to international prominence” (“*Arts & Culture*,” n.d., para. 7). The Dunedin City Council’s Arts and Culture Strategy, Ara Toi Ōtepoti (Dunedin City Council, 2015), “formally recognises both the intrinsic value of arts and culture, and the value of the creative sector as an industry of critical importance in the knowledge economy” and “aims to position Dunedin as one of the world’s great small cities for arts and culture” (p. 4).

However, a profile of Dunedin’s arts and culture sector in 2020, indicated that employment in the performing arts had reduced from 61 in 2009 to 56 (-0.9%) in 2019 (Patterson, 2020). It isn’t clear how much music performance makes up this number as the profile also outlines Musicians’ (Instrumental)

as constituting 32 persons in 2019 and other types of music maker are not accounted for. What instrumental musicians *are* isn't defined within the profile document but the Dunedin Symphony Orchestra website states that it “consists of part-time professional musicians from Ōtepoti Dunedin and the greater Otago region...[ranging] in size from approximately 30 players...to as many as 70” (*Meet Our Players*, 2023) indicating that this perhaps constitutes a significant portion of that statistic.

While the city recognises the economic benefits of the arts and culture sector and seeks to leverage the history of creative taonga produced by music makers in Dunedin, it neglects to meaningfully foster conditions that support contemporary iterations of music work, of future generational taonga, leaving spaces unsupported and in disrepair, and the music community struggling to sustain itself.

Of course, this is not solely a Dunedin problem. In response to the existential threats posed by gentrification, urban development, and the effects of COVID-19 to the music venues which foster these communities and their well-being, New Zealand music scene charity collectives have materialised. In 2020, Save Our Venues NZ promoted crowd funding campaigns for various live music venues that were under threat with COVID-19 lockdowns. This has since developed into an advocacy service for Aotearoa's live performance venues, running crowd funding campaigns that have raised close to \$500,000 (*Save Our Venues*, n.d.).

Another charity organisation started by music community organisers, the New Zealand Music Foundation commissioned survey research in 2016 outlining the health and well-being of the music community, after which they rebranded as MusicHelps. This organisation seeks to use “the power of music to change the lives of thousands of New Zealanders in need” (*MusicHelps*, 2022, para. 1) and provide a bespoke online and face to face counselling service tailoring to the music community. This organisation is funded outside of governing channels by various music businesses, music bodies, and prominent musicians such as Neil Finn and Lorde.

This disconnection between acknowledgement of the value of culture, past generational taonga and its economic benefits, while inadequately supporting the conditions for its creation in contemporary capitalist societies, sets the context for the present study. This research seeks to develop a better

understanding of how these broader structural conditions impact the everyday well-being of music makers.

Defining Wellbeing

The World Health Organisation defines well-being as:

...a positive state experienced by individuals and societies. Similar to health, it is a resource for daily life and is determined by social, economic and environmental conditions. Well-being encompasses quality of life, as well as the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world in accordance with a sense of meaning and purpose. Focusing on wellbeing supports the tracking of the equitable distribution of resources, overall thriving, and sustainability. A society's well-being can be observed by the extent to which they are resilient, build capacity for action, and are prepared to transcend challenges (World Health Organisation, 2021, p. 10)

Moreover, the glossary of terms defines *health* as a fundamental right, a resource rather than an objective. Their definition encompasses a holistic view of health that considers socioeconomic conditions, physical and social environments, as well as individual behaviours. It states that a comprehensive understanding of health “implies that all systems and structures that govern the determinants of health should take account of the implications of their activities in relation to their impact on individual and collective health and well-being” (World Health Organisation, 2021, p. 3).

In 2021 the New Zealand Government Treasury updated their Living Standards Framework - a framework introduced in 2018 by the Labour government to frame understandings of how policy impacts different dimensions of well-being (*Our Living Standards Framework*, 2022). Within the three levels of the Living Standards Framework, the ‘Our Individual and Collective Wellbeing’ level is intended to define the resources and aspects of life that research suggests are important

for the well-being of individuals, whānau (family), and community. Within this level the Living Standards Framework is broken down into 12 domains.

While it is beyond the scope of this research to go into details of each component here, it is worthwhile reflecting on how well-being is framed as multilevel and produced by various social and material factors. One of these domains of individual and collective well-being is ‘Subjective well-being.’ Subjective well-being is defined as “people being satisfied with one’s life overall, having a sense of meaning and purpose, feeling positive emotions, such as happiness and contentment, and not feeling negative emotions” (*Living Standards Framework Dashboard*, 2022).

Indeed, Diener et al. (2018) in a metareview of the psychological research into subjective well-being assert that subjective well-being should be considered a facet of well-being capturing people’s evaluations of their lives rather than conflated with objective well-being. Much of the measurement of subjective well-being in the psychological literature has consisted of simple self-report psychometric assessments which Diener et al. rightfully point out as problematic despite internal consistency. Various biases such as self-deception and response bias raise questions about validity and as Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter (2003) state, the contexts in which surveys are taken can influence subjective answers such as whether people are happier on a Saturday than on a Monday.

While the updated definitions implemented by government that acknowledge multifaceted aspects of well-being are heartening, governance and the process of being or feeling well occur within wider structural contexts. In neoliberal economies, individual well-being is underpinned by assumptions of rational actors, and capacities of intentionality and as McLeod (2018) writes, well-being is understood as a “multifaceted internal state in which people are resilient to stress, able to make a social contribution, realise their capacities, and have productive working lives” (p. 4). Supported by disciplines like positive psychology, this drives self-help and wellness industries as individuals take up the optimal well-being project that those narratives imply it is their social responsibility for them to do. Indeed, in 2021 the ‘global wellness economy’ was reportedly estimated at \$4.5 trillion and forecast to reach \$7 trillion by 2025 (*The Global Wellness Economy Stands at \$4.4 Trillion Amidst the Disruptions*

of COVID-19; Is Forecast to Reach \$7 Trillion by 2025, 2021). While acknowledging the importance of subjective individual well-being, this research proposes an alternative, relational perspective of well-being, which I will detail in the following section.

Research Gap & Rationale

In health and well-being studies, McLeod (2018) and Duff (2014) developed new theories of well-being drawing from the philosophical ideas of Deleuze and Guattari that view health and well-being as emerging from relations of affects. Coffey (2022), building on this work, asserts that conceptualising well-being as shaped by the material world and assembled by the everyday conditions in which we find ourselves, destabilises individual-blame narratives that situate health and well-being as resulting from personal choices. Indeed, the Living Standards Framework deigns to measure the availability of resources that support our well-being, the quality of our ‘beings’ (such as health). The authors assert that this is important in part because they help expand one’s capability to exercise choice and the quality and balance of our ‘doings’ (such as work and play)” (*Living Standards Framework Dashboard*, 2022, p. 10). It is this capacity to act that is enabled or constrained by the socio-material and discursive forces that dictate our ability to choose, the wellspring from which our agency spouts. Subjective well-being is an embodiment of the assemblage of non-human elements it emerges from.

While there is a deluge of research work on the therapeutic qualities of music-making and creativity, the psychological and social science literature is scant as to how or why music work might be harmful to music makers. Much of the past research work into well-being in music makers has consisted of large survey studies which have provided useful data in bringing attention to potential poorer health and well-being outcomes in music makers. However, while these quantitative approaches might be used by researchers to highlight the need for support services, they are limited in their utility to identify systemic and structural factors that shape these outcomes. Understanding how well-being experiences are contextualised within larger systems and structures demands qualitative investigation however, high quality, in-depth qualitative research exploring experiences in music making work is mostly limited to the UK (Forsyth et al., 2016; Loveday et al., 2022). Furthermore, like the quantitative approaches, this qualitative research is oriented to individual intervention and fails to address structural determinants.

This present research, therefore, will seek to address the lacuna of research on well-being in working music makers and offer an alternative to the individualist approaches that this existing work primarily adopts. The aim of this study is to use a theoretical approach that is capable of locating people in their wider contexts to understand how that context scaffolds experience. The research will aim to achieve this by applying relational, assemblage frameworks to health and well-being and in so doing, will contribute to the emerging literature in this area.

Literature Review

Well-being in working music makers.

In this chapter I will begin by reviewing the existing research on well-being in working music makers covering survey research and qualitative research. Given this research I will argue, an alternative approach is required to understand in more depth the contexts from which the health and well-being outcomes emerge. I will argue for a radical relational approach to well-being using conceptual tools developed from Deleuze and Guattari. I describe and define these tools in a conceptual apparatus section before giving an overview and reviewing research into health and well-being that has utilised similar conceptual tools.

In 2014, a study by Barbar et al. (2014) investigating musical performance anxiety in Brazilian musicians assessed 230 participants using self-rated psychometric instruments. Music performance anxiety, social anxiety and depression were measured using psychometric tools and inventories such as the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (K-MPAI), the Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN), the Beck Anxiety Index, and the Patient Health Questionnaire-9. The study observed that those high in music performance anxiety also scored higher in all other assessed variables including general anxiety, social anxiety, and depression. Composed of 74 professional music makers, and 141 amateur musicians (15 not advised), the professional musicians rated higher for anxiety and depression than amateur musicians. Both however, rated more highly on these measures than the general population. Discussing the comorbidity of music performance anxiety and depressive symptoms, Barbar et al. infer that this may be due to “the attribution of success to external factors, poor acknowledgment of effort accomplished, excessive self-demand, introspection, hopelessness, and lack of confidence in self” (p. 385). They conclude that the high rates of psychiatric indicators particularly in working music makers are at least partly related to music making work. However, they suggest developing adaptive, hyperthymic characteristics like self-confidence and optimism as possible solutions for reducing music performance anxiety. This neglects the corollary possibility that music performance anxiety is produced by depressive symptoms or social anxiety. These may in turn be produced by issues linked to producing creative work such as poor acknowledgement of effort, and excessive self-demand.

Research conducted in 2014 as part of an Australian report into the mental health and well-being of workers in the entertainment industry was composed of two phases. The first phase involved 36 in-depth interviews with members of the entertainment industry and informed questions for a larger (n=2,407) survey phase (van den Eynde et al., 2014). Of the 2,407 participants included in their analyses, the age range was 18-75 years (mean of 36 years) with 49.5% identifying as male, 48.9% as female, and 1.65% as non-binary or other. Ethnic background data indicated most participants' backgrounds were White/Caucasian/European (77.8%), followed by Asian (10.2%), and a small percentage as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (1.4%). The remaining 10.6% identified as other ethnicity or were unsure. Regarding employment status, 54.5% were full-time employees, 16% were part-time employees, 22% were self-employed, 7% were casual employees, and 0.5% were unemployed. The participants represented various sectors within the entertainment industry, including music (31.5%), film and television (23.6%), performing arts (18.2%), and others such as radio, circus, and comedy (26.7%).

The findings from the report identified that compared to general Australian population data, entertainment professionals reported higher symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress as well as higher levels of substance abuse to cope with those challenges. The problem was compounded by fear of mental health stigma with a quarter of the participants suggesting that they avoided help-seeking for this reason. An extremely competitive music industry culture was pointed out as a significant source of stress where everyone was competing for a small amount of work. As a result of this competition, participants indicated that they no longer supported each other, leading to feelings of isolation and anxiety. Meanwhile, participants felt the need to hide "weaknesses" such as injuries, health issues, and mental health challenges due to the potential risk to future work opportunities. Participants also reported that there was a lack of support resources available to them and that the industry engendered a lack of trust, was an unsupportive environment, promoted a disjointed lifestyle, and people were personally responsible for coping with and finding support through personal relationships or outside the industry. Overall, this substantial study demonstrated that the context of entertainment work was likely to create mental health stressors but was unlikely to provide support for them. The report recommends early intervention and prevention programmes, better access to support, and fostering a culture of openness and support.

In response to a growing awareness of anecdotal associations between music work and negative health outcomes, and considering the international work in this area, here in Aotearoa New Zealand, survey research was commissioned by charity organisation the New Zealand Music Foundation. This aimed to produce sufficient, reliable data examining the health and well-being of musicians and music industry workers with reports published in 2016 and 2019 (MusicHelps, 2016, 2019). Recruitment was advertised through music industry databases, community organisations, and social media with a total of 552 members of the music industry participating. The demographic data collected indicated 62% identified as male, 33% as female, and 1% as gender diverse or transgender. The majority (71%) identified as New Zealand European, with other European (7%), Māori (6%), and Pacific Islander (2%) also represented. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 75, with the largest age group being those aged 35-44 (24%). Most participants had been involved in the music industry for over 10 years (62%) and held roles as songwriters, performers, and composers (85%). While 26% reported that their only income came from music work, a significant proportion (36%) reported that most of their income came from other sources. The findings revealed that these participants reported worse health outcomes compared to the general population, based on self-report questions around sleep, nutrition, physical activity, and disability. The report identified the causes of emotional distress in musicians were tiredness, pressure to succeed, overwork, and financial struggles. Most musicians also reported that they were unable to sustain a living solely from music making while half earned less than half of the national average. Like the van den Eynde (2014) study, the demands of the highly competitive environment of the music industry were highlighted as a factor contributing to burnout and stress. The need to constantly produce new material and content, pressure to perform at a high level, and the challenges of maintaining a public image along with freelance and short contract work are characteristic of working in music. Also like the van den Eynde (2014) Australian report, the authors recommendations are there is a need for appropriate and affordable support services for people working in music.

Both the Australian report (van den Eynde et al., 2014) and the NZ Music Community Wellbeing Survey (MusicHelps, 2016, 2019) provide valuable indications about the mental health and well-being issues faced by music workers and recommend the provision of appropriate and affordable support services. However, from a critical psychology perspective, individualistic approaches fail to account

for the broader contexts that individuals exist in. As a result of individually geared foci, recommendations often revolve around individualistic interventions such as psychological counselling or therapy that address individual behaviour and cognitions. This locates the responsibility for managing mental distress and health outcomes within the individual, rather than addressing the systemic issues that produce these outcomes. This inherently requires an assumption that individuals are rational actors, that they have agency. The survey findings highlight specific job-related issues, such as poor pay and long hours, that can negatively impact mental health. However, these issues exist within a broader societal context, characterised by meritocratic assumptions that also place the responsibility for success on the individual. These views neglect the scaffolding and ecologies that give rise to individual success and the implication, therefore, is that not achieving success is owing to individual failures. It is important to note that these broader issues are not addressed in the survey findings and will be explored further in this study. The survey findings represent important work nevertheless and highlight the need for further research to explore how the work conditions in music impact the well-being of music makers, and to understand the broader societal and material forces that shape these environments.

As with the Australian and New Zealand surveys, a UK survey (Gross et al., 2018; Gross & Musgrave, 2016) also found higher rates of mental health issues among professional musicians compared to the general population. However, the UK survey stands out in its methodological approach and its recommendations. Unlike the Australian and New Zealand surveys, which relied primarily on survey data, the UK survey employed a mixed-method approach with a large qualitative component.

The study started with a survey to identify the prevalence of mental health issues among musicians. The survey study was conducted to investigate the mental well-being of self-identifying professional musicians (n=2,211) asking questions around the prevalence of mental health issues, the impact on their lives, and what supports were available (Gross & Musgrave, 2016). When compared with national statistics, their research also indicated greater mental health problems, including that professional musicians could be three times more likely than the national average to experience depression.

The authors acknowledge self-selection bias and the contextual issues characteristic of survey research, but the survey was considered useful in identifying an issue that could be followed up with a qualitative

component. The researchers followed up with in-depth semi-structured interviews with a subset of the participants which allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of the causes of the high incidence rates identified in the initial survey.

This follow up qualitative research was composed of in-depth semi-structured interviews with 26 professional musicians to gain further insights into the causes of the higher incidence rates identified in the initial pilot study (Gross et al., 2018). The questions focused in on income and work factors like industry relationships and social media, and experiences around mental health challenges.

Thematic analyses identified various themes as impacting on the well-being of the participants. Similar causes of distress regarding the highly competitive aspect of music to the van den Eynde (2014) and the MusicHelps (2019) report were identified such as exposure to constant critique and feedback and being unable to clearly define success in the face of constant pressure to succeed. The precarity of work and the resulting hyper-competitive environment this engenders was noted as affecting working relationships and that hyper-competitiveness led to masking insecurities and vulnerabilities to avoid losing work as was also highlighted in the van den Eynde report.

Routines that promoted well-being were identified as being disrupted by the irregular schedules that characterise music work and the constant attention needed to maintain a social media presence led to burnout and feelings of anxiety. Their recommendations also called for increased mental health support but went further than the Australian and New Zealand reports in considering socioenvironmental conditions suggesting a universal basic income to address financial precarity. The study provided valuable contextual insights and proposed limited structural solutions such as a universal basic income.

While financial precarity is thematic of this research, there is a lacuna in the literature around well-being in music as it relates to new capitalist models such as streaming. For example, in their book *Chokepoint Capitalism: How Big Tech and Big Content Captured Creative Labor Markets and How We'll Win Them Back*, Giblin and Doctorow (2022) outline how dominant corporate tech platforms like Facebook, Google, and Amazon have created 'chokepoints'. These 'chokepoints' are control points within the market that these platforms manipulate to exploit suppliers, clone successful products, and create barriers for competition. This results in a *monopsony* in which the buyer has power over the

seller and leads to worker exploitation. They assert that the three major labels and their publishing arms (Universal Music Group, Sony, and Warner) control so much music that any streaming service must negotiate with them. This results in more favourable terms for them and their artists at the expense of independent songwriters and music-makers.

Expanding this point, Leyshon & Watson (2022) observe how streaming platforms pay royalties as a percentage of their revenue rather than as a fixed rate per stream. As Gibson and Doctorow (2022) assert, this means that even the subscription of a user who listens to a single independent artist, will be meted out as a percentage to major labels and artists for who that subscriber never listened.

Deleuze & Guattari (1987) propose art has affective force. That is, it produces some change in the observer, allowing them to become different through experiencing it. Streaming services that base the value of music on the number of streams a song receive neglect this affective value of art. For example, a song may only be heard once or twice, and it has created possibilities of change. Listening to it repeatedly isn't necessary for it to provoke a new way of being or understanding. As Giblin and Doctorow (2022) assert, neither does the per-stream model make sense for album-oriented artists who release music less frequently and whose albums are conceptualised as whole works of art.

This emphasis on structural forces and the use of qualitative methods to explore them in depth sets the stage for a broader discussion of qualitative research in the field of music maker well-being. I will delve further into the literature to explore how these methods can provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of music maker experiences and the factors that shape them.

In recent qualitative research, Musgrave (2023) focused on the relational aspects of music workers' professional and personal lives, thematically analysing semi-structured interviews with 28 UK musicians. To explore this relational aspect, Musgrave drew on Zelizer's (2012) 'relational work' theory which challenges conventional ideas that economic and social spheres of life are separate, instead arguing that they are interconnected and co-constitutive.

This view is particularly relevant for music-workers for who music-making and collaboration starts out in what would be deemed the social sphere - as something done for fun, for connection, and at some point, transitions into a professional pursuit. Relationships blend into the economic/market sphere, creating a unique tension. Musgrave's findings highlight how this relational blur can result in mismatches in expectations and valuations, and the how these relational strains have well-being impacts such as stress, anxiety, and depression.

By analysing the data through a relational work lens, Musgrave (2023) provides novel and incisive insight into how the participants manage relationships. Particularly, the study suggested music makers face difficulties with differentiating between personal and working relationships, if music industry professionals use a 'sociality with intent' where working relationships and thus friendships, are contingent on the continuing success of the musician.

Bridgstock (2005, 2013) provides a useful lens for understanding this relational blur, defining it as a 'protean career'. Artists are architects of their own career paths, driven by intrinsic motivations tied to their sense of identity. Taken together, Musgrave's (2023) study enables us to begin considering delineation, boundaries, and categories as fragile, fractious, fictive. Bridgstock's (2005, 2013) theory suggests that because a music-maker's sense of identity is tied to their artistic pursuits, it is important for that subjectivity to be validated by society. This perspective provides a new lens through which to interpret the findings in the New Zealand and Australian surveys that identify poor mental health and competitive market forces as part of the assemblage of professional music-makers.

In addition to the issues of financial precarity and relational stress, other studies have highlighted the importance of work-related alcohol issues. A qualitative study conducted by Forsyth et al. (2016) with 24 performers in Scotland sought to explore experiences of music work-related alcohol issues. The study identified four main themes in the performers' accounts, all of which encouraged workplace drinking. These themes were: constant exposure to alcohol and drinks marketing in the workplace, performance-related psychological incentives/stressors that encouraged drinking before, during, and after shows, free drinks provided by venue managers, fans, peers, and alcohol industry sponsors (often viewed as a perk-of-the-job), and a social expectation that entertainers should drink.

The authors do discuss the workplace environment as a causal factor in excessive alcohol consumption. However, they fail to consider or comment on the economic and political conditions which give agency to and advance the interests of alcohol companies over the well-being of music workers. This oversight calls for broader research perspectives.

As a result of an individualistic orientation, the authors suggest that sober audiences encourage sober performances and recommend that performers modify their drinking behaviour for example, by holding gigs earlier in the day. These kinds of recommendations while well-intended and useful modulations perhaps, nevertheless, reproduce neoliberal personal responsibility narratives in which the performers are responsible for their exposure to alcohol while alcohol companies that perpetuate and benefit from associations with music and its venues go without critique.

Rather than problematic alcohol consumption being something that individual people do, another perspective considering the broader structures shaping patterns of consumption and its impacts on well-being, might allow us to view alcohol as something done to people. In addiction research, (Fraser et al., 2018) offer us a different possibility for how researchers looking at music makers could think through drug and alcohol use. Drawing on new materialist and posthumanist perspectives in framing alcohol as agentic technology, the authors show how its production, distribution, and consumption are intertwined with social, economic, and political systems that shape human experience and societies.

Finally, (Visser et al., 2022) conducted a meta review on professional popular musicians' experiences and perspectives toward mental health interventions. They reviewed six studies: two cross-sectional, one case study, two phenomenological studies and one quasi-experimental quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods study. From the findings of this meta review, the authors emphasised the need to develop interventions that are appropriate for the personalities and psychosocial characteristics that may be unique to popular musicians such as “their propensity to self-medicate using alcohol and other substances” (p. 11). Moreover, the authors highlight how one of the barriers to treatment was a reluctance to appear mentally unwell due to the potential loss of work in an environment of work and income precarity. They conclude with recommendations for research to explore individual psychoeducational, clinical, and peer-to-peer interventions, however, they fail to recognise or discuss for example, how working environments and economies structure this experience.

Research specifically exploring music work, health and well-being is not considerable, and I have outlined quite comprehensively the extent of it here. While survey research is an affordable method of research given the lack of interest or funding for research with this population, it produces data that is light on deeper insight and meaning. Qualitative research is needed to explore with more depth the poorer health and well-being outcomes that quantitative research points to.

The qualitative studies outlined here show how they can make important contributions to understanding the nuanced, contextual experiences of music-makers and their work and are indicative of how complex and dynamic the affects and interactions are for working music makers. How they navigate their creativity as commodity - as subjects subsisting amongst wider contextual forces. Structural forces are hinted at, how they structure their so-called private lives as well as their financial pursuits while the lack of attention given to these forces indicate how taken-for-granted these structures are.

Despite some of the limitations outlined around onto-epistemological assumptions, the fractures of research drawn together present an overall picture of how music makers experience distress and report poorer health outcomes than general populations. While outdated discourses about tortured artists may advance ideas about unwell people confounding research by being drawn to creativity, the research outlined here indicates it is subsisting from arts and music making that at least partly contributes to these outcomes. In the next section I will explore conceptual tools and research that will allow me to think outside the limitations inherent in the studies reviewed here.

Health, Wellbeing and Conceptual Tools

Having outlined the existing research on music work and well-being along with its limitations, it is apparent that there exists an entanglement of social, economic, technological, and biological components. In this thesis, I make the case for an approach that can address the complexity of these entanglements and conceptual difficulties related to health and well-being. Below, I outline the conceptual tools that I have used to underpin the work in this thesis. Tools that articulate the co-constitutive, affective, and interconnected elements that make up experiences of music making and well-being. These tools allow me to view the music maker not as an individual, but as part of a

dynamic network of relationships. Throughout this section I will show how various tools have been deployed in existing health and well-being research and evaluate the usefulness for this research.

Conceptual Apparatus

This thesis marks a radical departure from conventional approaches to studying well-being. Instead of relying on established paradigms, it embraces an innovative conceptual apparatus influenced by the philosophical works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. These novel conceptual tools serve as the bedrock for understanding well-being, inform the review of existing literature, and are the lenses through which data were analysed. The tools introduced here will be revisited and elaborated further in the Methodology chapter.

For a starting point, Deleuze (paraphrasing Proust) in a conversation with Foucault (1977) asserts that if his theories be useful, they should be treated like a toolbox: “treat my book as a pair of glasses to the outside; if they don’t suit you, find another pair; I leave it to you to find your own instrument, which is necessarily an investment for combat” (Foucault, 1977, p. 208).

While critically useful tools, it’s imperative to turn criticality upon itself, to remain reflexive. As critical psychologist Ian Parker in conversation with Marianna Fotaki stated:

Well, Deleuze...I’m not terribly keen on Deleuze but I think the reason is because I’m not terribly keen on Deleuzians – those who simply repeat phrases from Deleuze and treat it as a complete system of knowledge or a world view (Parker & Fotaki, 2014, p. 9).

So, it is with openness and curiosity that I approach these tools, with which I try on these glasses. Not as a closed system or world view which would be counteractive to the philosophy of the approach, but as guiding flashlights, torches to cast over a dark cave so that I might find a trickle of water. To shake loose what might be taken-for-granted, to look under a few rocks to see what scurries away.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari developed the concept of assemblage (“agencement” in French) in their philosophical work *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Deleuze & Guattari,

1987). This work was formulated in critique of traditional philosophical essentialist, reductionist, deterministic, and hierarchical concepts, and categories (Blackman et al., 2008). In contrast with theories of human society and behaviour that focus on overarching structures, assemblage theory is concerned with the fluid, contingent, and emergent nature of social phenomena. They argue that phenomena are produced by complex interactions of diverse elements. (See the Methodology section for further discussion of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this research). What is relevant for this study is that Deleuze and Guattari viewed subjectivity as an emergent property of ever-evolving and self-ordering forces and diverse materials – subjectivity, therefore, is an assemblage of forces and materials.

Briefly, assemblage's ontological underpinnings are Spinozan monist. In contrast to Cartesian dualistic notions of mind and body, monism posits that all things material and non-material are part of the same substance. There is no separation between mind and matter. As Robson and Riley (2019) point out, the implications for health (or well-being) of a monist ontology are that cognitive and intellectual experiences – matters of the mind – are embodied, they are not distinct from physical phenomena. Mental processes are physical, and immaterialism is an emergent property of materialism. In other words, materials assemble to produce seemingly immaterial things, but these are material products of affective relationships between the material components of an assemblage.

The organisation of this mess of materials is interpreted by Fox and Alldred (2014) as a chaotic network of connections that assemble and reassemble in unpredictable ways. Subjectivity, therefore - what makes the sense of 'me' in any given instance - is temporally located. It is a state that is contingent on the momentary, fleeting flows of materials that are in constant relational change. Like a hurricane moving across a landscape speeding up and slowing down, the things that I collect produce and affect me, I am made of them. Geographical features enable and constrain me, atmospheric pressure and global air currents precede me. I am a weather pattern subject to global flows.

Opening the Tool Shed: Analytical Instruments

Now to open the conceptual shed door, lay the tools out, and explain what they're made of and what they might be used for. I've white knuckled the arm rests at a dentist rolling out a trolley full of metal

instruments: “What does that one do? You are not going to use that one, are you?” I hope at the least, this small overview will anaesthetise the area a little, numb the gum so I can see what there is to extract.

Immanence

Taking up Spinoza’s monist metaphysics, immanence rejects the separative philosophy of dualism where there are transcendent hierarchical planes, instead emphasising the interconnection and interdependence of things that exist within the same place (Williams, 2010). Cartesian splits between mind and matter, heaven and hell, disappear in a monistic ontology where everything is in relationship.

Territorialisation, Deterritorialisation, and Lines of Flight

Territories are open systems composed of human and non-human relations. Territorialisation is the capture and stratification of this territory by a force “associated with an apparatus of capture, codification of life and human behaviours that is part of the process of stratification” (Fullagar & Malone, 2021, p. 50).

A deterritorialising force disrupts the stratified formation opening a line of flight to transformation. It encourages creativity and desire for difference, to become-other. Organising (molarising), territorialising forces are ‘major’. Deterritorialising forces are minor, and in constant struggle with the molar force. For Deleuze, social life and behaviour is structured, coded, and organised into habitual ways of being and doing.

Disruptions to this organisation allow us to see another way, to take a line of flight. A line of flight is an actualised connection that was previously only virtual or implicit (Lorraine, 2010) a creative possibility along which an assemblage can transform and become-other. They offer paths of escape from stuck-ness, and resistance to molar forms.

An assemblage can be viewed as a territory subject to constant processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation. Perhaps, a music maker’s writing assemblage has become territorialised as they write with the same chord progressions, producing the same harmonic relationships. Maybe, pop music

is a major force that has captured and structured – territorialised – that song writing assemblage. They might be taught or discover a new chord that enables them to explore new harmonic relationships, a line of flight to a new kind of song. The writing assemblage is deterritorialised.

Of course, eventually a novel, deterritorialising element becomes a habitual part of the assemblage and ceases to have a deterritorialisation effect, to open a line of flight. Discovering a diminished chord and using it all the time eventually stops being surprising. As I point out elsewhere, novelty relies on the context provided by structure – an over-proliferation of a I-vi-IV-V chord structure in pop music allows a departure from that to *be* unexpected, to be different. Similarly, identities as music makers are assemblages that are subject to territorialisation, as are notions of well-being. This concept can help us to analyse how different forces in an assemblage are enabling or constraining becoming-well.

The Molecular and the Molar

Molar forms refer to dominant and established orders – “well-defined, massive and governing - such as large structures or identity categories” (Jackson, 2010, p. 581). The molecular refers to the minute details, our everyday feelings and experiences that debase our perception of the whole.

The molecular is a deterritorialisation of the molar (Jackson, 2010) and is a happening that moves us away from molarity, from adherence to a structural and stable norm, and towards difference. This may lead to a line of flight in which our assemblage is transformed in a becoming-other.

Molecularity for a music maker might be the self-expression or emotional release that is provided by music making whereas the molar is the overarching economic model, or industry that a music maker operates within. A music maker identity is molar: what is it that constitutes an acceptable music maker subjectivity and what does one need to do to identify as or be identified as a music maker? Molecules can aggregate into stable, molar forms (think individuals in an audience at a gig).

Striations and Smoothing

Whereas molecular and molar describe scale, processes, and systems; striation and smoothing describe how space or systems are organised. A striated space is structured and organised, it contains grooves

along which we move. Smooth space is a clean plane, unstructured and open, like a blank canvas without paint, open possibilities. A striated space might be the established norms of making music – what sounds are acceptable? Perhaps, popular music or the canon of classical music has created striations that dictate the possibility of movement or doing and being different. What scales can we use? What words can we say?

A smooth space is unmarked by expectations, it is John Cage's "4'33", open, diverse, and multiple, a place conducive to forming unexpected connections. Atkinson and Scott (2015) writing from a health geography, Deleuzian perspective, produced a case study involving a primary school in England that delivered the curriculum to 7- and 8-year-old students using dance and movement. They found that through disrupting (smoothing out) habitual (striated) ways of doing and being - changing expectations of behaviour and reimagining educational spaces - new possibilities of being emerged.

As the capacity for an assemblage to transform, and the availability of lines of flight relate to well-being in a Deleuzian sense, the authors sought to show how smoothing out spaces that are striated (such as reconfiguring the expectations and environment in a classroom) creates new affective encounters and new potentials for well-being. In a pedagogical environment that was desk-free and encouraging of movement for learning, both the children and the parents reported improved subjective well-being. The researchers did not however, explore how disruption to the habitual might also have potential for reducing well-being, particularly in children. Nonetheless, conceptualising and understanding well-being in a geographic sense through striated and smooth spaces, could be useful for generating insights about how taken for granted music industry practices are striations that constrain the well-being capacities of music makers.

Affect

Colman (2010) describes affect as "the change, or variation, that occurs when bodies collide, or come into contact" (p. 11). Fullagar and Taylor (2021) refer to affect as a relational and transpersonal energy, force, and flow that produce individual subjectivity. Affects are pre-personal forces that change a body's capacity to act, think, or desire (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Affects produce our subjectivity, however, affects are not static - they are temporally and geographically produced. Affects create transformative potential and thus are part of the process of becoming. Affects are transversal and relational, flowing within social and material assemblages.

Subjectivity and self are a constant process of 'becoming' as different interactions, and new relations shape and reshape the assemblage. 'Becoming' is driven 'affect' - Deleuzian affect refers to how mixtures of process, force, power, and expression cause a body to be modified or transformed (Colman, 2010) in some way. Bodies are being perpetually transformed in response to the changing dynamics of an assemblage. McLeod (2018) draws from Deleuze in framing life as undifferentiated matter-energy, not located within or generated by individuals, but in the virtual – in possibilities, potentials to be fulfilled. Desire, therefore, is not individualistic but is an inherent underlying collective desire for transformation, for difference.

Becoming-Other

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari (1987) illustrate becoming-other through the analogy of an orchid and a wasp. An orchid produces flowers for reproductive purposes and the wasp seeks out those flowers for nectar and in which to lay eggs. Some orchids however, evolved to resemble female wasps. When the male mates with the supposed female wasp it is covered in pollen which it then transfers to another orchid, thus participating in its reproduction. The categories between orchid and wasp become indeterminate as the orchid becomes a wasp, and the wasp becomes an orchid as they move beyond their identities as wasps or orchids in a mutual becoming.

From this analogy I think of another example in which bats and moths are in a continual, mutual cycle of becoming-other. Where bats developed echolocation to detect moths in the dark, moths developed ultrasonic clicks that confuse the echolocation capabilities of the bat. Bats then evolved again to rely more on their sight, and as there is a becoming-moth for the bat, there is a becoming-bat for the moth as their behaviours and physiology are in dynamic relationship, creating mutual desires and possibilities of becoming-other.

Identities as moths and bats, or orchids and wasps, are not static and fixed, they are mutually contingent and in constant process of becoming. In becoming-other we discover new ways of being, we redefine what it is to be a music maker.

Assemblage

Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical project, the concept of assemblage is a central analytical instrument in understanding well-being in working music makers. An assemblage view provides a perspective of subjectivity as an emergent property of ever-evolving forces and diverse materials: "complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities, and territories that come together for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning." (Livesey, 2010, p. 18).

This conceptualisation allows me to understand well-being as an intricate socio-material mixture, composed of individual experiences, social structures, cultural norms, and the use of instruments or technology. For example, dominant social expectations about what a music maker is can influence an individual's ability to identify as such, depending on whether they perceive that they have met those criteria. Duff (2014) suggests that a conceptualisation of *health* as an assemblage of cultural norms, environments, social institutions, technology, and bodies affords us novel insights into how health is a process rather than a fixed state. It is shaped by social, biological, political, economic, affective, and material forces.

Research by Julia Coffey (2020) supports and builds on Duff's (2014) work on health assemblages. In exploring well-being in youth, Coffey points out how well-being is linked to neoliberal discourses of successful subjectivity. Well-being is something to work towards and achieve, and young people are celebrated as self-responsible and self-actualised when they achieve it. Viewing well-being as assemblage argues Coffey, moves focus towards how individual factors are in interplay with structural and institutional factors.

The resilience-based approaches of positive psychology offer individual solutions for problems with structural conditions such as housing, poverty, access to health services and education. Coffey (2020) draws on Deleuzian understandings of bodies and subjectivities as produced through social, material,

and affective relations. Our everyday circumstances, the conditions that produce us *are* our bodies. That is, our bodies are made of them, our feelings and emotions are manifested by these relations. What our body can do, our capacity to be well is contingent on the composition of these affects. Coffey orientates us towards how those problematic individual experiences (that music makers pointed out in the survey research such as income, work precarity, and competition), are related to structural and institutional issues. The distressing, embodied outcomes emerge from this interplay.

Kim McLeod (2018) in the book *Wellbeing Machine: How Health Emerges from the Assemblages of Everyday Life*, addresses how mental well-being interventions in western cultures have traditionally sought to address neurochemical activity or psychological attributes of individuals. While well-being is an internal state in which individuals are resilient to stress, make social contributions, are productive, and self-actualised, 'illbeing' is a measurable pathology located within an individual that is ascertained using depression rating scales, for example.

This individualisation of illbeing says McLeod, emerges from economic discourses that exert pressure on individuals to pursue optimal well-being for the sake of prosperity in the region. The result is blaming-narratives directed towards individuals who have no control over the social and material conditions from which their illbeing is produced.

McLeod (2018) acknowledges the insights into complexity that social determinants of health research has provided around the material, social and biological factors that are associated with health inequity. However, she argues that this has failed to account for how everyday health and well-being is materially shaped, or how larger global forces instantiate themselves in our immediate experiences. McLeod critiques both the 'capabilities approach' used in policy evaluation to assess policy implications on people's capabilities of being and doing, and social capital perspectives in which well-being is enabled through relationships that are productive individual and collective resources. For McLeod, these retain notions of the agentic human actor where given the right environment and conditions, they will make rational choices. McLeod's response argues for an assemblage view of health and well-being to consider extra-individual and non-human agency and orient us to the interactive and relational way health and well-being emerges.

Drawing on Manuel DeLanda's theoretical developments of assemblage, Price-Robertson and Duff (2016) put assemblage theory into conversation with psychology. They argue that even biopsychosocial models are bound to individualistic ontologies and seek linear explanations to account for psychological phenomena. In accounting for the physiological and psychological effects of trauma in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for example, the authors suggest that reducing the problem to simply neurological processes, or conversely, overly privileging social structures or discursive causes is limiting.

Rather, they propose that by conceptualising the unit of analysis as an *assemblage*, we can treat psychological phenomena such as PTSD “less as a discrete effect of isolatable events and neurological processes, and more as an emergent property of diverse entities acting together” (Price-Robertson & Duff, 2016, p. 71). This account has clear implications for psychological intervention. Rethinking hierarchal causal explanations with assemblage, allows a treatment to focus on relations between social, material, and affective components of an assemblage and the forces they emerge from. Where the only capacity for response in the music and well-being research is individual, this opens cracks to new ways of thinking about how we respond to the experiences and conditions that music workers describe as affecting them.

In maternal health research, Neely (2023) explores first-time motherhood through an assemblage theory lens. Neely theorises maternal transition as a ‘mother-baby-assemblage’ seeking to situate maternal well-being within a socio-material framework. Viewing motherhood as an assemblage, Neely challenges the biological and social role understandings of motherhood, highlighting it as a process that is complex, dynamic, and emergent. Mother and baby subjects are mutually constitutive and trans-subjective, in ‘chiasmic relationship’ – describing two entities as interwoven and co-affective - and entangled bodies.

Understanding subjectivity as co-constitutive and agency as distributed throughout an assemblage (and thus all its socio-material, human and non-human agents), subverts discourses of responsibility and moralisation of mothers according to Neely (2023). Being a mother with a baby in public as Neely asserts, and the capacities of a baby to affect and be affected, invoke feelings of guilt and the need to

accommodate others for feeling personally responsible for producing those affects. Neely draws on qualitative data from other maternal health literature for analysis.

Coffey (2015) uses a Deleuzian approach and ‘affect’ to empirically analyse how bodies, body work, and health are experienced. Coffey theorises embodiment as an assemblage and argues that part of what makes up that assemblage is health discourse and consumer culture. The affective forces of these elements determine what the body can do – its capacities for action – as what bodies feel influence what bodies can do.

Observing how participants equated looking good with being healthy, Coffey (2015) links this to consumer culture and moralised, individual notions of working on one-self. Body work was analysed as a means of achieving health and happiness, and while participants “liberated” themselves from “feeling bad” (p. 620), Coffey argues that paradoxically, the embodiment of the affective forces of “discourses, ideals, and sensations of ‘health’” (p. 621) instead has a constraining effect on a body’s possibility of being-other than those discourses, ideals, and sensations.

Coffey’s (2015) work here reinforces how subjectivity is produced by assemblages of affects, how bodies are emergent properties of affective assemblages. Coffey’s study is valuable in modelling application of theories of affect and assemblage to working with empirical qualitative data. This provides insights for thinking through methodologies for the present study and how music-maker well-being is similarly constituted of affects. Our everyday circumstances, the conditions that produce us *are* our bodies. Our feelings and emotions are manifested by these relations. What our body can do, our capacity to be well is contingent on the composition of these affects. Further research could broaden to understand other components of well-being and how health and embodiment contribute to a wider assemblage of well-being.

Space and Place

Investigating how places and spaces impact human health, Fox and Powell (2023) argue for places not to be understood as causes of good or poor health, but as a relation *within* an assemblage that enable or constrain what a body is able to do. Places and spaces enhanced well-being through whether they

enabled participants to exercise, or whether they could grow their own fruit and vegetables which also had economic advantages. Changing socioeconomic climates were seen by some participants as making spaces and places more unsafe.

This kind of research illuminates how there are different advantages and disadvantages given a space, and how these are not ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ but that they are good AND bad. Furthermore, what might be bad within one person’s assemblage, might be good within another. In the assemblage of a music maker for example, we might look to how those lower incomes that are associated with that work, constrain their capacity to live somewhere more advantageous to their well-being. Living in a neighbourhood for example, that has poorer access to fruit and vegetable stores, or is heavily territorialised by alcohol outlets and low-nutrient food outlets, are constitutive elements of one’s assemblage. Indeed, the authors discuss ‘social position’ as not attributes of an individual, but as a set of capacities that are “contingent on the assemblages within which [they] participate” (p. 231). The ‘thousand tiny advantages and disadvantages’ enable or constrain a body’s capacity for well-being.

Ambulatory Research

Davies (2021) reinterprets data from educational research with children that she conducted in the 1980s and 1990s with a new materialist methodology. Drawing from Deleuzian ideas of creative production – the production of difference – Davies compares royal-legal (molar) research that relies on established concepts and aims to maintain the status quo, to ambulatory research that breaks disciplinary boundaries through creative and emergent thought. While one is stabilising and normalising, and the other is destabilising, Davies asserts that they are co-dependent where the dominant royal-legal relies on the new possibilities created by ambulatory thinking, ambulatory thought relies on existing order.

Davies (2021) applies this methodology to observations of children engaging with gender roles and societal expectations in their play. As Davies notes in one example, pursuing a line of flight, a boy noticed enjoyment from how a skirt felt to wear. This deterritorialisation of gender constructs and its expected social norms, however, was disrupted when another smaller boy attacked him now that his body was perceived as weaker. This loss of power resulted in the boy reterritorialising his body as masculine to reclaim the lost dominance.

Employing the new materialist methodology in research says Davies, allows us to explore how subjectivity is enmeshed with others' lines of force, co-existent, and moving. New materialist research involves smoothing the spaces that have been striated by molar modes of thinking.

As creative work often involves ambulatory thought, pursuing novel lines of flight to become-other, new materialist methodologies provide perhaps, a harmonious way of articulating the assembled experiences of music makers. In this review of health and well-being literature drawing on Deleuzian concepts and new materialism, I have explored how these conceptual tools have been theorised and applied in other research and how this supports ways they might be used to achieve the aims of the present research. Specifically, insights into the social and material contexts from which the experiences of working music makers emerge, and how thinking with these concepts can glean insights into the need for macro-level and structural interventions in creative work rather than interventions with a solely individual focus.

The existing research on music work and well-being has provided valuable insights, but it also has its limitations. It is clear that there is an entanglement of social, economic, technological, and biological components that contribute to the experiences of music makers. However, these complexities have not been fully addressed in previous studies. It is the aim of this study therefore, to explore the broader contexts from which music-maker experiences of well-being emerge. Given the need for a relational approach to well-being that avoids re-producing individualistic assumptions, I have outlined the various Deleuzian concepts that I will deploy to achieve this, and I have shown how they have been successfully utilised in previous well-being research. This research will provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of music makers and their well-being, which could highlight the need for different kinds of interventions and policies to be implemented alongside individual interventions.

Method

Design

The present research is an in-depth interview study employing a Deleuzian-informed post-phenomenological analysis to explore well-being in working music-makers. It utilises the conceptual tools of assemblage theory to explore the affective elements that scaffold working music-makers' experiences of well-being. It is an exploratory and experimental work underpinned by a relational ontology. It was guided by post-phenomenological and post-qualitative methods literature and drew variously from new materialist, posthumanist, and health work in geography, sports science, psychology and sociology work on well-being and subjectivity.

In this chapter, heeding Elizabeth St. Pierre's (2016) call for researchers to study the epistemological and ontological assumptions grounding their empiricism, I will first give a rationale for this blended approach before examining in more detail the methodological landscape and articulating the processes of movement through theoretical frameworks.

The methodological section will involve discussion of the phenomenological beginnings, subsequent explorations of post-phenomenology, to the Deleuzoguattarian understandings which collectively came to inform the analysis. Following this I will outline how this methodology came to frame the interviews, and then give an overview of the study design, a procedural break down of recruitment, inclusion criteria, and ethical considerations, before outlining the quality criteria that I used to ensure a high standard for this project.

Mapping the Methodology

I liken the following methodological process to Kim McLeod's (2014, p.13) "researcher reassembling". This describes how unexpected and unplanned affects rupture the habitual, and the researcher's agency is distributed amongst the elements of the research assemblage. The approach here moves away from viewing things as discrete entities, and towards a Deleuzian relational ontology whereby forms

(materials, human bodies, social and abstract phenomena) are produced through their relationships with other entities (Fox & Alldred, 2014).

Relatedly, as this was an exploratory, experimental approach, much of the method and analysis was processual and iterative with multiple stages of refinement.

Psychology Research & Subjectivity

Throughout the 20th century, scientific disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis shaped ideas of the self as individualised and life in the Global North became conducted and governed with this individualistic perspective (Rose, 2013). This is linked to Rene Descartes' 17th century writings positing that the human mind is separated from, and reasons with, the body and the natural world (Vagle, 2018). This assumption has underpinned the positivist orientation with which psychological and social sciences have conducted research.

In the quantitative paradigm this means controlling conditions, operationalising experiences like 'anxiety,' valuing researcher impartiality, and measuring an objective reality; and along with much qualitative research, seeking to understand how the mind represents and reasons with the external world.

Individualism is a core tenet of neoliberal thought that has greatly influenced western democratic societies, including New Zealand, and is related to market theories around individual consumer freedom. Individuals are themselves commodities, entrepreneurs of the self, products to be refined to maximise their sale price in a competitive labour market. Through dividuation, the neoliberal project deigns to quantify and measure the individual and thus can assign value under the assumption that as rational actors, superior individual characteristics are meritocratically rewarded. The resultant labelling of individuals as social loafers and ne'er do-wells and as personally responsible for their health, economic, or social position through inherent character flaws not only absolves social responsibilities of addressing inequities but protects those who benefit from the status quo as simply being rewarded for the superior value of their inherent character and abilities (Bates, 2021; Littler, 2013; Rottenberg, 2018; Viana & Silva, 2018).

This focus on individual subjects within neoliberal democracies however, results in assigning the responsibility of health and behaviour to those individuals, with less regard for broader social, economic, and contextual forces (Thorpe et al., 2020). Social sciences were utilised for their potential to provide insights into how to govern individual and collective aspects of living. This form of social governance became self-fulfilling in that this created an imperative for researchers to conduct research within the positivistic tradition that authorities (funding sources, government, educational institutions etc) would sanction (Thorpe et al., 2020).

The contention of this thesis is that doing health and well-being research outside of the assumptions and methods that re-produce neoliberal and individualistic narratives is imperative for developing wider perspectives for both intervention and treatment, as well as how we conceptualise well-being and health.

What's (the) Matter?

The discursive turn in psychology represented a shift towards understanding how language and discourse were the instruments from which we constructed our reality and has been influential in shaping critical approaches to psychological research. This approach has been important for challenging traditional views of language as neutral representations of ideas, and instead emphasises how discourse shapes our understanding of the world. Michel Foucault's analysis of 'the medical gaze' in 'The Birth of the Clinic' (Foucault, 1975) for example, showed how discursive practices of modern medicine have led to a new way of seeing and understanding our bodies. Focusing on physical symptoms and pathology, disease could be located within a body and studied in isolation from the person's lived experience. Health, therefore, was re-defined as the absence of disease, rather than a state of overall well-being.

Sociologist Nikolas Rose (2013) however, suggests that being overly focused on discourse risks neglecting the "reality of our fleshly nature" (p. 4) and thereby overlooking the importance of constraints and possibilities for a body. Social life is a consequence of evolutionary processes, and social life in turn activates or inhibits neurobiological structures and processes (Cacioppo & Patrick,

2008). Social isolation for example – whether actual or perceived – “configures neural processes at the molecular level” (Rose, 2013 p.17). Rose asserts that by eroding the boundaries of the organism we can encourage recognising cognition and affect not as individual properties, but as distributed among the constituent interactions, processes, and other entities within a given territory.

Like Rose, Rosi Braidotti (2019), a new materialist, also challenges traditional human-centric views of life arguing that an embodied subjectivity is not individual bound but a transversal, in-between state. Social discourse emerges from matter and acts upon matter. Read diffractively, these theories do not discount each other, moreover they are in relationship with each other.

While both Braidotti and Rose emphasise the complex interplay between biological, social, and material processes, for Braidotti (2019), a neo-Spinozan monist, matter is autopoietic, self-organising, and agentic. The site of agency therefore is distributed (as Rose asserts with cognition) throughout the substance. Indeed, physicist and feminist theorist Karen Barad (2003) writing from a post humanist perspective, criticises Foucault’s assessments of the political anatomy of disciplinary power for pacifying the active power of matter and neglecting the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices.

Barad’s (2003) theory of agential realism is also ontologically relational positing that entities do not pre-exist their relations but emerge from “intra-action” (p. 815). It is through intra-action that boundaries and components of phenomena are made determinate. Barad (2007) argues how for example, in quantum physics, whether light behaves as particles or a wave in the double slit experiment, is dependent on the intra-action with the apparatus, with the experiment, with the measurement. Whether it is particles or wave is not independent of the experiment, not previously defined, it emerges from the intra-action, the measurement produces it.

These theories have significant implications for understanding well-being. Our well-being is not personal, but deeply interconnected and produced by intra-action rather than ontologically separate as traditional health research would have it. At a fundamental level, our-selves and our well-being is contingent on the well-being of the entire substance.

I draw together these theories to illustrate how things are not this OR that, they are this AND that. Reality is an assemblage of social construction AND physical processes. Well-being is processual and relational. Understanding how experiences of well-being are produced by intra actions, by social discourse, by biology and materiality allow us to view health and well-being as not located solely within the individual, but as a complex, emergent phenomenon.

The Present Research

Prefacing with Phenomenology

While my academic interests to date had drawn me towards more critically oriented frameworks, as the research I was to undertake here would involve my musical peers and acquaintances I hoped to amplify and honour their accounts and experiences of well-being in relation to music-making work. At the outset, it seemed to me that an interpretative phenomenology would facilitate an advocative approach. To accurately reflect what underpins the various phases of this research then, below I outline the key elements of phenomenology that inform this project.

Phenomenology asserts that conscious experience is the only absolute reality and the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), posited that the mind’s consciousness is always *of* something (Vagle, 2018). Further, consciousness is not used to objectively reason with an external world, rather, consciousness is always in relationship with something else. This perceived ‘thing’ has experiential meaning for us because of our conscious relationship with it - being conscious of something means being *in* relationship with it. Husserl referred to these relationships as *intentional*.

So, from this phenomenological perspective, *something* appears, or affects us when we think or experience an object, and thus there is a connectedness *between* us and the world. That ‘something’, or entity, could be “physical objects, people, ideas, particulars (this patch of colour), universals (the general concept of colour), states of affairs, and mental entities, such as thoughts, images, and feelings” (Benade, 2016, p. 137).

Husserl's student Martin Heidegger (1889 - 1976) later ontologically modulated phenomenology asserting that we are 'being-in-the-world' where intentionality is something embodied in a self-world inseparability. From this perspective, we were in and of the world, not simply experiencing it. Contrary to an encased, autonomous Cartesian mind constructing the external world, phenomenological research therefore, seeks to illuminate what the experience of being *in relationship* with others and things is like.

Attempting to capture this intentionality, I had begun approaching my interview data with qualitative coding following Braun and Clarke's (2006) seminal guide to thematic analysis. However, I was troubled by my inability to step outside of the text, outside of the participant accounts. I felt like the participants were pushing at important things that were wider than their immediate and embodied experiences, but I was stuck inside the data. I could not situate experiences within wider contexts and this approach was stifling social critique. It felt passive and I wanted to work actively. Expressing my frustrations with my supervisor, she suggested I investigate moving into a post-phenomenological space.

Pursuing the Post-Phenomenological

Things then entered a process of becoming-Deleuzian-research after experiencing this dissatisfaction with the phenomenological approach. In my pursuit of a new methodology that could satiate my critical tastes, I first encountered Mark Vagle's (2018) post-intentional phenomenology. Vagle suggested that the ontological "in-ness" and "of-ness" of a phenomenological perspective: "the ways in which we find-ourselves-in the world – in-love, in-pain, in-hate, in-distress, in-confusion" (p. 42), – is incompatible with post-structural readings.

From a post-structural perspective, intended meanings are unstable, merely a glimpse of a virtual reality as phenomena blur, shift, and bank over time as they move through different contexts – they are fleeting and partial. Vagle (2018) suggested "through-ness" as a more appropriate proposition for an intentionality without an essence. This "through-ness" according to Vagle, means that when we interact with individuals in research, we acknowledge that they are part of larger social strata with histories and traditions.

As a subject moves through the world the complex patterns of various relationships change and importantly for the following phase of this research, a Deleuzoguattarian perspective of *how things connect* can allow researchers to move away from essentialist *what things are* understandings of phenomena. Without those assumed stable connections, phenomena relinquish their transcendence, they are not fixed entities independent of their context. A phenomenon is understood as constantly changing as its relationships with other entities and forces change.

With Deleuze, I was squinting to find figures on the horizon. I was spotting something in my periphery that I could not make out yet. Was it a cat or a cucumber? What would happen if I turned towards it? I felt that exciting, fresh pang of creativity. There was a great lyric emerging even if I did not know what the melody was yet. A David Bowie quote does it more justice:

If you feel safe in the area that you're working in, you're not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you're capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth. And when you don't feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you're just about in the right place to do something exciting.

– David Bowie in *David Bowie: The Last Five Years* (Whately, 2017)

I did feel like my feet were not touching the bottom. It did feel exciting. This must be the place! But if I was cutting myself adrift, I needed to explore how to work without pre-scripted, how to whistle it into a tune, how to choreograph a drunken dance for a Broadway musical.

Thinking Post-Qualitatively

St. Pierre (2021) calls for a post-qualitative inquiry (PQI) that rejects logic relying on ontological assumptions that reality is either objective *or* representational. Social scientific research has been traditionally underpinned by dogmatic, pre-philosophical images of thought that assume existence is separated into a subject/object dualism (St. Pierre, 2016). Consequently, much psychological, and social science research has been shaped by assumptions about how a subjective mind represents an objective, external reality.

While traditional scientific research methodologies seek to systematically solve a research problem by following prescribed methodological steps (Patel & Patel, 2019), for St. Pierre, PQI is immanent, created differently each time: “The goal of post qualitative inquiry is not to systematically repeat a preexisting research reprocess to produce a recognizable result but to experiment and create something new and different that might not be recognizable in existing structures of intelligibility” (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 6).

St. Pierre et al. (2016) write that PQI requires breaking down the philosophical and scientific divide. Without critically examining ontological and epistemological assumptions in psychological and social science, the case cannot be made for alternative approaches. PQI can “fundamentally question assumptions about how ‘matter’ is lived and constituted relationally through entanglements of human and nonhuman bodies, affects, objects and practices.” (Fullagar, 2017, p. 250).

Ringrose and Coleman (2013) point to how Deleuze and Guattari's (1984) critiques of Oedipal, familial, and conjugal views of sexuality and desire have been valuable tools in feminist research for disrupting naturalised, essential gender differences. Deleuze and Guattari's ‘transcendental empiricism’ provides new ways for empirical research to view and alter social issues. Noticing difference (rather than overlaying pre-scribed categories) becomes methodological practice itself (Ringrose & Coleman, 2013).

From these readings, my question became: how could I use these conceptual tools of Deleuze and Guattari to explore well-being and music-making work? Deleuzoguattarian ‘lines of flight’ for example, can help to shake loose either/or styles of thinking. These conceptual lines consist of three types, introduced in chapter 1, *molar* (rigid, binary), *molecular* (somewhat fluid, but always in danger of becoming rigid), and *lines of flight* (exploding beyond the rigidity) (Vagle, 2018). Referencing these lines, one can continually reflect on whether they are regressing into patterned, habitual, or binary thinking or theorising.

This way of approaching research creatively opens avenues in which to accept new connections and new understandings. This methodological ethos seemed to resonate with the creative endeavours of the

participants that they discussed in their interviews, a knitting together of methodology and their lived experiences in music. Indeed, Deleuze observed the inter-relationship between different planes of thought: “art, science and philosophy seem to be caught up in mobile relations in which each is obliged to respond to the other, but by its own means” (Deleuze, 1994, p. xvi).

A Line of Flight to Deleuze

I began to debase, reconstruct, and reorient my focus. Things themselves became unstable, shifting, in constant dialogue with other things and remoulded by contexts. Taking up Deleuze’s (1990) version of Spinozan monism I began to engage further with conceptualisations of all existence and matter as a single substance.

Through this lens, I conceived the universe as a physical substance expanding outwardly, entropically from an infinitesimally dense point of origin. Not only is everything *matter, physical* in origin and physically related, but stability is fleeting and illusory. Incremental entropic dis-order indicated to me that everything (in the substance) is relationally different than it was or will be. The order of the universe changes and so do the material relationships. Rigid definitions and categorisations are doomed to become outdated. In a Deleuzian ‘becoming’ every event is a unique instant of production in a continuous flow of cosmic change (Stagoll, 2010).

Given this dynamism, the subject/body is also newly created in each instance, defined by continuous variation in becoming-other from itself (Deleuze, 1978 as cited in Duff, 2014). From this new starting point, I needed to re-think participant subjectivity as unstable, constructed and constructing, agentic, affecting and affected by other human and non-human agents. As Duff (2014) puts it, we should think not of subjects experiencing events, but of events as producing the effects of subjectivation.

Whereas the body-with-organs is the site of health and illness from a biomedical perspective, Deleuze’s *body-without-organs* (BwO) views embodiment as emerging from assemblages of relations that establish limits and define what a body can do (Fox, 2011). This perspective rejects the privilege of the physical body instead placing it within an *assemblage*, in relationship with and dynamically interacting with other social, cultural, and environmental entities.

In developing understandings of assemblage for this study it was useful to see how, for Deleuze and Guattari (1984), an assemblage emerges from relations, affects, creative desire and a body's sense-making capacities. As Coffey (2013) points out, 'agency' does not come from a subject/body but is bound up in the complex of forces and effects that constitute a subjective assemblage.

Assemblage and Affect

Assemblages emerge from relations and effects in a chaotic network of connections, constantly in flux (Potts, 2004). Fox (2011) writes that assemblages are expressed through connections of disparate elements which may be material, psychic, social, or abstract. For Deleuze and Guattari, these complex organisations of objects, bodies and qualities coalesce to create new ways of functioning (Livesey, 2010) and apply to all structures: individual, institutional, spatial, and ecological. Unexpected connections can change the *territory* of an assemblage and lead to its transformation.

Thinking through how an entity is defined by its affective relationship with other entities I considered an abstraction like 'poison.' What makes something a poison? A poison does not just sit around being a poison. It is not 'poisonous' until it encounters a system in which it is toxic, present within the system at a minimum (or any) level.

Chocolate for example as a material assemblage, is derived from the cacao plant of which theobromine is a methylxanthine alkaloid. Methylxanthines are easily digested and excreted by humans and the half-life of theobromine is around 2-3 hours, however in dogs, absorption is much slower, and the half-life is around 18 hours (Finlay & Guiton, 2005). Relationally, the bodily affective differences between chocolate in an encounter with a 'human' assemblage (where part of the human bodily assemblage is the process of metabolising theobromine) and in an encounter with a 'dog' assemblage is what determines its definition as toxic. A (grossly simplistic) 'poison' assemblage, therefore, might look something like:

chocolate – dog – theobromine – metabolic rate – toxicity

Very quickly assemblages become extremely complex. A human-chocolate assemblage will also be constituted of social elements such as publicly available discourses around unhealthy eating, Valentine's Day, or hyperactive children. Those discourses themselves are entangled with various capitalist and neoliberal assemblages where for example, ambition, accountability, and personal responsibility are bound up in entrepreneurial subjectivities (Scharff, 2016).

The totality of the assemblage from which a human subjectivity emerges is constituted by a seeming infinitude of possible assemblages including hunger assemblages, work assemblages, sexuality assemblages (see Fox, 2011), family assemblages, social and natural environmental assemblages, and of course health and well-being assemblages. These assemblages, the BwO, is the context that provides the conditions of possibility for what a body can do. These conditions of possibility are historically contingent configurations that contour a body, where becoming-other can be achieved through *lines of flight* from the habitual (Currier, 2003).

I therefore conceptualised the 'music maker' subject as an assemblage (a process from which that identity is accessed), and 'well-being' as another assemblage and decided to focus on how those assemblages overlap and relate to each other.

Given the focus of this paper, useful starting points in the literature included Nick Fox's (2013) anti-humanist paper on creativity and health in which creativity is conceptualised as an active, experimental flow within an assemblage, and health is conceptualised as the capacity of a body to affect and be affected by an assemblage. Fox (2011) describes health as a Deleuzian process of becoming-healthy (or becoming-well) where an ill-health assemblage is characterised by a body's restricted capacity to transform its relations (biologically, psychologically, socially).

Likewise, I drew on Julia Coffey's (2013) Deleuzian approaches to embodiment in which she frames bodies as "entangled processes", produced by affects, where *bodily experience* is a result of affecting and being affected. Affective encounters and relations are therefore the means by which bodies can do things – or 'become-other.'

Supporting this definition of health, Ian Buchanan's (1997) Deleuzian essay also analogises health as a body's capacity to form relations, to affect and be affected and as Coffey (2013) articulates it, affects produce us, while the capacity to affect and be affected defines bodies. We might therefore consider an assemblage of ill-health as encountering and comprised of affects that constrain its capacities for action, its transformative ability to become-other. Ill-health defined in these terms can therefore factor the way biological (e.g., degenerative disease), psychological (e.g., anxious avoidance), or social (e.g., gendered pay disparity) affects can contribute to an overall assemblage of well-being.

A well-being assemblage thus consists of various competing affects that enable or constrain a body's ability to do something. In conceptualising well-being in music-makers therefore, I needed to explore what the components were that made up the subjectivation of a music-maker; the affective and affected properties of those components; the transformative capabilities and the capacities for action available to those assemblages. For Deleuze, (1994), freedom is the capacity for a subject to transform the make-up of their assemblage and thus their subjectivity. Creating smooth (as opposed to striated and habitual) spaces upon which new marks can be made, alternatives to constrained and constraining identities can be deployed to maximise a body's capacities to act (Duff, 2014).

Participants

Recruitment

I set out with the goal of recruiting 10 participants to ensure sufficient interview data could be obtained for analysis. Vagle's (2018) guidelines for conducting post-phenomenological research encourages selecting participants who can provide thorough and rich descriptions of the phenomena you are interested in. In line with this recommendation, I reached out to various music makers around the country who I perceived would provide those rich descriptions to gauge their interest in contributing. I sought a variety of experiences that cut across stages of music-making careers, that varied in levels of industry engagement, that would be comfortable reflecting on their experiences. I offered either a video conference interview or to meet in person where possible. Seven participants were people in my music community I reached out to directly and expressed a willingness to participate, and two of the participants I recruited while attending gigs or while on tour after they expressed interest in

contributing to the research. Five participants were interviewed via video call and four in person at either a café or bar of their choosing. Conversations ranged from between 45 – 70 minutes in length. After assessing the richness and level of detail in the interview data, my supervisor and I decided that the seven participants I was able to obtain signed transcript releases from was sufficient for this research.

As I recruited for this study from my own network, it is important to acknowledge that this constitutes a narrow sub-section of working music-maker experiences. This research, however, does not seek to make broad claims or assumptions about the experiences of all music-makers, but to explore in rich detail the experiences and related affects of the participants herein.

The inclusion parameters I set around my recruitment were people:

1. Based in Aotearoa New Zealand
2. Over the age of 18
3. Deriving part or all their income from the creation and performance of music.

These criteria were not intended to discount the experiences of those under 18 or those who do not earn an income from music. Rather, they were implemented to capture the effects and experiences of those with long-term involvement in working as a music-maker.

In total, seven people were interviewed for this research, including five identifying as male and two as female. Participants primarily comprised artists who might be loosely described as ‘indie’ and each participant was either currently, or had recently, been engaging in music work as a significant component of their income. Participants varied in their level of media or public engagement, from ‘house-hold name’ to ‘under the radar.’

As part of an ethical process, I encouraged participants to assert control over any data that they wanted to omit from analysis by providing them with transcripts and redacting any information they requested. I used pseudonyms and further redacted any information that might make participants identifiable however, I have tried to include enough descriptive information below that contextualises their well-

being/music-making assemblage without identifying them in the small community that comprises New Zealand music makers.

These short descriptions are elements that emerged from the researcher-participant conversations, and do not define or represent the entire context of these individuals - subjectivities are produced and re-produced moment to moment.

Julia

Julia is an emerging artist in her 20s writing and performing in her indie band. She has close friendships with her band members, describing them as family. Julia also works as a touring session musician. Julia described challenges around anxiety and performing but values the connective, validating aspect of performing music.

Kilgore

Kilgore is a commercially and critically successful recording artist. He initially experienced the music industry as incredibly cliquy and secretive and expressed frustration with the lack of guidance from within the music industry.

Des

Des is a working musician and songwriter who has played in various bands encompassing a wide array of genres. Self-managed, he has booked and embarked on extensive tours of New Zealand and played support performances with some large visiting international acts.

Mark

Mark is in his 20s and plays in an established indie band that has experienced success both in New Zealand and abroad. Mark also completed a higher-level tertiary qualification in a career he described as less authentic, and which he has put on hold to pursue his successes in music.

Daniella

Daniella is a music-maker in her 30s with vast touring experiences. She currently collaborates, performs, and tours as a member of a critically successful band, balancing this with regular work and family life.

Malachi

Malachi is in his 20s and over the last few years has extensively toured overseas as a session musician and musical collaborator. He adopts an anarchic worldview with which he critiques capitalist systems but accepts that he must sustain himself from within it. He strongly values a life aligned to his principles and autonomy to do so.

Billy

Billy has been an active music-maker for several years, previously writing and performing in a band he now views as musically inauthentic, and now creating music he feels is more authentic to him. However, he described struggles with fitting this authenticity into an industry model that values kinds of music and ways of conducting business.

Interview, Event, and Research Assemblage

Interviews with these participants were also shaped by a shift from a phenomenological to a post-phenomenological approach. The original semi-structured interview schedule was designed to elucidate participant experiences of well-being and music-making in line with phenomenological inquiry. I developed my interview around three core experience-based questions exploring specific peak moments, mundane moments, and moments that undermined well-being. The aim was to situate the participant in a specific time and place, and I shared these questions in advance to give participants an opportunity to find an experience they wanted to relate. I asked them to pay attention to feelings,

emotions, and embodied sensations that they experienced in the phenomenological encounter, as well as spatiotemporal contexts and how the experience affected a sense of well-being or health.

As I engaged in the initial interviews phenomenologically, I could not bracket off my critical concern with the wider contexts within which these individual experiences were being produced, nor the wider forces they were hinting at. They felt like important lines of flight to pursue. I needed to develop my interviews appropriately to gain insights into lived experiences of music-makers and I needed to engage with that data appropriately. As I moved into a more post-phenomenological space, I introduced more questions to guide us into areas that explored experiences around industry, social, and economic affects. While semi-structured interviews are typically used to guide conversations in interpretative phenomenological research (Eatough & Smith, 2017), I took guidance from how unstructured conversational approaches to phenomenological interviewing have also been utilised as with Clare and Shakespeare's (2004) research into experiences of dementia in residential care. Notably, Brinkmann (2014) suggests a conversational style can facilitate participant accounts that engage with their lived experience rather than producing overly reflective and interpretative data.

Through reflexive thinking I began to understand the semi-structured interview as re-producing a context that music-makers were familiar with, that produced interpretation of experience. I reflected on how music industry practices involve artists engaging extensively with media to accompany music releases and these engagements are typically conducted in a question-and-answer interview format. Music industry and social media models encourage artists to brand themselves in ways that appeal to their target audience subject/identity and to deploy this branding consistently.

Artists are encouraged and incentivised by industry and funding models to build social media audiences and engagement which are used as measures of success that gatekeep sources of funding. This imperative results in brand narratives across social media in which the successes are shared: the festival performance! the label signing! the new release! the tour! However, branding narratives neglect less 'positive' aspects of music-making, the realities of working in music that drive the health outcomes outlined in the literature review section.

Music-makers are, therefore, well-versed in media interviews and those kinds of interview events produce a particular subject. The semi-structured interview was mimicking media encounters that provoke and produce a subject. The data began to hint at varying degrees of entrepreneurial subjectivity that protected less desirable (and less marketable) subjectivity from (a neoliberally informed) public gaze. I deduced that this could restrict a participant's capacity to explore their well-being freely. The next section 'facilitating the interview event' describes how I sought to further address this challenge.

Facilitating the Interview Event

As I proceeded with the interviews, it was apparent to me that conducting these sessions with people from a community I am part of while attempting to position myself as an interest-free observer was going to create an unnatural dynamic. In the initial stages of the first interview, the style was provoking responses in the participant that were addressing an end reader or audience. The orientation of some of the answers seemed aimed at what working in music was like for people looking to become music-makers – or for a potential reader that did not know what that life was like. Intuitively, I needed to invoke my own music-maker subjectivity and bracket my researcher subjectivity to make the event a more safe and comfortable space in which to speak about music-making related challenges to well-being.

St. Pierre (1997) in what was originally ethnographic work investigating the subjectivity of women in her hometown, wrote about how growing up within the community and knowing many of her participants meant her own subjectivity was “folded into theirs in particularly fruitful and disturbing ways” (p.177). St. Pierre's response was to invoke Deleuze's image of the fold where interiority is the operation of the outside and binary dualisms of humanism like self/other, inside/outside, identity/difference are challenged. For St. Pierre, this more appropriately articulated her field experiences of the shifting boundary of otherness.

Channelling St. Pierre's (1997) invocation of the fold, as I spoke with participants, I regularly experienced moments of incredible insight, shared understandings where our sense-making resonated, and the participant was presenting what I now view as lines of flight for the interview assemblage. Sensing the affective power of these moments I allowed conversations to wander away from the

interview structure to develop into unexpected areas. I encouraged participants to explore the wider meanings of the affects they were signalling as important. I continued to use the scaffolding of the original interview schedule, returning to questions as needed but increasingly allowed sessions to become more free-flowing where we could reflect together and become-vulnerable.

Procedure

Procedural Ethics

In completing a research proposal and ethics application for this project, I consulted The Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching involving Human Participants (Massey University, 2017) and Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Māori research ethics (Hudson et al., 2010). I submitted my full ethics application to the Massey University Ethics Committee on 30/05/22 and approval was granted on 29/07/22 by the Human Ethics (Southern A) Committee.

Practical Ethics

Hopner and Liu (2021) argue for ethics as a first principle, that our ethics be relational, and we consider why we are seeking this knowledge. My aim was therefore to produce something useful and advocative for the community whilst protecting the dignity of the participants involved in the research.

Chamberlain (2015) argues that reflexivity allows us to consider what stories we should be telling through our research, and how we can appropriately frame our findings. In conducting myself as such, I aimed to ensure that principles of care and interconnectedness were embedded throughout the research process.

As Thorpe et al. (2020) point out, a new materialist ethical view should recognise that ethical questions are situational, raised in any given moment. This view required a constant reflexivity in planning, pre-interview screening, interview events, data analysis. To aide with this reflexivity, I kept a journal and brought up any tensions I experienced with my supervisor. I used the journal to explore affects in my own assemblages. Why did I find a response challenging? Why did something have a harmonic resonance?

In one entry for example, I had expected a participant to respond in a certain way to a question and instead they answered in a way that was challenging for me to make sense of. I had perhaps expected the participant to discuss environmental challenges like alcohol as cultural affects, but they instead framed a sustainable career in music as requiring a disposition with which one can work despite the challenging conditions. I came to realise that this created capacity for action within this participant's assemblage, some sort of resistance.

While I was drawn to viewing this as creating exclusivity in who can conduct music work, for this participant it was a freeing, enabling affect. Reflecting on my initial reaction to that data, I realised that I was closed off and affectively/effectively constraining the research. This unexpected answer was providing a line of flight that came to inform more of the analysis and transformed the overall research assemblage. This was the crack through which I realised I needed a new approach. I continued to maintain an awareness of my affective presence in the research, and this is woven throughout the thesis.

Informed Consent

I considered consent to be ongoing and processual, and made efforts to ensure participants were happy to continue participating at each step. The Participant Information Form was sent to people who expressed interest in participating outlining the purpose of the study, what participation would involve, and how privacy and confidentiality would be handled (refer to Appendix A for a copy of the Participant Information Form). I ensured participants understood everything contained in the Participant Information Form and sent them a consent form (See Appendix E) to sign outlining the handling of their data and information and included the interview schedule at this time so that participants could consent with full knowledge of the interview orientation. I stored all consent forms, transcripts (See Appendix F for an example), and transcript release forms (See Appendix D) securely.

Following the interview, I sent full transcripts to the participants asking that they review the transcript and remove any text that they did not wish to have included in the analysis. This step added strength to

the consent process whereby participants were not beholden to anything said at the time of the interview.

Right to Withdraw

I ensured that it was clear in the Participant Information Form that participants could withdraw at any time (including during the interview) without reason and without judgement and could withdraw their data for two weeks following interview.

Two of the participants I was unable to contact to obtain transcript release from, and given these are my music-making peers, I decided that after two follow-ups - I would respectfully assume that those participants no longer desired to participate so as not to apply pressure or social obligation to continue and considered them withdrawn.

Privacy and Confidentiality

In the interviews that took place over Zoom I used the in-built recording function to record audio only and in-person meetings were recorded using the voice memo app on my phone. These recordings were then uploaded and securely stored on my Massey University OneDrive cloud account and deleted from the original devices. All consent forms, transcripts, and transcript release authority forms were also uploaded and stored on my cloud account.

After transcribing interviews, and especially given the public nature of music-making work, I removed all identifiable (any references to places, bands, other artists etc) information and gave each participant a pseudonym to protect their identity. I gave careful consideration to any contextual information that was shared that I felt made a participant identifiable and redacted this. I also invited participants to remove any information from the transcripts that they felt made them identifiable. I advised participants that while I would make every effort to ensure the protection of their data and identities, I could not guarantee this.

Participant Safety

Outlining and informing the participants of the risks of participating, I anticipated the possibility for emotional memories or topics to arise during the interview. I attuned myself to participant body language to ensure I was sensitive to any discomfort and checked with them throughout the interview when I intuited that a topic had potential to cause distress. Before the interview, I ‘caught up’ with each participant informally to re-establish our connections. I wanted to infer and infuse the sentiment of the research aims, that I was doing this research *with* the community rather than *on* the community, that our interests were knitted together.

In the Participant Information Form, I pointed out and provided telephone, text, and online support options that could be accessed in the case of emotional or mental distress, whether because of participating and/or to have access to going forward. I emailed each participant a few days after our interview to check in on their well-being and to reiterate the support information provided in the Participant Information Form. This information included the MusicHelps Wellbeing Service which is a fully funded, 24/7, online, phone and in-person counselling service provided free of charge and specifically oriented to support people working in the music industry in Aotearoa.

Many of the participants expressed how much they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss both the benefits and challenges in music-making; that the process had given them opportunity to reflect on music-making and well-being in ways that they had not before. Participants mentioned that participating had made them realise how limited their opportunities were to reflect on and discuss challenges related to music-making work and were grateful to vent and validate their concerns, and to feel as though the topic mattered.

Cultural Considerations

While the aims of the research were not to investigate ethnicity per se, I sought to maintain an awareness of how cultural contexts were conditions from which assemblages were produced. An orientation to individual subjectivities for example might be more characteristic of a Pākehā worldview than Māori. Honouring Hopner and Lui’s (2021) call for relational ethics focused on collaboration,

sincerity, shared purpose, I developed a relational ontology that emphasised interconnectedness and deconstructed individualistic assumptions. I sought to welcome all ethnicities, worldviews, and subjectivities to this research and to ensure that the research was culturally sensitive towards Māori participants. In line with the quality criteria for qualitative research in New Zealand, this study upheld principles of Manaakitanga and Whakawhanaungatanga, ensuring a respectful, inclusive, and autonomous environment for all participants, with special consideration for Māori participants.

Manaakitanga

This project sought to uphold principles of Manaakitanga, acknowledging responsibilities of care and protection, upholding privacy, confidentiality, and autonomy, and an awareness of culturally sensitive issues (Hudson et al., 2010). As above, I resolved to provide welcoming and inclusive spaces for Māori and to provide autonomy through offering for participants to review and amend interview questions and transcripts. I reiterated that participation was voluntary and reminded participants of their right of withdrawal at multiple stages of the research process. I welcomed attending whānau and invited participants to begin with pepeha and/or karakia if they wished. I invited participants to let me know ahead of time so I could make space for this without invoking unnecessary whakama for them.

Whakawhanaungatanga

A defining principle of Mātauranga is whakawhanaungatanga (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011) in which all the elements of creation are interrelated. Both “animate and inanimate elements are infused with mauri (spirit or living essence) and related through whakapapa” (p. 23). The central ontological premises of this study support principles of whakawhanaungatanga in which everything is interrelated, and existence is relational. While not to conflate or neglect the cultural contexts of the two worldviews, a relational ontology may be complimentary to the assumptions of te ao Māori. I sought to focus on relationship building, setting time aside before interviews to find common connections and listen. I sought to build trust and congruence in interviews and share knowledge in a way that acknowledged my own vulnerabilities and experiences. An orientation of care and respect for all forms underpinned the research.

Analytical Process

Given the initial phenomenologically informed approach, in my analysis I decided to firstly approach the data by organising it into themes. Informed by Braun and Clarke (2006) I read and re-read the text to ensure I understood the overall context. I worked inductively, first coding descriptively before developing these into interpretative codes in line with a hermeneutic phenomenology. I paid particular attention to interpreting the participant's experiences and how they made meaning of them. I developed broad themes out of the resulting interpretations and wrote up individual interpretative phenomenological analyses for three of the participants (see Appendix B for an example).

As I moved into a post-phenomenological approach to the data, I needed to develop an analytical process that could work with the existing data and allow me to use more experimental conceptual tools. As research in health using affect theory and assemblage theory is still experimental and in its infancy, there was no recipe to follow, no established guidelines.

I began this post-phenomenological re-birth by drawing on McLeod (2018) for who the researcher and participant are not seen as authentic, bounded individuals, but rather as entangled products of the relational processes occurring during the research encounter. The interview data thus became a novel object, a co-produced assemblage of affects. This assemblage was composed of and produced by our individual and collective subjectivities, as well as non-human affects such as the space the interview was conducted in, the chairs we were sitting on, the day of the week, and the weather outside. Abstract affects evoked in conversation, such as alcohol, anxiety, and musical collaboration, also contributed to the assemblage. The interview assemblage thus became an activated blob, an affective component of this wider research assemblage and thesis.

To guide my analysis, I focused on the following questions:

- How are music-maker and well-being assemblages encountering each other?
- What are the affective elements within a music-maker well-being assemblage?
- How are capacities for action (or conditions of possibility) constrained or enabled by those affective elements?

To help visualise and understand the elements and their relationships within each participant's assemblages, I created separate mind maps for each participant (see Appendix C for an example). Both human and non-human elements were analysed as agentic, affective assemblages in their interactions and relations within a music maker - well-being assemblage. For example, several participants mentioned alcohol, which I analysed as an assemblage with agency given the fiscal interests and agendas from which it emerges and its constraining and/or enabling affects that were described by the participants.

Informing my analysis was an acknowledgement that the constitution of an assemblage is far more complex than what can emerge from a single, short interview. A subjective self is an emergent property of an infinitude of inputs. Furthermore, the affective power, influence, and force of an element within a given music-maker - well-being assemblage will vary due to the different interactional flows and relations within that unique assemblage. An element might constrain in one context, while it creates possibility in another. It might have both affects simultaneously, and it might change state from one to the other according to its relational context. I expected contradiction as different assemblages were invoked, assemblages are not bounded and static. I also considered the capacity of assemblages to identify as working-music-maker subjects, and how that subjectivity might be contingent on the presence of affects such as income, audience, validation, and perceived or measurable success.

This process freed me to analyse well-being outside of individual experience, giving me a line into wider social, material, and structural contexts. In the following section I will outline how the quality of this approach, and the resultant research can be evaluated.

Evaluating the Research

Quality Criteria

As a theoretical and conceptual project, this research sought to highlight what kinds of issues unique to music makers are experienced as impacting the participants' well-being and how these experiences are

related to wider contexts and conditions. The research endeavoured to explore well-being as relational, multifaceted, and made up of non-individual dimensions.

At all stages of this research, I sought to uphold the highest standard of work. As a result, I rigorously worked through theoretical frameworks to locate the best tools for conducting meaningful research. Importantly, this meant not encountering the research with fixed, rigid ideas about method, methodology or data, but crafting a text in a way that Vagle (2018) describes as engaging productions and provocations in context, around a social issue.

Chamberlain (2000) challenges methodolatry (excessive focus on method at the expense of theory or concept), asserting that broader ways of promoting quality in research than ‘good methods and measurement’ should be promoted, such as whether a piece of work can change understanding and practice in a given field. Methods must be viewed as tools of understanding rather than ends in themselves and Chamberlain points out that theoretical thinking has become subservient to method in the qualitative paradigm. Riley and LaMarre (2023) put it succinctly: that qualitative psychological research is less about accurate assessment, and more about envisioning “new possibilities that widen our capacities to support human flourishing” (p. 18).

Riley and Chamberlain (2022) therefore, suggest core principle should include a deep and critical examination of our concepts and frameworks, and reflection on how we are producing understandings in our research. Further, they assert that the fertile soils that have produced qualitative research have been produced through cross-disciplinary reading as I have done by drawing from various disciplines throughout this research. I will discuss orientation to method and social change further in the next section.

Orientation to Affecting Social Change and Provoking New Understandings

In Vagle’s (2018) *Guide to Crafting Phenomenological Research* he asserts that identifying a social issue and thinking through how your explorations of post-intentional phenomena may affect social change are foundational for the quality of a work. This involves identifying theoretical ideas that “focus

on critiquing, changing, or disrupting social norms, discourses, traditions, etc” (p. 147). I oriented myself to these criteria:

- Firstly, I identified the issue of significantly poorer health outcomes for working music-makers compared to general populations and thoroughly reviewed the available literature on this topic including quantitative and survey research, qualitative studies, and government and policy reports. While limited survey research has been conducted in New Zealand, I identified the absence of further research (quantitative or qualitative) addressing the findings of that survey work.
- Secondly, I conducted a thorough examination of ontological, epistemological, and theoretical issues to produce a research framework that could disrupt taken-for-granted social norms and allowed me to examine the wider social context that participant experiences are in relation with.
- Lastly, I produced a text that challenged the previous literature on this topic and wider cultural assumptions around individualism and how music-maker subjects are produced. This involved critiquing neoliberal accountability narratives and highlighting otherwise difficult to identify non-human health factors such as alcohol entanglements and tensions with industry and economic models.

Considering Chamberlain’s (2000) notions of whether a work provokes new understandings, and thinking of methods as tools of understanding, I embarked on what was necessarily a transdisciplinary project due to the limited work done in this area. As Riley and Chamberlain (2022) might put it, I got lost:

- I drew on and blended theoretical considerations from phenomenology, post-phenomenology, new materialism, posthumanism, health geography and assemblage theory.
- Experimented with conceptual tools in challenging traditional notions of health and well-being as individualised.

- Examined music-maker subjectivities in ways that decentred people and objects and showed how this subjectivity and well-being are not static entities, but relationally situated.

In the following section I conduct the analysis of the participant-researcher conversations.

Analysis

Table 1

Analytical Themes and Sub-themes

<p>Superordinate Theme 1</p> <p><i>Becoming-other: beneath and beyond the self</i></p>	<p>The personal benefits experienced through music-making and the lines of flight that it provided.</p>	
<p>Superordinate theme 2</p> <p><i>Becoming-orchestral: a bubble in the ocean on Solaris</i></p>	<p>Being a music maker facilitated well-being as creative processes provided social connection, community, and emotional bonds. I use the term orchestral for this theme to invoke a sense of how togetherness here is underpinned by music making.</p>	
<p>Superordinate theme 3</p> <p><i>Desire: Disruptor/Motivator</i></p>	<p>Explores tensions between the desire for validation and acceptance as a music-maker, and the challenges and potential harm this pursuit can cause to one's well-being and interpersonal relationships.</p>	
<p>Superordinate theme 4</p> <p><i>Neoliberalism: Between molarity and flight</i></p>	<p>Affective forces of neoliberalism impact well-being by constraining capacities for action in three subthemes.</p>	
	<p>Subtheme 1</p> <p><i>Citizen! Agent! Affect!</i></p>	<p>Personal responsibility, self-surveillance, and social expectations of productive, economic citizenry.</p>
	<p>Subtheme 2 -</p> <p><i>Corporeality Incorporated and Quantifying Quality</i></p>	<p>The challenges of music-making in an environment of quantification.</p>
	<p>Subtheme 3</p> <p><i>Talent, Myth, and Endless Hours: "Paid in Piss and Food"</i></p>	<p>The intensive physical and emotional labour, sacrifice, and commitment required of creative work reap fickle and elusive rewards.</p>
<p>Superordinate theme 5</p> <p><i>Technologies of Alcohol</i></p>	<p>The alcohol industry has entangled its products with the affective power of music, territorialised music, music events and spaces, and created industry reliance on alcohol, impacting the well-being of music-makers.</p>	

As outlined in Table 1, I discuss several common affective elements within music-maker well-being assemblages identified in this project. While I have organised the analysis into themes, in a monistic sense - as everything is in relation with everything else - these are not cut and dry categorisations. Themes crossover, and bleed into each other.

Further, subjects are not fixed and as context shifts and different assemblages are invoked, contradictions can arise. So, to claim that categorisation of data here represents some objective truth would be fallacious. However, it is a reasonable argument that all scientific endeavour is creative endeavour, therefore, I must put entropy into reverse and make form from the chaos.

Through this analysis of the participant's discussions - of how their own sense of subjective well-being is impacted by being a working music maker and by the processes of music-making itself - meaningful patterns for understanding the relations between and within these assemblages emerged. I begin the analysis with two themes that outline how music making work facilitates affirmative becomings before showing how these becomings become re-territorialised through the molarising affects of a music-maker - well-being – capitalism assemblage. The first superordinate theme, 'Becoming-other: Beneath and Beyond the Self', details personal benefits experienced through music-making and the lines of flight that it provided. In the second superordinate theme 'Becoming-orchestral' I demonstrate how being a music maker facilitated well-being as creative processes provided social connection, community, and emotional bonds. I use the term orchestral for this theme to invoke a sense of how togetherness here is underpinned by music making, like in an orchestra where various performers and their instruments work together to create a cohesive musical whole, notes in constant relational change. In this theme I also develop the idea of subsumption into substance where the self becomes absorbed into a whole. The third superordinate theme 'Desire: Motivator/Disruptor' explores tensions between the desire for validation and acceptance as a music maker, and the challenges and potential harm this pursuit can cause to one's well-being and interpersonal relationships. Where the first two themes are relatively affirmative, the 'Desire: Motivator/Disruptor' theme is more ambiguous as tensions emerge when attempts to validate and affirm identities or an authentic self through connection are not perceived to have been fulfilled. I follow this with the fourth superordinate theme 'Neoliberalism: Between Molarity and Flight', in which I analyse how affective forces of neoliberalism impact well-being by constraining capacities for action in three subthemes: through expectations of citizenship

(‘Citizen! Agent! Affect!’); molar patterns of business practice and issues with assigning value to creative work (‘Corporeality Incorporated / Quantifying Quality’); and in tensions between protecting brands shored up by inherent talent myths, and undervaluing the hidden labour that produces the performer and their work (‘Talent, Myth, and Endless Hours: “Paid in Piss and Food”’). Finally, the fifth superordinate theme ‘Technologies of Alcohol’ explores how the alcohol industry has entangled its products with the affective power of music, and has territorialised music, music events and spaces, and created industry reliance on alcohol. The theme explores the impacts of alcohol on the well-being assemblage of music makers.

Becoming-other: Beneath and Beyond the Self

For the participants interviewed in this study, music-making provided transformative potentials to their well-being assemblage and personal benefits were experienced. Through musical creativity, they were provided with the capacity to express their emotions, to better understand their emotions and experiences, to externally validate internally perceived states, and to self-soothe. In a Deleuzoguattarian sense, our ability to become-other - to become different than what we were - to transform our subjective-self assemblage underpins our well-being. As discussed earlier, Deleuze conceptualises three lines of flow in which we occupy space: *molar* lines are rigid striations such as institutionally imposed structures, *molecular* lines are more fluid and overlapping, less divisional, and *lines of flight* are those transformational paths we can take that privilege creativity and metamorphosis (Patton, 2010). These three lines of flow are evident in Julia’s account below, where she discusses her experience with music-making.

It's definitely a big outlet for me, like I find often [I'm] almost like writing a song as a friend. Like sometimes I write a song for myself from the perspective of someone else like being there for myself. Yeah, I think if I'm going through something or anything I feel like I definitely need to let it out. And then I feel way better knowing that that song exists. When I go to look for other music to validate what I'm going through, I can create that for myself. And then I might “Oh, that's legit.” Like, “that's happening, and I've expressed it,” and I can listen to that song now whenever I need to sort of get into that.

By writing to herself from the perspective of a friend, the music-making assemblage comes to affect the well-being assemblage by enabling her to safely engage with difficult emotions, to comfort herself, and to practice self-compassion. Fox (2013) theorises the creative production as a process of becoming-other, of affecting and being affected, the creator producing and simultaneously produced by their creative output. In Julia's music-making, this process enables her to materialise and validate things that she is experiencing as interior.

Song writing is experienced as an "outlet" for a perceived internal world, a puncture in the skin to release pressure, a valve from which the milieu of pre-individual affects is expressed. For Julia, her feelings are experienced as legitimised when they are given an external form in song, and she has confirmation of their materiality. Julia's repeated emphasis on the word 'definitely' indicates this is an important capacity for action that is available to her, that not letting it out is *not* an available option to her. Song is a tool with which Julia witnesses the extension of herself into something outside of what she perceives as herself. As an affective force in a well-being assemblage, song writing for Julia has transformative, deterritorialising potential, providing a capacity to change states, to transform the affective hierarchy within it. Confusion is overwhelmed by clarity, loneliness by self-soothing and Julia is recognised and validated by the work. The song is a technological tool with affective force, facilitating expression of an authentic self, recognised within and by that song. Moreover, the song is now an artefact with transformative force, a psychic anchor Julia can return to.

Similarly, songs provided transformative, affective force for Billy. He described how he viewed his life as having two channels – his analytical, "literal administrative life" – he "loves problem-solving and patterns" - and his "private musical life" through which he seeks emotional connection, and acceptance of what he sees as his authentic self. Billy suggested that there was a lacking in his family environment as a child and music became a conduit for expressing those emotions:

There is a certain nature of the emotional and psychological landscape of my upbringing, that meant that music was my haven and maybe that's what people got from their families. For me music was that. Yeah. It was something I could always rely on. Yeah. And to get to that space or to contribute to something that could mean something to someone else that would

give them a reprieve from what they felt. It feels like a lineage of sorts...it gave me so much,
you know?

Music and music-making was characterised as being a reliable source of emotional safety for Billy – a haven. Music was a capacity for action, a line of flight allowing him to navigate an environment that was psychologically and emotionally lacking. Billy described it as a lineage, this is familial language, something that he inherited from other people, is now a part of and belongs to. Billy himself can bequeath this line of flight to others looking for emotional reprieve and there is a sense of familial fulfilment, kinship, and the self, subsumed into a greater whole. As Billy hints at, as a child he had learned to separate rationality and emotion and as an adult uses music to find his way back to an emotional world in becoming-authentic.

For another participant, Mark, music-making served as a process for becoming-other, and like Billy, becoming-other for Mark was becoming-authentic, a true representation of his desires:

A sense of purpose that feels true to myself, and not one that I can justify outside of any like, societal expectation. I just truly believe that it is the best thing for me to be doing. And I can't say that about anything else in my life. Everything else I feel like there's some other agenda or like, there's an influence that's come from somebody that it's not like - it's not truly me.

With this authentic purpose Mark expresses a congruence of belief, understood as “the best thing for me to be doing” and the only thing in his life, the only path he could reasonably pursue that would honour that belief. Mark describes everything else in his life as being influenced by society, people, and agendas that do not prioritise his best interests. In a Deleuzian sense, Mark’s experience is a struggle between the *molar* and the *molecular*. Social influences are threatening to *territorialise* Mark’s well-being assemblage, cultural expectations that define particular paths as acceptable or necessary, expectations that create order, stability, and identities of success. Mark finds a line of flight in music-making away from the molar, the existing striations in the plane - fixed cultural expectations defining what a body can and cannot do. This disruption to the territory of cultural expectations challenges those boundaries and the ‘Mark’ subjectivity is *deterritorialised* as he finds a line of flight through pursuing

the creation of music into a *nomadic* space in which Mark's possibilities for action are opened, and movement is available to him. These 'authentic' possibilities include a desire for his work to provide lines of flight for others, to affect and deterritorialise others' assemblages:

I love the idea of making something and then at some point, someone needing that and then being - because that's like, what art does, right? It's, for most of the population, it's insignificant, and then something happens in their life and then they really, really fucking need it and it's there and everything and helps them to see the world in a clearer way.

While participants describe how creative productions affect our assemblages (and produce us) through the process of creation and through the product itself, they also serve as a means of connecting with others. Billy, Julia, and Mark all describe this connective aspect of their music whether drawing strength from songs that allow them to feel less alone in experiencing a feeling, or creating works that provide solace for others, music-making is tied to community and shared experience. The material content of the songs can continue to provide potential for others as free-standing compounds of percepts and affects. Indeed, writing on employing affect as research methodology, Hickey-Moody (2013) describes the Deleuzian creative (artistic) process as making *affecting* material mixtures (or assemblages) which extend subjectivity and readjust personal capacities.

Mark describes a property of his well-being as purpose, and here the creative aspect opens up *capacities for action* – Mark describes a “love [for] the idea” that an entity of art might go on to *affect* another assemblage that ‘need[s]’ it to, that “helps them see the world in a clearer way” – a line of flight for this other to pursue perhaps. The materials of a work and its sensorial blocs prompt observers to feel and connect things (Hickey-Moody, 2013). Mark describes a purpose - that what he does might provide help for a hypothetical other. This suggests that through the idea of ‘providing benefits for others’ pro-sociality can territorialise, *affect* Mark's music-maker assemblage where the act of music-making becomes something pro-social, where well-being and music-making flow together. Being a provider of this service to others is an affect in each of Mark, Julia, and Billy's well-being assemblages, their authenticity is a benefit, it has value, ‘Mark’, ‘Julia, and ‘Billy’ are well-being providers to others.

As Atkinson and Scott (2015) highlight in their research on dance and subjective well-being, engagement in the arts facilitates the exploration of uncharted territories, offering affective encounters that provide potential escape from habitual assemblages. In each account presented above, an inward reflection is followed by an outward connection to others. Their songs extend a part of their selfhood, a representational aspect of themselves. This extension of selfhood is a shared element in their diverse experiences, all part of the process of 'becoming'. Indeed, as 'human' assemblages interact with each other, they engage in complex ways – as affective forces themselves – that further constrain or enable transformative potential. These connective, affective encounters are explored further in the next theme 'Becoming-orchestral: Bubbles in the Ocean on Solaris'.

Becoming-orchestral: Bubbles in the Ocean on Solaris

In this theme, the music-making assemblage provides a line of flight for the self to be subsumed into a pre-individual collective, which I describe as subsumption into substance. I use the term becoming-orchestral to highlight music makers' descriptions of how music making enables them to experience life as an ensemble, an orchestra of instruments playing together in constantly shifting harmonic relationship, contextualising and co-constituting each other. This contrasts with experiences of individualism, like the isolated context of an unaccompanied vocal line in an ambiguous key. Music makers can cede notions of individuality to the relative whole and thus be expressed differently within the substance.

I develop an analogy here of bubbles in the ocean on Solaris to help develop a concept of subjectivity as emerging from and connected to a main substance. Bubbles in the ocean on Solaris refers to Stanislaw Lem's (1961) novel *Solaris* in which scientists sent to the frontier, are investigating an alien life-form on the distant planet Solaris. This life-form is an oceanic substance covering the planet, from which recognisable shapes occasionally bubble up. The scientists try to make sense of these, eventually realising these shapes are reflecting things held within their private psyches. Here, I conceptualise all matter as an ocean from which our individuality occasionally flares, individuals as bubbles rising and falling in fluid motion.

In an interview with Billy, he describes how music for him is searching within himself and then finding other people to connect with what he finds.

I think with music often it's a job of job searching, searching within yourself. And then once you've found something within yourself searching for someone to connect with that, like someone else that resonates with you know, and when you have a larger group of people that like for that it was like, I searched within myself for ideas and then within the group we searched together and then also, we found the spot and it was within the locus of a community as well. That were all searching for an experience together.

Billy describes a process that starts with a searching within, looking for *something*. Whatever this something is, once it's found, the next step on the process is to search for others who can create a space within which this something is able to resonate and become louder (the acceptance or recognition of an other). This resonance becomes so vibrant that it becomes caught in a positive feedback loop and held momentarily static, witnessed collectively, nomadic subjects unified on a plane of encounter. *Something* recognised is subsumed into communal subjectivity in a wider assemblage becoming-other, together. In his search for connection, Billy amplifies himself to become visible to others – attracting potential bonds. Like atoms with complementary valence shells, bonding facilitates stability, in a co-validation of subjectivities. The need for movement – the search – can be relinquished.

For Billy, who elsewhere in the interview describes normal, everyday communication as exhausting and songwriters as “alienated” and fundamentally “alone,” music-making provides lines of flight for him away from those molar, alienated forms of communication into a collective transcendence and interconnectedness.

Likewise, Julia explains how being a music-maker has enabled her to form familial-type relationships with her band members.

I feel like a lot of bands have that really sort of family like feel and after playing together for so long you do feel like family. And that's pretty special. And like when I see interviews of other bands, and I can see they have that same thing. I'm like, if I wasn't a musician, I'd want

that so badly. That's how you make friends...to experience something together...[It's sharing] that good feeling. You're sharing that too. Like excitement about opportunities. It's sharing that. Everything's so much better when you're not doing it alone. It totally is.

Being in a band enables Julia to feel so close and connected to her band mates that she considers them family and thus the music maker – well-being assemblage is composed of this family affect. While family and family experiences will have different (perceived positive or negative) affective force within different assemblages, clearly for Julia this is deeply desirable. Being a music maker provides that connection, and if she was not in a band and looked at other people who did have that seemingly familial interconnection through music, she would “want that so badly.” Sharing your life, similar experiences, and experiencing those things with others is affirming. Life is experienced as an ensemble, an orchestra of instruments playing together in harmonic relationship, rather than in the isolated context of an unaccompanied vocal line: “Everything’s so much better when you’re not doing it alone.” In contrast to becoming-other, this is becoming-orchestral.

For Mark, the creative collaborations being a music-maker involves for him are experienced as sources of presence and contentment.

Peace and contentment. Contentment, I’ve found really fucking hard to find in the music industry. It's a constant. Like whenever you look back there's a mixture of disappointment, and shame, and embarrassment. And you're always comparing it to what other bands are doing, or whatever. This was a real moment of just stillness and clarity...being contained in something that you're creating and being the best thing that you can in that moment.

In this extract, Mark describes an experience of well-being as ‘presence’ during a creative session with another band member. He refers to being contained in what they are creating, underscoring how they are assembled through intra-action. Agency is not individually located but distributed throughout this new ensemble of materials and processes that mutually produce each other. This redistribution of agency is experienced as contentment. The creative collaboration is a flowing-together, a mixing of assemblages as the elements of the collaborators negotiate and relate, the constitutive parts limiting and

enabling in complex ways. Becoming-orchestral, they become-other than their selves, subsumed into the collective assemblage, expressions of a new whole transcending the individual unit.

Mark juxtaposed this against how those feelings are otherwise “fucking hard to find in the music industry” which is punctuated by “disappointment,” “shame,” and “embarrassment,” and in which one problematically compares oneself with other music-makers. The alienating, individualistic effects of molar music industry norms that Mark and others in these interviews refer to do not penetrate the ensemble here:

It's just like, a moment of presence to give like, a moment of stillness. And that's really simple. And it's not much but it's - to actually really be present with a group of people is - it's really hard. That's kind of what it is. For me.

Being a music-maker for Mark, provides opportunities of stillness and collective presence that are otherwise elusive. This stillness in connectivity is collective becoming, a line of flight from the illusory bounds of individuality. In those moments they are freed from the molarity of individualism, from capitalist notions of people as individuals - to be defined, categorised, quantified, as units to be measured and assigned value (see the theme ‘Corporeality Incorporated / Quantifying Quality’ for discussion of capitalist *overcoding*). Mark’s description of this experience of well-being illustrates how music-making is an affective force within the well-being assemblage. This aspect of music-making produces an affect, provides a capacity to become-other. These moments of music making are affirmative, increase capacities for action that require hard work, but create profoundly good feelings such as peace, contentment, and interconnection.

Deleuzian notions of freedom entail the capacity of a subject to transform (deterritorialise) the properties of their assemblage and this requires a reflexive awareness to “get free of oneself” to pursue their limits (Duff, 2014). Mark describes how in this moment he is free to try and be the best he can be – in pursuit of his limits. Collaborative creation as a property of Mark’s music-maker assemblage can be understood as enabling for him the capacity to embody feelings of stillness, contentedness, and clarity. Creative collaboration expands Mark’s range of possibilities as the properties of his assemblage are brought into relationship with those of his creative collaborators, together constituting the elements of a band assemblage in which these properties flow and intermingle. These new flows provide

opportunities for new lines of flight – the new entity (song/piece of music) produced, the process of creating it, both new affects that provide a transcendence of individuality, of the human - witnesses to the substance. In a Deleuzian sense, transcendence is not reaching a higher plane (immanently there is a single plane), rather it is a moment of deterritorialisation, of becoming-other than this, a shift within the substance. Both Malachi and Billy in their interviews also refer to feelings of transcendence and to “becoming transcendental together” (Billy). Deleuze defines the transcendental as stream of consciousness that is a-subjective, pre-reflexive consciousness without a self (Brown & Stenner, 2009). Here, Malachi describes transcendence through music-making:

But when it's on like fuck, it just feels you feel like really quite powerful, you know, sort of spirit or you feel spiritually powerful, and I don't consider myself particularly spiritual. You know, I don't have any like, real belief system. I'm pretty nihilistic on the, on the whole, but like, holy shit, there's no real other vocabulary to describe what that feels like. You know, it's like it's, I guess if you wanted to be more scientific, intensely emotional, but not in an in like a purely abstract way, which I think is really what Spiritualism is, if you're, if you're that kind of person, you know.

Here, Malachi describes performing improvisational music during which he experiences what he describes as spiritual power despite a lack of a spiritual belief system. Malachi clarifies that what he feels materially is intense emotion. The music-maker assemblage here provides Malachi with access to a channel, a safe environment, and a *reason* for intense emotions to be felt and explored. This is something that others may be able to experience, access and relinquish control over in a socially acceptable way through components of religious and other spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, meditation), practices that promote inhibition and/or excitation of various cortices and executive functioning (see Azari et al., 2001; D'Aquili & Newberg, 1999; Persinger, 1983; Schjoedt, 2009). In the next extract Julia reflects on how the affective power of music is misconstrued as spirituality:

That's why everyone feels like they're feeling God. And that's why they think like there's a presence here because it's so powerful. Because I went to church when I was younger, and that's totally - I thought that too. Like that is God. Even though I'm not Christian now or anything but yeah, when everyone is singing together, and just so united in that moment, it's

like so powerful. You can feel it. And so, when you're told that's God, you're feeling God in the room. I get why everyone believes that.

God as an affect in the assemblage is a powerful presence. The idea of, and collective focus on God facilitates the transformation of an 'I' assemblage to a 'we' assemblage. Singing in unison strengthens this subsummation of self and the impression of something greater than the self – a sense of the substance, our ocean without externality. In Christian churches often prayer is accompanied by music that slows to an ambient lull, a trance-inducing quality that Julia now understands as creating that powerful affect, assemblages resonating as whole. Music is a line of flight, can territorialise multiple assemblages in a single act, facilitate experiences of spirituality and transcendence. However, music's affect as a non-human agent can be captured and exploited by interests and agendas adjunct to the intention of the assembled percepts themselves as explicated in later themes (see: 'Corporeality Incorporated / Quantifying Quality' and 'Technologies of Alcohol').

Music-making here is illustrated as impacting well-being by enabling capacities for action through self-reflection, transcendence of self, and becoming-other. Music also serves as a channel to express and explore intense emotions in a socially acceptable way. However, there are also hints of how this affect can be undermined by broader structural impositions which will be further explicated in following themes.

Desire: motivator/disruptor

While finding connection with others creates transformative potential, allowing music makers to experience trans-individuality, a tension emerges when attempts to validate and affirm the authentic self through connection are not perceived to have been fulfilled. In various instances throughout Julia's interview, for example, Julia expresses a desire for validation that she feels would resolve self-doubt and self-criticism:

it does sort of chip away at you a wee bit I find. I don't know why that is I don't know why it doesn't get better. I don't know why those nerves don't go away. And I think part of me thinks like, you just gotta get bigger and more validation. Just to know people like what you're putting out. There's no way you can screw up and then those - that will go away

maybe. And maybe that's why when I think of a situation I'd love in music is if everyone's singing my lyrics because like there's nothing more validating.

Deleuze and Guattari understand desire as a gap, lack, or void waiting to be filled by producing reality through action, ideas, and interactions. This productive desire motivates us to create – and creation is engaging with other bodies and the world, exploring conditions of possibility (Fox, 2013). For Julia, who elsewhere in the interview describes moments “when everyone was singing along with us. And we were all on the same level” - those moments are experienced as (and expected to be) utter validation – relief from the patten of nervousness that affects her. Identity is in flux as momentarily Julia’s music-making is a powerful affective presence to others - this capacity to affect, feeding back into her own well-being assemblage. However, this brief release is disrupted by the affective force of an-uncertain-future which has territorialised the well-being assemblage, the elements interact in complex ways to produce the wider assemblage and affect.

Presentation of self is also clearly fraught for Billy as he describes his experiences when his expectations for the success of a project aren’t realised:

it's not only demotivating incredibly, [it's] demoralising and then also your esteem, your self-image kind of, I would say, collapses. I would say, you know, like putting out this putting out this last album was a culmination of, you know, I'd say five years of emotional energy, like, put through the funnel of a musical album, and then I try and look at what's measurable about that in terms of finances...And it just makes you feel like the work you're doing isn't worth anything. Yeah. I mean, who really cares about what you're saying? And so maybe what I'm saying, maybe what I have to say in the world, is not worth anything. So maybe I as a music person isn't worth anything. Because if you're going to the bottom, you know, basement level of your, you know, spirit or character you know, that's where you're trying to speak from. Yeah. I just think it requires a lot of strength really, and I just don't think anyone tells you know, there's no one saying how much you almost need a different part of your brain for reasoning away why it feels like that. Because you know, it's such a core part of being a human being is to be accepted for who you are, and that's what it is to make music and to express that music in the world. It's like this is this is yeah. And when it feels like

inadvertently, basically that either no one cares, or they've listened and they don't care. Yeah, it's confirmed. It's just yeah, it just feels like feels like an ultimate rejection.

Assemblages are amorphous, constantly in flux and in different relational flows. Where music-making for Billy was this childhood strategy in ‘Becoming-other’: a haven, a safe place, a way to express and be seen as something he felt he otherwise couldn’t – his now adult sense of the (lack of) value given to his emotional labour, affects his well-being assemblage in a much more nuanced way. Billy wants to be accepted for who he feels he authentically is, authenticity that is established in his musical work. Yet, he feels through his perceived lack of success that who he is has been rejected. In a system in which commercial value is quantified by financial success, Billy describes the affect of this reflecting his core being itself as having no value. What Billy experiences as being fundamental to being human – acceptance – is not accessible through expressing his authenticity. In the following extract, Malachi also addresses validation of identity:

It's that thing, right? Like it's very hard to, especially if you're somebody who thinks too much, which probably most musicians are. You know, it's hard to quantify your identity. Just by deciding it, you know. Just by saying this is what I am because I decided that. We're not indoctrinated to think like that. And external sort of validation - and it doesn't even have to be emotional validation - just like, external. Somebody being like, yes, yes, I see that. I see that that is music that you've made.

Malachi describes the challenges that music-makers have in finding acceptance from both within themselves and from others, that what they *are* is a musician. That one must be seen as a musician by others, to confirm or validate for themselves that they are a musician, that this identity be confirmed “externally”. For Malachi, you can’t just decide that what you are is a musician. Others must confirm it because to “quantify” your own identity as a music-maker is challenging. Malachi points this out as particularly impacting music-makers given the propensity for musicians to probably “think too much”, perhaps a trait from which being a music-maker itself emerges – where does one put their excess of thoughts but into their creative pursuits, the vehicle with which they process and validate these. That finding acceptance as a music-maker can be damaging, was a reoccurring pattern in the participants talk. Below, Kilgore uses high school as an analogy:

...you can definitely reach the point where you feel like you're at seventh form school camp, and you've tried really hard to get in with the cool kids and then, and then you realise that you haven't succeeded at getting in with the cool kids and it can be a real emotional roller coaster and it can be I think it could be incredibly damaging. And yeah, I had some had good times for a while with that.

Here, Kilgore describes how as a music-maker sometimes you're in the cool social group, and sometimes you aren't. Kilgore's use of a high school context to articulate the challenges for people attempting to establish an identity as a music-maker is notable. Kilgore conjures a palpable analogy of the challenging contexts, heightened emotions, and unstable social dynamics of high school where we strive for acceptance and to avoid rejection, where we formulate identities and try to understand our position in the world. Here, the world of music-making is rife with these affective social dynamics. Kilgore goes on to describe the pressure placed on his friendships due to the scarcity of opportunity experienced in the music industry:

And then there were a couple of moments particularly, and particularly one time when I went to [overseas trade festival]. Where you know, I felt like I was exhausting some old friendships, because I was trying, trying to push, push, push for opportunities and I yeah, and I just felt dirty. Yeah. And I started to feel and there's been other times as well where I've tried to, yeah, that search for opportunities. When that search of opportunities means you're making friendships or what seemed like friendships, really just as a means to an end or, or even worse that you're trying to use friendships for some kind of career gain and potentially damaging the basis of those friendships in the process.

The scarcity of opportunities for validation in the music industry limited Kilgore's capacities for action to sustain a music-maker assemblage. These seemingly restricted capacities for action led to a search for superficial friendships predicated on their usefulness in sustaining the music-maker assemblage and to Kilgore leveraging his friendships in a way that he felt compromised them. This resulted in Kilgore feeling "dirty" indicating experiences of shame and guilt. Clearly here, the music-maker assemblage interacts with Kilgore's well-being assemblage as sustaining one compromises the existence of the other. "That search for opportunities", the desire to prevent the dissolution of the music-maker

assemblage (and perhaps a sense of self, of identity), is emblematic of how the shift, flux and flows of assemblages can seem contradictory. In this extract, the authentic, subsumed self is contradicted by the affective forces of industry and capitalism – Kilgore’s desire for his authentic self to be validated flowed alongside what he reflects on as an inauthentic self.

This theme enables us to conceptualise how a well-being assemblage is comprised of transformative potential through its facility to extend subjectivity beyond (or pre) individuality. However, there emerge tensions around a music maker identity and subjectivity when attempts at finding validation for that identity are compromised and constrained by interactions with industry practices, hegemonic societal ideals, and individualistic discourses. As Becker et al. (2021) point out, neoliberal free market ideologies promote individual self-actualisation, personal growth, and happiness. By extension, this focus undermines social cohesion, as market principles of competition become an affective force within the subject assemblage which the following theme looks at in further detail.

Neoliberalism: Between Molarity and Flight

This superordinate theme describes how music makers create and pursue lines of flight through music, however, as there becomes a need to subsist financially from this line of flight, the music-maker well-being assemblage becomes territorialised by molar structures and caught in the etched striations of the plane. The affective forces of neoliberalism on subjectivity, of the way creative work is valued economically, and the invalidating effects of this are explored in three sub-themes: ‘Citizen! Agent! Affect!’, ‘Corporeality Incorporated / Quantifying Quality’, and ‘Talent, myth, and endless hours: paid in piss and food’.

Citizen! Agent! Affect!

The authenticity and freedom from outside agendas that participants talked about occurred against a backdrop of, and in relationship with, flows of neoliberal discourse and ideology. In participants’ accounts, music-making - well-being is affected by notions of personal responsibility, self-surveillance, and social expectations of productive, economic citizenry.

I started to have this feeling like fuck!, I need to do something with this [tertiary qualification]. Otherwise, I'm never going to and that partly like, I think was because nothing had been happening with the band due to the pandemic. We hadn't been progressing in an external sense of progress. We've been recording but we had, I hadn't been seeing progress in a way that was validated by society. So maybe I felt like "oh shit, I should actually go and be a [area of study] so that society sees me as a success."

In this extract, Mark is describing the presence of an affective, agentic social element. While his band had been making and recording music, due to the COVID-19 pandemic he describes how the band had not been making progress in a way that was visible to the public. For Mark, pivoting to a career in his field of study would constitute a socially acceptable subject that is progressing themselves in some productive way. Neoliberal ideas of productive, economic citizenship (contributing to gross domestic product), social obligation and personal responsibility flow into the music-making assemblage, manifesting as this embodied anxious affect ("feeling like fuck!") and offering a line of flight for Mark away from what he describes as an "authentic" self-ness that provides him with well-being, and towards neoliberal notions of well-being and socially/fiscally responsible citizenship.

In Mark's references to progress, he displays awareness of tensions between what progress can be for him and socially sanctioned versions of progress. Mark wants to be both authentic to himself, but also a valued member of the wider social assemblage in which he is necessarily and inextricably in relation with and territorialised by. Like Mark, Malachi also grappled with the tension between his personal measures of success in music-making and the societal expectations territorialised by neoliberalism. Malachi's description of the attitude of his Granddad towards him being a music-maker gives us a sense of how those normative ideological pressures are experienced:

You know, I had this pretty profound experience after I'd been on my first tour overseas, which again... sort of tangible or easy to understand concepts like suddenly my granddad was really positive about it. Whereas before, every time it's the same bullshit and it's that funny thing of like, you get so used to the negative that you think you don't care and then when it suddenly it like, flips you're like, "oh, oh my goodness", you feel like so good.

You're like, "well, I did care."

For Malachi, his Granddad's attitude changed from constant negativity ("the same bullshit") to being "really positive" once his music-making resulted in overseas touring – a quantifiable version of success. Malachi describes how he had become so used to this that he hadn't noticed the affective force of his Granddad's view of him as a music-maker until he did accept and validate Malachi's choice. This is described as a profound experience that provided feelings of goodness.

Neoliberal policies, labour market deregulation, and anti-union practices collectively contribute to an increase in precarity for music-makers. As neoliberal policies of labour market deregulation and corporate anti-union practices become more prevalent, the precarity of music-making work is increasingly normalised. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, these policies force more and more people into casual work, making the precarious nature of music-making less of an outlier and more of a standard condition. However, even having casual work in music-making is considered a privilege. Yet, what Malachi can do, what his capacity for action is as a working music-maker in a neoliberal, capitalist system, is to frame his music-making as power. As resistance to societal pressures:

the most valuable thing for me is like you, you get to choose what the problems are. You're the author of your own story. You're the author of your own catastrophes...where else in your life do you get to do that? You know, yeah, I think, there is a real a real sense of, of power there of kind of like, "oh, okay, I'm, I'm in charge of something". You know, yeah, I think that matters to me.

Malachi implies how fraught with problems being a music-maker is, but asserts that being authentic, the author of his own story, is more important to him than relenting to outside expectations of what success is. Feeling in charge of his life and living it in accordance with his own values gives him a sense of power and possibility. Possibility and potentiality are fundamental aspects of the well-being assemblage where Deleuzian freedom is free flowing and open. Even if the story were to be catastrophic, Malachi has written it himself less constrained by structures imposed by rigid – *molar* – social and economic forces.

Hegemonic, neoliberal ideas about success in New Zealand are constantly and rhizomatically in relationship with these assemblages. For example, in response to a question about how touring affects well-being, neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility emerged in Des' talk: "I do think that when

you're living that kind of lifestyle, it's your own obligation to look after yourself. That harks back to that whole thing of, again, not being entitled to succeed.”

As illustrated by this quote, and several other extracts in this analysis such as Billy’s comments on streaming measures, music work is especially ripe for internalising neoliberal principles. Success is often viewed as being meritocratically linked, and failures in well-being and health viewed as a consequence of individual moral deficiencies.

Music-makers are particularly vulnerable because they must operate as contractors and self-promoting entrepreneurs in the absence of unifying bodies and industry protections. Clearly, this discourse has a constraining effect on the music-maker assemblage implying that choosing to be a music-maker is choosing particular working conditions. However, the working environments of music-makers are territorialised, colonised, and invaded by other non-human agents, that have agency, that have agendas - and needn’t be taken for granted as this analysis will explore further in following themes.

Corporeality Incorporated / Quantifying Quality

Territorialisation of the music industry by neoliberal market forces and ideologies forced music makers to adhere to molar structures to subsist financially. Where music was a line of flight, it was now forced to fit structure. Many of the participants expressed wanting to provide to others, what music had provided for them. That is, music facilitated profound lines of flight that enabled them to become-other - so much so that they became music-makers. Music making is partly motivated by a desire to facilitate profound lines of flight for others, to undertake emotional labour to create parcels of affect. However, participants reflected on the challenges of creating music within economic and ideological environments that rely on quantifying value in a way that is often incongruent with how creative cultural practices like music create value.

As Mark points out “[art is] insignificant, and then something happens in [one’s] life and then they really, really fucking need it and it's there and everything and helps them to see the world in a clearer way”. The music business for Mark has a strong affective presence within his music-maker - well-being assemblage:

And contentment, I've found really fucking hard to find in the music industry. It's a constant.

Like whenever you look back there's like a mixture of disappointment and shame and embarrassment. And there's moment there's always like, you're always comparing it to what other bands are doing, or whatever.

Music industry's affective force produced "disappointment", "shame", and "embarrassment", for Mark and re-produces market *affects* of competition in which one compares oneself with other music-makers, a constant measuring of one's success against others. Industry provides a somewhat antithetical force in the music-maker – well-being assemblage to Mark's experiences of creating art, and his hopes for its affect for others.

Kilgore similarly describes the products of his creative labour as not tangibly connected to an end.

It's like you're creating something people don't even know that they need and when they see it, they're like, "I don't need that". And so, you have to one by one convince people that they do need what you make.

In this extract Kilgore also confronts creation as unsolicited, this kind of music work is conducted in a speculative fashion. Kilgore describes the painstaking brickwork, convincing people "one by one" that what he creates is of value to them in order to sustain his career, his identity, his music-maker assemblage.

Again, there is interaction with and presence of neoliberal discourses of productivity as Kilgore describes his creative process elsewhere in the interview: "in a life where we try to be productive all the time...I have just accepted that I will waste a certain amount of time of my life fiddling around with instruments". Kilgore recognises that social expectations in a neoliberal society are to be productive and that playing around with instruments with no clear end or value might be perceived as wasted time – a discourse which he has internalised.

Kilgore's capacity for action is to accept that he will have to "waste" time if he is to be a music-maker. Neoliberal productivity imperatives moderate and constrain the ways Kilgore can consider this kind of work – He resignedly "accepts" the lesser value of this kind of work within a neoliberal economy and re-produces this notion describing his creative labour as fiddling and wasteful. Creative work that

might have been a source of well-being – a positive affect on the well-being assemblage - is constrained as neoliberal ideals and discourse come to bear on the music-maker assemblage.

As a music-maker subjectivity becomes one's business, and that business then operates within a neoliberal economy, free market principles of competition come to bear on the music-maker - well-being assemblage. In Becker et al.'s (2021) research into neoliberal effects on social well-being, they suggest that the pursuit of individual self-expansion is only achieved through competition with others. Success then, is measured by comparison against the success of other individuals and as Becker et al. observe, this competition results in significant psychological wear and tear. This psychological wear and tear is evident in many of the participant's descriptions such as Julia's self-criticism, Mark's experiences of shame and disappointment, and Billy's sense of frustration and invalidation.

Billy further describes a kind of psychological struggle in which this thing that is "sacred" to him, this authentic channel, this capacity for action, has "the heart ripped out of it" when subjected to the existing music industry prescriptions, standards, and models for promoting music.

Feels to use that word before, like the idea of it feeling sacred. It just it really is a sense of removing or sacrilege in a sense. But it's also I feel like it's a dilution, maybe it's sterilising, I guess. It's because I think it's an idea of like I've got to translate information across some kind of plane to get to another point. And you realise what [music industry] people want. It's as simple as like, you know, them [saying] "you can only have a press shot", that we can't have live press shots. "It's got to have everyone in it. It's got to be this blah blah blah" criteria. "We need this and this and this on a one sheet," etc, etc, etc. And then you're sitting here with the point of having to translate this monolith of feeling into an idea, and then all of a sudden you have to translate it again, down into a different format and it just feels like you've just taken something huge and to try and keep the entity a bit whole, but just through that bottleneck...I don't think you're gonna cure the noise by being equally noisy. Is that a way to like, explain how I feel about it? It's just there's so much noise around people advertising their own music. So by you matching that noise all you do is become part of some kind of chaotic sound. And, you know, by being part of it, you're almost excluding the [authenticity] or thing that makes it idiosyncratic.

All the potentials, all the possibilities that Billy's music once had are closed off as the music is squashed into and through a single point, the bottleneck. And much of the context – Billy's idiosyncrasies – don't survive the mashing. Like a wave function collapse, the superposition becomes a single eigenstate, predicated on how industry dictates music be commodified. Capitalism transforms culture into a commodity, and through this economic coupling, culture – and the music makers who produce it – lose autonomy, bound to market machinations.

For Deleuze and Guattari, social formation restricts flows and movement to delineate social structures in which to subsist (Roffe, 2010). They term this structuring 'coding'. Societies are regimes of coding that restrict and create structure to impose fixed ways of being. Capitalism however, 'decodes' flows and instead operates on *axioms* with which it recaptures flows by emptying them of their previously coded meaning/context and imposing a monetary value on them. Where the coded context of sex was marriage for example, capitalist societies made it novel by decoding its context and commodifying it. While the creation of novel connections is important for Deleuze and Guattari, capitalist decoding is an imitation of creativity. Its' decoding practices are for capitalist ends that produce an illusion of freedom which is monetarily bound.

The capitalist axiom of *overcoding* flows and affects therefore, reduces abstract qualities to quantity. Value can then be assigned, and financial profit extracted. In effect, art and music become complicit by reproducing clichés that overcoding has established as the quantifiable qualia (Filipović, 2015). Indeed, Billy asserts that the idiosyncrasy of the work, perhaps the lines of flight that the music-maker hopes to provide, are undermined by an industry and media that demands adherence to established overcodes.

Billy describes the demands for producing specific types of promotional content for example and alludes to how music industry striations stifle the lines of flight generated by authenticity and idiosyncrasy. Overcodes create imperatives for artists to reference genres and similar artists so that the correct value, market, and consumer can be identified. For Billy, everyone is shouting the same thing, massive choruses of music-makers re-producing genre-appropriate clichés so that they are overcoded for the intended consumer.

In Billy's music-maker – well-being assemblage, the possibilities, the capacities for action that music enables, when caught in interactional flows with capitalism, are completely closed and calcified.

In the extract below, Billy describes another potential line of flight however, that flees the molarity:

Everything in the rest of my life has always been on hold. Because I believe that music was what spoke to me more than anything else. Yeah. And I think there's an acceptance now that I've been struggling with the last few years, it's just realising that it's not that like, you know, I have to accept that music might not be able to give me all maybe the expectations that I have of what music can deliver me within this world, or within this industry, is, you know. Rather than being cynical and unhappy about it, I can find myself a new happiness with it. Because I was in [another country] for two years, and I didn't really – I had a band, well not a band, I caught up with some people and jammed. We never played a gig. And no one knew me as a musician. And I just part of that I really enjoyed.

Billy recognises that music making had become territorialised by forces that constrained his well-being assemblage, stifled its transformative capabilities. Billy's only capacity for action is to become-other than a working music maker. To untether his original line of flight from structural molarity. To make a sacrifice to retain the sacred.

Talent, Myth, and Endless Hours: "Paid in Piss and Food".

Dissonance between art, creative work, and capitalism are further illustrated in this theme where the intensive physical and emotional labour, sacrifice, and commitment required of the creative work reap fickle, and elusive rewards. The participants reveal an industry that commodifies talent, while often overlooking or devaluing the hard work behind it, while this is supported by wider narratives perpetuating myths of inherent talent, luck, and easy success.

Daniella and Malachi both frustratedly describe their feelings about how fundamentally undervalued the work of music-makers is and how this kind of work can't ever really be fully compensated:

The ways that people leverage money out of it all kind of don't make any sense. They don't make sense fundamentally, and even the ways we're doing them I think are pretty cooked. You see it like there's so much that rubs with it, you know, like the fact that the training for a

musician who's high calibre, you're talking about years, years and years and years of intense, intense training...and so there's no way to reasonably compensate for that. Even if anyone intended to. The proportional wages for someone who's done all that training. (Malachi)

‘[The public] perceive things to be glorified like in the movies, but it's really not. I don't think people maybe understand that. They might think "You were lucky to do this". And it's like am I lucky? Or have I spent like, all my life, hours and hours and hours of practice, you know, to get like, to get prepared for a moment that may never...’ (Daniella)

Malachi describes making music in this kind of reward system as not making sense, how the years of training can't possibly be reasonably compensated. Daniella's interview supports this notion as she describes films as having informed public perception of what it is like to be a music-maker to the point where she feels that something she has dedicated her whole life to achieving, sacrificed so much to do, can be perceived as “luck”. This is clearly an important and emotive point for Daniella as she reflects on how undervalued those sacrifices are, how all of it could have been for nothing, unable to finish the sentence “for a moment that may never...”.

Kilgore likewise describes frustration with the public perception of music-makers:

[There's a frustration with] the fetishisation of musicians as naturally talented. Yeah, I find the public doesn't want to believe that musicians work hard, they want to believe that they're magic or that they're born that way. Like a great athlete or something. And if you try to talk about the work part, it kind of can undermine your mystique and your brand and that kind of thing.

Kilgore describes a dichotomy where the public's perception of music-makers as possessing inherent gifts undermines the amount of hard work that goes into music-making, yet being overt about how much of that ability is developed through hard work also undermines the public perception of a music-maker's special-ness. So, there is an agenda for music-makers to perpetuate myths about mysterious, inherent talent to feed that public fetish of special-ness, to perhaps dissuade others from competing, or maybe to artificially inflate value. Yet, this strategy also has the effect of obscuring the labour value behind music.

For Julia, territorialised elements of the music-maker assemblage, industry aspects of music-making that are expected – work, and performance (which can be understood as commodification of the music-maker/music) have undesirable affects for the well-being assemblage.

I actually hate interviews on radio I freak out and I get really in my head and I just come across so bad. Like, there's so many things like that, that I hate about music. And like there are things that I love and there's so much that just comes with it that I don't want to do but I feel like I have to. It might be contradictory to what I just said but playing live as a really, I struggle with that quite a bit. There are elements I do love about playing live and I'm always on a buzz afterwards. But if I'm playing too regularly, I am just in a constant state of nerves and I think that has a really bad impact on my health...I think we all have that like sort of ingrained that you just got to play play, play, play play. So yeah, if you feel like I'm not taking up every opportunity. Like my dad used to always say something like everyone gets an opportunity and you just don't know which opportunity it is. So, if you get offers or anything just always do it.

For Julia, there are “so many things” that she hates about music but that are perhaps perceived as necessary to inhere a music-maker assemblage (“I feel like I have to”). This results in a “constant state of nerves” which Julia identifies as impacting her health severely. Julia suggests that opportunities can come unexpectedly and at any time. However, saying yes to every opportunity affects Julia’s capacities for action. She can’t say no to an offer to perform live, yet performing live affects her well-being.

The future has agency within Julia’s assemblage, her anticipation of the future, that there might not be another opportunity after this one, limiting the well-being assemblage as she is compelled to say yes to everything. There isn’t a line of flight available in this account, the precarity of this work, and the affect of her father’s ouroboric prophesy produces molarity. It holds her in a striation.

Similarly, Malachi describes how the uncertainty of future opportunities limits his capacities of action in that he is also compelled to say yes to everything:

the nature of being a kind of independent contractor is that you lack the security of being an employee. And so you are kind of needing to constantly seek out work and you there's definitely a feeling...that you kind of just need to take everything that comes your way

because a) you don't know what any of it's going to lead to so you're not sure what opportunity is going to domino into something bigger and better. And b) you know, none of it amounts to very much like it's all pretty... It's all not a lot so ...my experience - and it's a lot of other people's experience - was that you just say yes to everything, and suddenly you're in nine bands and it's fucked and it doesn't make any sense.

Like Julia, this element of Malachi's music maker assemblage impacts the well-being assemblage to the point where he is suddenly overwhelmed with work that "doesn't make any sense" in a way that is clearly detrimental as he describes exasperatedly "it's fucked". Which opportunity will lead to something "bigger and better"? Perhaps the seemingly chaotic randomness with which success happens in the music industry makes it impossible for Malachi to discern which project or band to dedicate (and not waste) time to and his only possible course of action is to try and do everything.

Finally, streaming services and the related economic devaluation of music has become a powerfully affective force in the assemblages of working music-makers. Where once 'selling out' to corporate interests was an unfathomable compromise on artistic integrity, music-making has shifted into an era in which the 'selling out' discourse has all but disappeared. Music makers have accepted that survival is predicated on collaborating and forming relationships with those that can provide capital now that income sustained by more direct-to-consumer models have been subverted by streaming.

Further, as streaming services create algorithmic subjectivities through a gradual imposition of recommendations (and as music businesses scramble to exploit the model and territorialise it), this in turn will create algorithmic music-makers (see Giblin & Doctorow, 2022; Lovink & Rossiter, 2018) where music is created with the overcoded values implied by the agendas of (capitalist) streaming services, rather than - as Billy points out - authentic, affective emotional work. Of course, capitalism and music are not a new marriage, but it is a considerable affective force in these music-maker - well-being assemblages, nevertheless, given its rhizomatic properties and the associated tensions hinted at here.

Few lines of flight were articulated by the participants indicating the limited capacities for action that were available to them. A music-making assemblage could for example transform to exclude live performance, but then the ability to be an affective force on others is reduced and music work even less

sustainable. While there are other commercial avenues with which to develop income from music, these opportunities are fraught without the visibility and connections that come from working in and around live performance. As suggested in Kilgore's assessment, mentorship, guidance, and supportive ladders are not forthcoming in the music industry as labour market competition (scarcity of work) reproduces neoliberal modes.

Ultimately perhaps, music-making subsumes music makers and provides well-being through access to collective subjectivity however, as they seek to subsist as providers of these affects, capitalism, and neoliberal ideology inevitably re-produce individuality and territorialise the music maker - well-being assemblage. In the capitalist rhizome, value is equated with consumption, consumption generates capital, success in capitalist society is financial success, and with financial flows perhaps one can finally identify themselves as a music maker.

Realising that his pursuit of "measurable" success in music may never be actualised, the only possible action, or alternative possibility for Billy is that the music-making assemblage be reterritorialised as one in which validation and recognition are reduced in power in terms of their affective force within it, and that capitalist meanings of successful music-making are fled from. Keeping this "sacred" thing protected from the reductive overcoding of capitalism and industry for music-makers might protect their well-being in a way that no longer produces stuck-ness and immobility but is reassembled to continue providing those capacities for action that produce feelings of wellness.

The dilemma is clear though: there is no externality to capitalism, and a music-maker must live in society. The cost of capitalism is that the music-maker cannot sustain the music-making, new affective works are not produced (or at least do not affect), and society is denied the affective power and potential lines of flight that music-makers aim to provide.

Technologies of alcohol

Within the music maker-well-being assemblage, alcohol emerged as a significant affective force. In my interview with Mark, he made a concerted effort to emphasise how the places in which he performs his music, and the cultural associations with music, facilitate problematic alcohol and drug use. He

experiences this association as worrying and elsewhere in the interview (l. 440-443) alludes to feeling “discomfort” with the idea that he as a music-maker has directly “benefited” from this association.

I feel really strongly about.. I'm really, deeply troubled I should say by the association of alcohol and drugs and music in particular. And in a way that's like really harmful because they can be like really great. They have really great health benefits, all drugs, when used correctly. But we've designed the consumption of music to also be surrounded by like harmful consumption of alcohol and drugs. And that's just like I'm just I'm really troubled by that and I don't know how to fix it.

In this extract Mark clearly relates as weighing on him (“I’m really, deeply troubled”), his experience of “the association of alcohol and drugs and music” describing this as felt “strongly”. While Mark describes an understanding of all drugs as having potential benefits to health if used in the right way, the way use is associated with music is “harmful”. Mark describes this co-consumption as constructed by design, something exploitative done on purpose, which he understands as something that should be changed, but feels “really troubled” and at a loss as to how to enact that change (“I don’t know how to fix it”). Mark’s music-maker – well-being assemblage has been territorialised by alcohol.

Given the reliance of venues on alcohol sales to be sustainable, and the alcohol industry’s attachment of its products to the ubiquitously affective, and transformational power of music created by music-makers, the molarising affect on Mark’s music-making – well-being assemblage, the stuck-ness he feels is palpable. For Mark, he desires the affective power of his music to be the focus of the audience experience, rather than an accompaniment to the affect/effect of alcohol:

But it feels like we're very much at the whims of it. The effects of alcohol on the environment and the space that we're in. And those often aren't particularly like interesting environments to me like they're social spaces and rooms that I wouldn't be in otherwise. So, I'm really not getting much from it, other than like, presenting this thing. And there's so much like that sounds incredibly bratty but that's fucking how I feel [Laughter].

Again, Mark describes how alcohol closes down capacities for action for him, as something that the band has no control over (“we’re very much at the whims of it”).

Alcohol is a non-human agent here. We might conceive of some constitutive elements that give alcohol agency such as social discourse around drinking, marketing, effects on individual cognitive processes, the alcohol industry etc. Alcohol, like human subjects, is also an assemblage produced by its constituent forces. Alcohol acts upon the environment, affecting the entire space. Mark describes the affect as making the environment uninteresting to him and somewhere he wouldn't otherwise want to be.

The transformative affects of music ("this thing") don't exist in these spaces for Mark – rather, these spaces constrain that capacity for music to be affective. Mark's only available option is for live performance to be a transactional necessity, to facilitate the creative process – a venue is just a place to promote the music in. He understands this as potentially construed by others as "incredibly bratty" – apologetically critical of something that others might enjoy. The affect of a discourse in which the closeness of alcohol and music is a normalised relationship bears on Mark's music maker-well-being assemblage as he then exasperatedly accepts his potential characterisation as a killjoy ("but that's fucking how I feel"), in the face of an otherwise widely accepted or entrenched alcohol-music assemblage. This tension is embodied and resolved through laughter indicating an experience of difficulty with which this position was taken up.

The map of Mark's music-making-well-being assemblage therefore is composed of these associations: his feelings of complicity as a music-maker, this troubled-ness Mark describes, this unwanted component, it seems to indicate an unfulfilled desire for lines of flight that don't perpetuate this associative *affect* on other's assemblages. This is constraining and immobilising and stifles Mark's capacity to become-other. If we imagine possible (as yet unavailable to Mark) lines of flight for a new music-performance-alcohol-venue assemblage, this might be a version of music performance that isn't reliant on the money generated by alcohol purchases to sustain a community space for performance. This could be a music-consumption assemblage that constitutes focus on live music's capacity for providing transformative affects and new lines of flight, reorienting it away from the music-drugs-alcohol assemblage.

Daniella, reflecting on her earlier experiences in which she compensated for a lack of income through playing covers gigs, describes how venues would provide alcohol and food in lieu of paying a better rate.

The amount of money you make is actually bugger all. And then they try and pay you in piss and food...But that balance of playing late nights playing all hours for like 50 bucks is pretty shit... It's just a game where people are trying to pay you off in booze, which probably leads to a lot of issues as musicians - like most of us are probably alcoholics. Yeah, it's pretty, pretty brutal.

There are clearly affective agentic forces at play in the assemblage as highlighted by Daniella. The value of her music-making by the venues contracting Daniella was undermined by their efforts to compensate her with “piss and food”.

Music and music-makers meanwhile are used as vehicles with which to sell alcohol, through their ability to provide ambient affects, energy affects and to re-produce (covers) music that has an existing affective presence in people’s assemblages. Alcohol companies entangle their products with artists, events, and music festivals.

There is (expectedly) a multitude of affects flowing together, and Daniella recognises the agency of alcohol as contributing to “a lot of issues” for music-makers. We might envision how these industry practices, as music-maker assemblages are starting out on their performance journeys, rewarded with “piss and food”, assigned some kind of validating value (as desired in earlier themes), catalyse alcohol’s territorialisation of the music-maker assemblage.

Emblematic of the way the territorialisation by alcohol of the music assemblage has become unquestioned, Des describes the presence of alcohol in the assemblage as an uncontrollable environmental factor:

a lot of musicians undermine themselves and myself included at times as well. You know, we've behaved a certain way or maybe had a little bit too much to drink which compromises you, or had a bit much of whatever else, which compromises your ability to perform in many different ways. But that's an environmental factor.

Neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility powerfully affect the music maker-well-being assemblage. “Musicians undermine themselves” through alcohol and drug taking. Alcohol’s presence in the music-maker – well-being assemblage is part of the perilous landscape one must navigate through. At the same time, Des acknowledges that this is an issue for “a lot of musicians...myself included” which compromises musicians in “many different ways”. Again, we can map contradictory agentic flows in the assemblage where alcohol’s territorialisation of the music-maker assemblage (incentivised by profit) is ubiquitous, and in relation with and protected by neoliberal discourse. Alcohol is an environmental factor to be accepted as a given, and one must simultaneously resist it in their professional practice.

It should be noted and is commented on by Mark, that using alcohol and drugs with music isn’t inherently bad or morally laden in and of itself, but perhaps used in the ways in which Mark experiences as harmful, has more *affective* force within the assemblage. This might allow us to think through the connective tissue, how alcohol companies benefit financially from this association, how their profit-motive connects and propels this force, and how the lack of regulation in this space contributes to the affective force of alcohol on various assemblages. Mark’s unease with the *molarity* of this association and music’s stuck-ness within an economic environment that rewards, compensates and privileges particular products, commodification, and ways of conducting business, produces an imperative for art to leverage its *affective* power through these associations to sustain itself. The talk in this theme highlights the distinct disruption to well-being that occurs through perceived limited capacities for action in music-making work.

Discussion

In this study I looked at the intra-action between music maker and well-being assemblages to explore what social, material, and structural conditions scaffold experiences of well-being in music making work in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through interviews with seven working music makers, the research shows that while music making was experienced as providing well-being benefits to music makers, the experiences of these benefits were modified and reduced by the structural conditions related to earning income from music.

Employing the conceptual tools of assemblage allowed me to glean novel and rich insights into the interaction between music making work and well-being, and to address a gap in the research in understanding music work in New Zealand. The specific aims of the present study were:

- To gain an understanding of how wider sociomaterial and structural contexts scaffold the experiences of well-being in music making work.
- To offer an alternative to research emphasising individual intervention for poor music making health and well-being outcomes.
- To develop novel insights using assemblage conceptual tools.

In this section I summarise the main findings as they pertain to these aims and discuss them alongside the existing research. Given the emphasis of this study on interconnectedness, relations, and flows, I don't discuss the analytical themes in isolation. Rather, I focus on the analysis as an assemblage of themes, collaborative productions between myself, the participants, the interviews, and the conditions giving rise to those productions.

The music makers who were interviewed, experienced well-being from music making through the capacity to become-other. Becoming-other is a Deleuzian concept alluding to a transformative process

that allowed music makers to move beyond fixed and stable identities to new forms. Becoming-other occurred as a process for emotional change, a place to express the otherwise inexpressible, or a way to become other-than-individual in collective flows.

Music makers also experienced well-being through the capacity of their creative output and their performances to affect others. This resonates with Fox's (2013) Deleuzian analysis of creativity's relation to health as it provides routes to deterritorialisation. Creative possibility does not come from within an individual, rather it emerges from the assemblage of bodies, things, ideas, and structural conditions that enable (or constrain) - as capacity to affect or be affected. Having this capacity to affect facilitated fulfilment, purpose, meaning, and well-being. Conversely, when this capacity to affect felt constrained or unavailable, it resulted in embodied experiences of anxiety and worthlessness.

Thinking with concepts such as becoming-other, and affect, highlight the creative process as relational and connective rather than individually located. It gives novel insights into how music making produces well-being affects through facilitating disruption of a habituated (territorialised) assemblage.

As music makers sought to subsist financially through their capacity to affect others, the well-being benefits that were experienced through their creative work were modified or reduced. As their creative work became territorialised by the music industry, capacities for action were limited through expectations associated with industry standards for conducting music work such as live performance, and self-promotion. Invalidation and lack of acceptance were experienced when their creative work was not quantified by financial success.

I explored how this invalidation is partly linked to the failure of capitalist overcoding to adequately impart economic value to cultural labour and its products. To extrapolate with a Deleuzian analysis, attempts by capitalism to capture creative flows constrains creative lines of flight because of the perceived inexistence of an end market. Harmonic mixtures for example that are territorialised by the ubiquity of pop music, operate within existing codes.

Music makers sometimes experienced authentic, affective emotional work as not valued and thus their authentic selves were experienced as having no value. This finding shows how macro-level political

structures such as economic policy relate to the experiences of well-being in music makers and constrain capacities to affect and be affected.

As the conceptual tools enable an analysis of how music industry practices territorialise music maker assemblages, it also highlights how these are not static entities, they are part of a dynamic relational network of affects. They thus have the potential to be resisted, navigated, or transformed rather than taken for granted - through collective action, for example.

Owing to the precarity of work, and the competition inherent in a gig economy, music makers were inured to accept every perceived opportunity regardless of whether it was tied to financial outcomes and even when it undermined well-being. This often led to unsustainable workloads. This aligns with research indicating that the hyper-competitive environment results in music-makers not acknowledging or discussing mental health challenges as stigma may affect their work prospects (van den Eynde et al., 2014; Visser et al., 2022).

Relatedly, in a narrative discursive analysis on creative workers Taylor and Littleton (2008) identify a 'big break narrative' where the possibility of success at an indeterminate future point motivates sustained and unpaid arduous work over extended periods of time. This results in creative workers juggling double lives in which they secure income through non-creative work at the same time as doing creative work. Subsequent issues arise with the ability to claim a creative identity if time is not spent producing creative work. Evidence of this discursive resource emerged in the accounts in the present analysis suggesting that this was an affective component of the well-being assemblage. Where even when well-being was undermined and music makers were overwhelmed, declining work or prioritising health was not always a capacity for action available to them such was the territorialisation by this work-precarity/big-break affect. Invalidation of identity was experienced when participants felt they had not fulfilled the requirements expected in identifying oneself as a musician.

Significantly, this research highlights the ubiquity and agency of alcohol within music. Alcohol is present from the early stages of music-making careers where it is often provided in lieu of financial compensation. Further, given the various psychological demands of live performance coupled with alcohol's effect of dampening physiological responses related to presenting an authentic self to an

audience - the assemblage doors are thrown open to the agency of alcohol. The presence of alcohol in music environments was described as uncontrollable, highlighting how it restricts agency and well-being.

Subjective well-being is produced by complex material and abstract relations, as well as affecting - and affected by - space and time as outlined in Atkinson and Scott's (2015) work on dance. Music makers were exasperated as to how to affect change in these performance spaces and music/alcohol consumption entanglements. This is indicative of how alcohol has territorialised music, music spaces, and venues.

A 2014 Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health) Ministerial Forum on Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship (Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health, 2014) acknowledged the harm of alcohol sponsorship at music festivals and cultural events, however, recommended only to ban alcohol sponsorship in sports. It did recommend implementing a government funded programme to transition sports clubs and associations to sustainable non-alcohol sources of funding, but acknowledged the risk that a ban in sports could risk alcohol companies pivoting further to cultural and music events as avenues for promotion.

In light of the sophisticated management practices and audience diversity the Forum is less concerned with the current volume, and potential impact of, alcohol advertising and sponsorship at cultural and music events. However, we acknowledge the risk that restrictions on sports sponsorship may see a flood of funds into cultural and music events as an alternative vehicle for brand and product promotion. However, our focus is on reducing exposure of young people to alcohol advertising and sponsorship and we have recommended a restriction to ensure the funds are not redirected to musical or cultural events with a large percentage of young people attending. (Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health, 2014)

In 2022, Green Party MP Chlöe Swarbrick's Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Harm Minimisation) Amendment Bill (2022) was drawn from the member's ballot that aimed to implement the forum's recommendations by banning alcohol sponsorship and advertising of all streamed and

live sports and banning alcohol sponsorship at all sporting venues. The amendment cited reduced harm from tobacco use following similar restrictions on tobacco however, the bill was heavily defeated on 5 April 2023 making any cultural disentanglement with alcohol seem further out of sight.

While using alcohol and drugs with music is not inherently bad or morally laden in and of itself, analysing it through an assemblage lens here has provided novel insights into its affects within a music-maker - well-being assemblage. Furthermore, it allows us to reconceptualise agency and alcohol as not located within individual behaviours of music-makers but to show how it is in relationship with other non-human agents. These tools enabled a thinking through the connective tissue, how alcohol companies benefit financially from music associations, how their profit-motive connects and propels this force, and how the lack of regulation in this space contributes to the affective force of alcohol on various assemblages. The *molarity* of this association and music's stuck-ness within an economic environment that rewards, compensates and privileges particular products, commodification, and ways of conducting business, produces an imperative for art to leverage its *affective* power through these associations to sustain itself. This suggests a distinct disruption to well-being through perceived limited capacities for action in music-making work.

This research adds to the work done by Coffey (2022) and McLeod (2018) that uses assemblage to debase notions of individual agency and reorients us to the socio-material conditions and its affects from which well-being emerges. The work of Fox et al., (2006), Fox et al., (2005), and Fox and Ward (2008) on health identities among people using pharmaceutical technologies, showed that this was partly assembled of social norms and institutional authorities. This research contributes to that work in showing how alcohol is normalised and institutionalised within music and music spaces and thus constitutes part of the well-being assemblages of working music makers.

The way in which the embodied acts of music-making contribute to assembling wellness, adds to Scott and Atkinson's (2015) observations of how dance and movement disrupt and deterritorialise the 'proper' conduct of a body. Like dance spaces, music spaces in which physical and emotional expression are accepted and celebrated provide a line of flight for music-makers to escape habitual

assemblage, and facilitate material, experiential, and affective encounters that elevate modes of communication beyond the spoken and written.

The participant's accounts of their experiences of well-being in music illustrate how well-being is assembled of non-individual dimensions. This assemblage view shifts agency away from an inherent subject-capacity to act and onto a collective body made up of agentic non-human as well as human elements. It debases individualistic notions of well-being and highlights the sociomaterial contexts that scaffold their experiences of well-being, debasing the idea of humans as rational, authentic decision-makers.

Where non-human elements territorialised subjects and constrained their capacities to affect and be affected, to do and desire, they experienced reduced well-being. This chimes with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of health as comprised of an assemblage's transformative potential – freedom as capacity for action. This is not to disregard important biomedical or other treatments, but to illustrate that this makes up only a part of subjective health and wellness.

This research suggests that future interventions to enhance the well-being of music-makers should extend beyond merely offering psychological and mental health services. Instead, focus should also be placed on creating structures that enable music to be created in ways that are not overly reliant on capitalist models. This could involve initiatives such as public service campaigns that underscore the cultural and social contributions of local art and music to social cohesion, collective national identity, and well-being, thereby garnering political support for more targeted policies. One such policy could be the implementation of a universal basic income for artists such as that currently being trialled in Ireland. Alternatively, policy and funding initiatives could focus on the development of a state-owned streaming and download platform, like Bandcamp, that encourages engagement with local content. This would create sustainable income opportunities for local creators, steering those profits away from multinational streaming platforms like Spotify and their inequitable distribution models. These interventions could significantly contribute to a more supportive and sustainable environment for music-makers, enhancing both their well-being and that of society.

Reflexive Chapter

As this research adopts assemblage theory and utilises the conceptual tools of assemblage generated by Deleuze & Guattari, it's with this theory that I also view the research itself – as an assemblage. As an element and affective force within the research assemblage the things that produce *my-self* are important to be understood to show how the research is affected by my presence within it. The assemblage of me partly consists of being cishet, Pākehā, male, a parent, a significant other, a student, an employee, and various other shards, a large one of which is being a music-maker.

Well-being and music-making was not a topic I had previously considered for research. In academia, I had previously been drawn to write around topics including amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and neoliberalism, social inequality, disaster research, and masculinity and meat-eating. When I began thinking about my thesis topic, I advanced quite far into reviewing the literature around stay at home fathers and contemporary masculinity. But, after some conversations with other musicians about making music, and the survey research showing that music industry workers report poor health outcomes, I started to wonder what it would be like to interview music-makers about the work they do. That perhaps I could make the research advocative for this community.

In my attempts to advocate for a community I was part of I asked myself how I could ensure that I was doing something beneficial, worth people's time, that honoured their sentiments? This quote from St. Pierre (1997) resonated:

Research is so hard, and I knew I needed other people to help me think, since I feared I would commit some horrible and unforgivable blunder, disgrace myself in my own hometown, embarrass my mother who still lives there, and do irrevocable damage to the women I had grown to admire and love. (p. 184)

Throughout the course of my studies, I had moved through various critical perspectives of health and psychology. I found myself wondering more and more how specialist disciplines, categorisations, the

Western tradition of atomising, of dividing things into their smaller and smaller parts, can also limit our understanding of any given ‘thing’ as we narrow our focus at the expense of the wider context.

What good is it to keep trying to treat individuals for [anything] without also addressing social, political, environmental factors that cause it? A health psychology that understands the limits of a traditional, mainstream psychology, and promotes transdisciplinary collaboration – is surely in a better position to pivot to the necessary tools at the necessary time. Otherwise, how might a preventative treatment remain open to the infinitude of potential inputs that contribute to health or well-being?

As discussed in the methodology chapter, given the topic I had initially decided that I would use phenomenological inquiry, I would give voice to the experiences of people in my music-making communities – in their own words they would tell me about how making music has well-being benefits, and how being a music-maker compromises their well-being. I would develop a richness of detail to fill a gap for understanding experiences of people working in the music industry.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is a well-established qualitative method that I could find plenty of examples of and transplant into my own work. However, I found myself dissatisfied with the tools. I felt stuck inside the text. I felt the participants were telling me something that I couldn’t get to without stepping outside of the phenomenological, experiential realm. With a prod from my supervisor to look at a post-orientation, my search led me to Mark Vagle’s (2018) post-intentional phenomenology.

Vagle’s working-class background and interest in socioeconomic issues resonated with me. My father is a carpenter (as was his father) and earlier that week I had been at the pub with him when his friend asked me “so what do you do?”. I replied: “I’m studying for my masters in psychology”. He looked at my dad and said “shit, he’s one of those *academics*”. “Nah” my father replied, shuffling uncomfortably on his bar stool “but he has worked on building sites too”. While giving-each-other-shit is a benchmark of the trades, I couldn’t help but read it discursively, as working-class distrust of institutions that are perceived as having failed them, “the woke brigade” trying to stifle their freedoms. My father’s defence of me was to assert my working-class credentials, to protect my in-group status.

Understandably. In my academic subjectivity, I sit around theorising, abstracting, and conceptualising things, trying to track the material impacts of the cartesian split, while they are out in “the real world” building homes that people can live in, and tar-sealing the roads on which I drop my children to school. How can someone talking about ontology and epistemology possibly be of use to society in the applied, practical way that the builders and the road workers are? The truth is I don’t quite know. Maybe it is grains of sand being thrown from an old beach to a new bay, and one day there will be a new beach.

Meanwhile anyway, I had been busy lower socioeconomically carpenter-ing my own things. Writing songs had been a vehicle for me to understand my world, to externalise seemingly internal emotions, to unconfuse myself. I could take the things I read and use them in lyrics to consolidate my understanding of them. I could take something that bothered me, lyricise it in a way to effectively reduce the power that it had over me. I could amplify a tiny thing, view it under a microscope and find myself amused by what it was actually made of. I wrote songs about how I accidentally worked with chickens on a battery farm, about how long-distance relationships are like an evolutionary divide in Indonesia, and about how bacterial flagella can free you from religious discourse. Music is like a parcel with words inside, sometimes they are in a nice gift bag with a helium balloon, and sometimes they are hurriedly wrapped in newspaper on the way to the party with the corners poking through the rips.

I played in bands and experienced live performances that were extra-individual. I toured and performed, played festivals, played with others, played solo. I coped with performance anxieties and experienced performances where individualism vanished. I experienced the extreme highs and lows of long tours. I played with musical peers that I admired and toured with some that I lionised. I struggled with the demands of doing comprehensive all-encompassing work for a band while working another full-time job and caring for a young family. I navigated the music industry without a map, it was terrifying and confusing and made little sense. I spent 99% of my time doing band work that was not the creative work that gave me well-being.

However, I *knew* for me, that music-making had been a source of great comfort and an important coping tool. It connected me with other people both through playing-with and playing-for. I knew it would be always just something that I did, but it had become my work too and I *knew* for me, how much impact that work had, how many sacrifices I had to make, and how much pressure it put on other

parts and people in my life. At times I thought of just completely stopping doing it, but ultimately it had become too entangled with my sense of self. It was something I did that connected me with people that I loved and cared for, that I developed pre-individual connections and non-verbal affinity with over long periods of time. It gave me stuff and it enabled me to give people stuff. So, I became interested in what other music-maker's experiences were like – what kinds of things about making music did they feel were a benefit to their wellness and what things put their well-being at risk – and why? Why did they do music making? Why do *we* do it?

As a child I inherited metaphysical beliefs about God and a hell. I watched people at masses (interesting word) where there was hypnotic live rock music, lifting their hands up and closing their eyes, swaying in an ecstatic unison. I was intrigued about how they would converse in a nonsensical babble to each other, to God, to themselves, to nobody, to nothing. They called it speaking in tongues. I saw people screaming primally and writhing on the ground while church members did tongue twisters and channelled the Tower of Babel – it was demons resisting exorcism. Yeah... I think I found it as strange then as I do now reflecting on it in this moment. Which is to say, quite strange.

Later, in my early twenties, when I realised those experiences made up some of the backdrop to my perspective, I undertook the task of re-mapping my entire ontological worldview. My reason for reflecting on this throughout writing my thesis is because religion, spirituality, and transcendence emerged in much of the data. I chose these sections to analyse, and perhaps this is why I was drawn to analyse them. This context is what I bring with me when religious discourses are invoked, things resonated with or repulsed me that may have not for another researcher. I *understood* Julia when she talked about the affective power of music in an evangelical church. I *knew deeply* what she meant about people thinking that was the presence of a god. I had seen it put them into trances week on week.

Part way through writing this thesis I stumbled upon the realisation that I had had ADHD for my entire life, and I was diagnosed with it. From the structure and constant urgency of looming post-graduate deadlines the curtains hiding the chaosmos had been flung open to the freedoms of thesis land and the horses of the mind ran through the open field with wild abandon. Reading Davies (2021) made sense; creativity relies on the safe frameworks of structure – like a parent to run back to after you've pulled the cat's tail. It's from structure that ambulatory connective thinking can be done. So, this experience

shaped my worldview while writing, I reflected on it a lot during this project, the balance needed between creative freedom and a framework of reference from which things can be made sense of. So, I bring my ambulatory imbalance; my little bag of pearls that I have to pat my pockets to find.

Inherent in parts of my social positionality are privileges associated with being cisgender, male, Pākehā. The challenges that I have experienced with attention have not intersected with the same disadvantages that are experienced by people whose identities consist of aspects that have been traditionally marginalised. I am also constrained by my worldview and experiences, there are important things that I couldn't possibly have thought to include in the analysis that people of other subjectivities could. Despite a deep desire to include a wide variety of perspectives in this research, given time and resource constraints I was not able to develop interviews and analyses into areas exploring how well-being and music-making intersect with experiences related to sexuality, gender, and ethnicity. Though I attempted to encourage and leave space for participants to discuss these.

I tried to balance this with an awareness of the dynamism and relational flows that existed within the interview events – to not push into discomfort, to allow participants to express what they felt. I paid attention to difference, when sense-making was different to mine I followed it up, often engaging in deep reflexivity as to why. In one of the interviews when discussing a particular event for a participant in which a big opportunity was scuppered, I felt this was something important however the participant was clear that it didn't matter. With reflexivity, I realised that this acceptance, the not caring, was a line of flight to well-being for them.

My music making peers were incredibly generous with their experiences, more insightful than I could ever have imagined and forever affective ripples in this humble research assemblage and for that I am grateful to them.

Conclusion

This research journey was guided by a desire to understand the complex interplay between music-making, well-being, and the broader socio-material and structural factors that shape these relations. A key finding was that music-making served as a source of well-being for participants, enabling them to transcend fixed identities and explore new forms of self through the transformative process of becoming-other. The capacity of their creative output and performances to affect others provided a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

However, the benefits of music-making were often compromised when the creative work was territorialised by industry and economy, leading to an imbalance that reduced the well-being benefits experienced by music-makers. This study highlighted the significant impact of wider social, material, and structural contexts on well-being in music-making work. The precarious nature of income and work in a hyper-competitive gig economy led music-makers to take on unsustainable and undervalued workloads, even when it compromised their well-being. This dynamic was further complicated by a crisis of identity that emerged when perceived failures invalidated the music-maker's subjectivity.

The pervasive influence of alcohol within the music industry and its commercial entanglements with music and performance spaces emerged as a significant concern. Its presence often constrained capacities for action and negatively affected well-being, underscoring the need for interventions that address these broader social and environmental factors.

The findings of this study suggest that future interventions to enhance the well-being of music-makers should extend beyond merely offering psychological and mental health services. Instead, focus should be placed on creating structures that enable music to be created in ways that are not overly reliant on capitalist models such as public service campaigns that underscore the cultural and social contributions of local art and music to garner support for more targeted policies. This could include a universal basic income for artists or development of a state-owned streaming service that provides engagement with

local content. These interventions could significantly contribute to a more supportive and sustainable environment for music-makers, enhancing both their well-being and that of society.

By adopting a relational, assemblage approach, this study aimed to broaden the understanding of music-making and well-being beyond the individualistic approaches common to much of the existing research. The novel insights developed using assemblage conceptual tools allowed for a nuanced exploration of the complex social and material forces that shape music-making and well-being. This research underscores the importance of considering the broader social, political, and environmental factors that contribute to health and well-being outcomes, alongside and beyond individually oriented interventions.

References

- Ackermann, B. J., Kenny, D. T., O'Brien, I., & Driscoll, T. R. (2014). Sound Practice: Improving occupational health and safety for professional orchestral musicians in Australia. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00973>
- Atkinson, S., & Scott, K. (2015). Stable and destabilised states of subjective well-being: Dance and movement as catalysts of transition. *Social & Cultural Geography, 16*(1), 75-94.
- Azari, N. P., Nickel, J., Wunderlich, G., Niedeggen, M., Hefter, H., Tellmann, L., Herzog, H., Stoerig, P., Birnbacher, D., & Seitz, R. J. (2001). Neural correlates of religious experience: Brain activity and religious experience. *European Journal of Neuroscience, 13*(8), 1649–1652. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0953-816x.2001.01527.x>
- Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 28*(3), 801–831. <https://doi.org/10.1086/345321>
- Barad, K. M. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.
- Barbar, A. E. M., De Souza Crippa, J. A., & De Lima Osório, F. (2014). Performance anxiety in Brazilian musicians: Prevalence and association with psychopathology indicators. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 152*, 381–386. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2013.09.041>
- Bates, V. C. (2021). Reflections on music education, cultural capital, and diamonds in the rough. *Philosophy of Music Education Review, 29*(2), 212. <https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.29.2.06>

- Becker, J. C., Hartwich, L., & Haslam, S. A. (2021). Neoliberalism can reduce well-being by promoting a sense of social disconnection, competition, and loneliness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60(3), 947–965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12438>
- Bellis, M. A., Hughes, K., Sharples, O., Hennell, T., & Hardcastle, K. A. (2012). Dying to be famous: Retrospective cohort study of rock and pop star mortality and its association with adverse childhood experiences. *BMJ Open*, 2(6).
- Benade, L. (2016). Teachers' reflective practice in the context of twenty-first century learning: Applying Vagle's five-component post intentional plan for phenomenological research. *Open Review of Educational Research*, 3(1), 133–147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23265507.2016.1201777>
- Blackman, L., Cromby, J., Hook, D., Papadopoulos, D., & Walkerdine, V. (2008). Creating subjectivities. *Subjectivity*, 22(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2008.8>
- Bonde, L. O., Juel, K., & Ekholm, O. (2018). Associations between music and health-related outcomes in adult non-musicians, amateur musicians and professional musicians: Results from a nationwide Danish study. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 27(4), 262–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2018.1439086>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bridgstock, R. (2005). Australian artists, starving and well-nourished: What can we learn from the prototypical protean career? *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 14(3), 40–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620501400307>
- Bridgstock, R. (2013). Not a dirty word: Arts entrepreneurship and higher education. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 12(2–3), 122–137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022212465725>

- Brinkmann, S. (2014). Unstructured and semistructured interviewing. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 277-299). Oxford University Press.
- Brown, S., & Stenner, P. (2009). *Psychology without foundations: History, philosophy and psychosocial theory*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Buchanan, I. (1997). The problem of the body in Deleuze and Guattari, or, what can a body do? *Body & Society*, 3(3), 73–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X97003003004>
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). *Loneliness: Human nature and the need for social connection* (1st. ed). Norton.
- Chamberlain, K. (2000). Methodolatry and qualitative health research. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 5(3), 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135910530000500306>
- Chamberlain, K. (2015). Reflexivity: Fostering research quality, ethicality, criticality and creativity. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.), *Critical health psychology* (2nd edition) (pp.165-181). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Clare, L., & Shakespeare, P. (2004). Negotiating the impact of forgetting: Dimensions of resistance in task-oriented conversations between people with early-stage dementia and their partners. *Dementia*, 3(2), 211–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1471301204042338>
- Coffey, J. (2013). Bodies, body work and gender: Exploring a Deleuzian approach. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 22(1), 3–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2012.714076>
- Coffey, J. (2015). ‘As long as I’m fit and a healthy weight, I don’t feel bad’: Exploring body work and health through the concept of ‘affect.’ *Journal of Sociology*, 51(3), 613–627. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783313518249>
- Coffey, J. (2020). Ugly feelings: Gender, neoliberalism and the affective relations of body concerns. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 29(6), 636–650. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2019.1658573>

- Coffey, J. (2022). Assembling wellbeing: Bodies, affects and the ‘conditions of possibility’ for wellbeing. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 25(1), 67–83.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2020.1844171>
- Colman, F. J. (2010). Affect. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Covid-19: Government provides more support for arts and culture sector*. (2022, February 2). Radio New Zealand. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/460701/covid-19-government-provides-more-support-for-arts-and-culture-sector>
- Creative NZ Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa*. (n.d.). Creative NZ Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa. <https://www.creativenz.govt.nz/About-Creative-NZ>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Hunter, J. (2003). Happiness in everyday life: The uses of experience sampling. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 4(2), 185–199.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024409732742>
- Currier, D. (2003). Feminist technological futures: Deleuze and body/technology assemblages. *Feminist Theory*, 4(3), 321–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647001030043005>
- Dalziel, P., Saunders, C., & Savage, C. (2019). *Culture, wellbeing, and the living standards framework: A perspective [Discussion paper]*. New Zealand Treasury.
<https://treasury.govt.nz/publications/dp/dp-19-02>
- D’Aquili, E. G., & Newberg, A. B. (1999). *The mystical mind: Probing the biology of religious experience*. Fortress Press.
- Davies, B. (2021). *Entanglement in the world’s becoming and the doing of new materialist inquiry*. Routledge.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *Expressionism in philosophy: Spinoza*. MIT Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1984). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Athlone.

- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Dickens, P. (2018). *NZ Music Community Wellbeing Survey*.
- Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2018). Advances and open questions in the science of subjective well-being. *Collabra: Psychology*, 4(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.115>
- Duff, C. (2014). *Assemblages of health: Deleuze's empiricism and the ethology of life*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8893-9>
- Dunedin City Council. (2015). *Ara toi Ōtepoti – our creative future: Dunedin's arts and culture strategy 2015*.
- E Tū. (n.d.). E Tū. <https://etu.nz/about-e-tu/history/>
- Eatough, V., & Smith, J. A. (2017). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (pp.193-209). SAGE.
- Filipović, A. (2015). Zones of non-communication: Music and the relative immanence of capitalism. *New Sound*, 46, 70–82. <https://doi.org/10.5937/news01545070F>
- Finlay, F., & Guiton, S. (2005). Chocolate poisoning. *BMJ*, 331(7517), 633. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.331.7517.633>
- Forsyth, A. J. M., Lennox, J. C., & Emslie, C. (2016). “That’s cool, you’re a musician and you drink”: Exploring entertainers’ accounts of their unique workplace relationship with alcohol. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 36, 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2016.07.001>
- Foucault, M. (1975). *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews*. Cornell University Press.

- Fox, N. J. (2011). The ill-health assemblage: Beyond the body-with-organs. *Health Sociology Review*, 20(4), 359–371. <https://doi.org/10.5172/hesr.2011.20.4.359>
- Fox, N. J. (2013). Creativity and health: An anti-humanist reflection. *Health*, 17(5), 495–511. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459312464074>
- Fox, N. J., & Alldred, P. (2014). New materialist social inquiry: Designs, methods and the research-assemblage. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 18(4), 399–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2014.921458>
- Fox, N. J., & Powell, K. (2023). Place, health and dis/advantage: A sociomaterial analysis. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 27(2), 226–243. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634593211014925>
- Fox, N. J., & Ward, K. J. (2008). Pharma in the bedroom. . . and the kitchen. . . . The pharmaceuticalisation of daily life. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 30(6), 856–868. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2008.01114.x>
- Fox, N. J., Ward, K. J., & O'Rourke, A. J. (2005). The 'expert patient': Empowerment or medical dominance? The case of weight loss, pharmaceutical drugs and the internet. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60(6), 1299–1309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.07.005>
- Fox, N., Ward, K., & O'Rourke, A. (2006). A sociology of technology governance for the information age: The case of pharmaceuticals, consumer advertising and the internet. *Sociology*, 40(2), 315–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038506062035>
- Francis, O. (2022). *Fears held for future of city music venue*. Otago Daily Times. <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/fears-held-future-city-music-venue>
- Fraser, S., Valentine, K., & Ekendahl, M. (2018). Drugs, brains and other subalterns: Public debate and the new materialist politics of addiction. *Body & Society*, 24(4), 58–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X18781738>

- Freeman, W. J. (1998). A neurobiological role of music in social bonding. In N. Wallin, B. Merkur, & S. Brown (Eds.), *Brain, music and dance* (pp. 411–424). MIT Press.
- Fullagar, S. (2017). Post-qualitative inquiry and the new materialist turn: Implications for sport, health and physical culture research. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 9(2), 247–257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676x.2016.1273896>
- Fullagar, S., & Malone, K. (2021). Deterritorializing. In K. Murriss, *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (1st ed., pp. 50–51). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003041153-26>
- Fullagar, S., & Taylor, C. A. (2021). Emotion/affect. In K. Murriss (Ed.), *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines* (1st ed., pp. 8–10). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003041153>
- Fuller, K., & Po Ching, G. (2022). *Profile of Creative Professionals*. NZ On Air and Creative New Zealand.
- Gilmour, F. E., & Monk, C. (2022). *We need to protect the life blood of our music scenes*. Otago Daily Times. <https://www.odt.co.nz/opinion/we-need-protect-life-blood-our-music-scenes>
- Gross, S. A., & Musgrave, G. (2016). *Can music make you sick?* Help Musicians UK.
- Gross, S. A., Musgrave, G., & Janciute, L. (2018). *Well-being and mental health in the gig economy*. <https://doi.org/10.16997/book32>
- Hickey-Moody, A. (2013). Affect as method: Feelings, aesthetics and affective pedagogy. *Deleuze and research methodologies*, 79-95. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2006-095>
- Hopner, V., & Liu, J. H. (2021). Relational ethics and epistemology: The case for complementary first principles in psychology. *Theory & Psychology*, 31(2), 179–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354320974103>

- Hudson, M., Milne, M., Reynolds, P., Russell, K., & Smith, B. (2010). *Te ara tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics*. Health Research Council of New Zealand.
<https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/te-ara-tika-guidelines-maori-research-ethics-0>
- Jackson, A. Y. (2010). Deleuze and the girl. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(5), 579–587. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2010.500630>
- Langley, E., & Bryant, C. (2022). *NZ On Air public awareness and attitudes survey report 2022*. NZ On Air.
- Lem, S. (1961). *Solaris*. MON, Walker
- Let's talk about universal basic income*. (n.d.). Musicians' Union. <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/all-campaigns/let-s-talk-about-universal-basic-income>
- Leyshon, A., & Watson, A. (2022). User as asset, music as liability: The moral economy of the “value gap” in a platform musical economy. In P. McDonald (Ed.), *The Routledge companion to media industries* (pp. 267–280). Routledge.
- Littler, J. (2013). Meritocracy as plutocracy: The marketising of “equality” under neoliberalism. *New Formations*, 80(80), 52–72. <https://doi.org/10.3898/NewF.80/81.03.2013>
- Livesey, G. (2010). Assemblage. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary* (pp. 18–19). Edinburgh University Press.
- Living standards framework dashboard*. (2022). New Zealand Treasury.
<https://lsfdashboard.treasury.govt.nz/wellbeing/>
- Lorraine, T. (2010). Lines of flight. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Loveday, C., Musgrave, G., & Gross, S.-A. (2022). Predicting anxiety, depression, and wellbeing in professional and nonprofessional musicians. *Psychology of Music*, 51(2), 508-522.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356221096506>

- Lovink, G., & Rossiter, N. (2018). Organization in platform capitalism. In R. Braidotti & M. Hlavajova (Eds.), *Posthuman glossary*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Massey University. (2017). *Code of ethical conduct for research, teaching and evaluations involving human participants: Revised code 2017*.
- McLeod., K. (2014). Orientating to assembling: Qualitative inquiry for more-than-human worlds. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13(1), 377–394.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691401300120>
- McLeod, K. (2018). *Wellbeing machine: How health emerges from the assemblages of everyday life* (Vol. 27). Carolina Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14461242.2018.1461575>
- McNeilly, H. (2021). *Shock closure of one of last remaining student pubs a “sad day for Dunedin.”* Stuff.co.nz. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/inside-business/300405722/shock-closure-of-one-of-last-remaining-student-pubs-a-sad-day-for-dunedin>
- Meet our players.* (2023). Dunedin Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.dso.org.nz/meet-our-players>
- Milestone reached in the Basic Income for the Arts pilot with commencement of the research programme.* (2023) Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/6b8e4-milestone-reached-in-the-basic-income-for-the-arts-pilot-with-commencement-of-the-research-programme/>
- Ministerial forum on alcohol advertising and sponsorship: Recommendations on alcohol advertising and sponsorship.* (2014). Manatū Hauora Ministry of Health. <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/ministerial-forum-on-alcohol-advertising-and-sponsorship-recommendations-on-alcohol-advertising-and-sponsorship-dec14.pdf>

- Mills, A. P. (2020). Scene and heard: Collecting the Dunedin Sound. *Popular Music History*, 13(1–2), 18–37. <https://doi.org/10.1558/pomh.39400>
- Musgrave, G. (2022). Music and wellbeing vs. musicians' wellbeing: Examining the paradox of music-making positively impacting wellbeing, but musicians suffering from poor mental health. *Cultural Trends*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2022.2058354>
- Musgrave, G. (2023). Musicians, their relationships, and their wellbeing: Creative labour, relational work. *Poetics*, 96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2023.101762>
- MusicHelps. (2016). *NZ music community wellbeing survey: Report 2016*.
- MusicHelps. (2019). *NZ music community wellbeing survey 2018—Report*.
- MusicHelps. (2022). MusicHelps. <https://www.musichelps.org.nz/>
- Neely, E. (2023). Theorising mother-baby-assemblages: The vital emergence of maternal health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115601>
- New Zealand Musicians' Union records. 1937-1991*. (MSS & Archives 2010/4). <https://archives.library.auckland.ac.nz/repositories/2/resources/860>
- New Zealand top 50 albums of 2022*. (2023). Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_top_50_albums_of_2022
- Our living standards framework*. (2022). New Zealand Treasury. <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework>
- Parker, I., & Fotaki, M. (2014). Prologue: Ian Parker on the psychosocial, psychoanalysis and critical psychology in conversation with Marianna Fotaki. In K. Kenny & M. Fotaki (Eds.), *The psychosocial and organization studies* (pp. 1–17). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137347855_1

- Patel, M., & Patel, N. (2019). Exploring research methodology. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 6(3), 48–55.
- Patterson, B. (2020). *Profile of Dunedin's arts and culture sector*. Ara Toi Strategy Team.
- Patton, P. (2010). Freedom. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Perkins, R., Ascenso, S., Atkins, L., Fancourt, D., & Williamon, A. (2016). Making music for mental health: How group drumming mediates recovery. *Psychology of Well-Being*, 6(1), 11.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13612-016-0048-0>
- Persinger, M. A. (1983). Religious and mystical experiences as artifacts of temporal lobe function: A general hypothesis. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 57(3), 1255–1262.
<https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1983.57.3f.1255>
- Potts, A. (2004). Deleuze on Viagra (or, what can a 'Viagra-body' do?). *Body & Society*, 10(1), 17–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X04041759>
- Price-Robertson, R., & Duff, C. (2016). Realism, materialism, and the assemblage: Thinking psychologically with Manuel DeLanda. *Theory & Psychology*, 26(1), 58–76.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354315622570>
- Recorded Music NZ. (2022). *Recorded Music NZ: Annual report 2022*.
- Recorded Music NZ. (2023). *The official NZ music charts: Chart rules*. Recorded Music NZ.
- Riley, S., & Chamberlain, K. (2022). Designing qualitative research in psychology. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research design*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529770278>
- Riley, S., & LaMarre, A. (2023). Developments in qualitative inquiry. In H. Cooper, M. N. Coutanche, L. M. McMullen, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and*

biological (Vol. 2) (2nd ed.). (pp. 5–23). American Psychological Association.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0000319-001>

Ringrose, J., & Coleman, R. (2013). Looking and desiring machines: A feminist Deleuzian mapping of bodies and affects. *Deleuze and research methodologies*. Edinburgh University Press.

Robson, M., & Riley, S. (2019). A Deleuzian rethinking of time in healthy lifestyle advice and change. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 13(4), e12448. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12448>

Roffe, J. (2010). Capitalism. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press.

Rose, N. (2013). The human sciences in a biological age. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 30(1), 3–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276412456569>

Rottenberg, C. (2018). Neoliberal meritocracy. *Cultural Studies*, 32(6), 997–999. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2018.1435703>

Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Harm Minimisation) Amendment Bill. (2022). New Zealand: New Zealand Parliament

Save our venues. (n.d.). Save Our Venues. <https://www.saveourvenues.co.nz/>

Scharff, C. (2016). The psychic life of neoliberalism: Mapping the contours of entrepreneurial subjectivity. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(6), 107–122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276415590164>

Schjoedt, U. (2009). The religious brain: A general introduction to the experimental neuroscience of religion. *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 21(3), 310–339. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006809X460347>

St. Pierre, E. A. (1997). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/095183997237278>

- St. Pierre, E. A. (2016). Rethinking the empirical in the posthuman. In C. A. Taylor & C. Hughes (Eds.), *Posthuman research practices in education* (pp. 25-36). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137453082>
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2021). Why post qualitative inquiry? *Qualitative Inquiry*, 27(2), 163–166.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420931142>
- St. Pierre, E. A., Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2016). New empiricisms and new materialisms: Conditions for new inquiry. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 16(2), 99–110.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708616638694>
- Stagoll, C. (2010). Becoming. In A Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Taylor, S., & Littleton, K. (2008). Art work or money: Conflicts in the construction of a creative identity. *The Sociological Review*, 56(2), 275–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.00788.x>
- The artists' social security fund*. (n.d.). Künstler Sozialkasse.
<https://www.kuenstlersozialkasse.de/ueber-uns/die-kuenstlersozialkasse>
- Global Wellness Institute. (2021). *The global wellness economy stands at \$4.4 trillion amidst the disruptions of COVID-19; is forecast to reach \$7 trillion by 2025*.
<https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/press-room/press-releases/2021-gwi-research-report/>
- Thorpe, H., Brice, J., & Clark, M. (2020). Feminist new materialisms, sport and fitness, a lively entanglement. *New Femininities in Digital, Physical and Sporting Cultures*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-56581-7>
- Vagle, M. D. (2018). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Routledge.
- van den Eynde, J., Fisher, A., & Sonn, C. (2014). *Pride, passion & pitfalls: Working in the Australian entertainment industry*.

- Viana, A. L. d'Ávila, & Silva, H. P. D. (2018). Meritocracia neoliberal e capitalismo financeiro: Implicações para a proteção social e a saúde. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 23(7), 2107–2118. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232018237.07582018>
- Visser, A., Lee, M., Barringham, T., & Salehi, N. (2022). Out of tune: Perceptions of, engagement with, and responses to mental health interventions by professional popular musicians—A scoping review. *Psychology of Music*, 50, 814–829. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03057356211019477>
- Waitangi Tribunal. (2011). *Ko Aotearoa Tēnei*. https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_68637556/Wai%20262,%20A001.pdf1.
- Whately, F. (Director). (2017). *David Bowie: The last five years*. BBC Films.
- Williams, J. (2010). Immanence. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Wilson, O., & Holland, M. (2020). Not our 'Dunedin sound': Responses to the historicisation of Dunedin popular music. *Popular Music*, 39(2), 187–207. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143019000278>
- World Health Organisation. (2021). *Health promotion glossary of terms 2021*.
- Zelizer, V. A. (2012). How I became a relational economic sociologist and what does that mean? *Politics & Society*, 40(2), 145–174. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329212441591>

Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



Well-being and the experiences of music-makers in Aotearoa New Zealand

INFORMATION SHEET

INTRODUCTION

Kia Ora, I'm Michael Cathro. I am currently undertaking a Master of Science with a Health Psychology sub-endorsement at Massey University. I am undertaking this thesis research in partial fulfilment of this qualification. My interest in this particular subject stems from my own music-making experiences and my associations with communities of music-makers. My previous research experience has involved assisting with studies investigating tinnitus, chronic pain, and functional neurological symptom disorder. During this research project I will be supervised by Professor Sarah Riley who is vastly experienced with supervising students completing qualitative research. Sarah is a Professor in Critical Health Psychology within the Massey University School of Psychology.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of how music-makers in Aotearoa New Zealand experience health and well-being (or lack of) in relation to their music practice and derivation of income from it. In addition to this, I am interested in what role wider social factors play in the health and well-being of music-makers. This research therefore, intends to give voice to the participants' experiences of being an income-earning music-maker.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

This study invites people based in Aotearoa New Zealand who are over the age of 18 and derive part (or all) of their income from their creation and performance of music to participate. People of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds are invited to participate in this research and participation would involve completing an interview with myself, the student-researcher, during which audio will be recorded for interview transcription purposes only. Participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Be over 18;
2. Derive part, or all, of your income from music creation and performance for at least the last 5 years;
3. Have been based in Aotearoa New Zealand for the last 5 years;
4. Be willing and comfortable sharing some of your experiences in music practice, and associated health, well-being, and lifestyle experiences

These criteria don't intend to discount the experiences of those who are under 18 or who have started earning income within the last 5 years but is implemented in order to capture the effects and experience of long-term involvement.

WHAT WOULD PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

As this is a qualitative study, I am seeking a depth of understanding of experience and so will look to recruit approximately 10 participants. To help gain an understanding of your experiences with music work, health, and well-being, I would like to ask questions pertaining to your experiences of performing music, your experiences of working within music, and your experiences of the value given by others to your work in music. This will be in the form of a semi-structured interview to take place over Zoom, or *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face) where geographically possible at an agreed location, either in a university interview room, a venue (e.g., Dog with Two Tails), at my studio space, or at your home. I will ask open ended questions to help you to explain to me your experiences in your own words.

In total, including an initial conversation and the interview itself, I expect to take a maximum of 75 minutes of your time.

If you do decide you wish to participate you would need to provide your preferred contact details so I can:

- Call you and go over the information sheet and interview schedule, answer any questions you might have, and amend any of the interview questions to better suit you
- Schedule an interview time (via video call, or in-person if possible/preferred)
- After the interview, provide you with the transcript of your interview for any amendments, additions, or retractions you wish to make
- Provide you with a summary of the findings
- Provide you with a consent form for you to read and sign before interview

Following the interview, audio data will be transcribed to text to prepare for analysis. All participants will be anonymised using pseudonyms, and all identifying information in the interviews redacted e.g., references to people and artists. Please see data management section below for more information regarding this.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING?

As the creative process and the performative aspects of music can be a personal endeavour, there is potential for difficult emotions or difficult subject matter to arise. You are not obliged to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable answering, and if you feel distressed, we will cease the interview at your discretion to take a break, postpone until a later time, or withdraw your participation completely no questions asked. While I will make every effort to protect your identity by using a pseudonym and redacting any personal information or references that could make you identifiable, I cannot guarantee your anonymity. However, I will provide you the opportunity to review your interview transcript so that you can remove anything you do not wish to have included in the results.

If you would like further support as a result of participating in this study, I will provide information on available, relevant support services including MusicHelps Wellbeing Service: a free 24 hour professional counselling service for New Zealanders earning a living from music and experiencing emotional distress (0508 MUSIC HELPS; wellbeing@musichelps.org.nz), and Lifeline (call 0800 543 354; text 4357).

It is my hope that through participating in this study and sharing your experiences, that you might feel validation and a sense of having been heard. The findings here will contribute to the existing research on health and well-being in musicians, but fill a gap in the literature of qualitative research within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. This research is unique in that it seeks to understand individual experience while situating that experience within its social context.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Participation is voluntary and there is absolutely no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in this study, only if it is your wish to share your experiences. If you do decide to participate you have the right to:

- Withdraw from the interview at any time (including during the interview)
- Withdraw your interview data up until 2 weeks following your review of your transcript (after which time data will have been absorbed into analysis)
- Request further information or ask any questions at any time before or during participation by calling me or my supervisor directly (contact details included below)
- Request amendments to the interview environment, including any cultural considerations (whānau are welcome to accompany participants to interviews, participants are invited to begin with karakia and/or pēpeha if they wish)
- To discuss including further questions or omitting others from the interview schedule to better reflect experiences
- Decline to answer any questions without any reason
- Take a break at any time during the interview, and ask for the recorder to be stopped at any time during the interview
- Review and make amendments to interview transcript up to two weeks following your interview
- Be sent a summary of the research findings
- Request a copy of all of your data (including transcripts and audio recordings)

DATA MANAGEMENT

I will record audio of our interviews and personally transcribe it to prepare the data for analysis. Audio, transcripts, and data (e.g., consent forms) will be stored on a secure Massey University OneDrive account, and a password protected back-up hard drive that only I will have access to. Identifying information will be stored separately from anonymised data to protect identities. Audio recordings will be destroyed once the research is completed and the conditions for completion of the master's thesis are satisfied. Data will be kept until after examination of my thesis, after which time (aside from any published material) this will be destroyed.

Your data will be anonymised at the transcription stage using a pseudonym to protect your identity, and only audio will be recorded in-person and during video conferencing.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Please feel welcome to email, text, or call me (Michael Cathro) at any time with any questions or concerns about this research. My supervisor Professor Sarah Riley is also available to be contacted regarding this study.

Michael Cathro
Master of Science student



Professor Sarah Riley
Professor in Critical Health Psychology
+64 4 979 3621
S.Riley@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/24. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

'Maria'

In terms of her wellbeing, 'Maria' described experiencing various benefits from her work as a music-maker as well as various stressors that she experienced as threatening her wellbeing. My analysis and interaction with the data has produced a number of superordinate themes relating to 'Maria's' experiences. In the theme '*Enhanced Social Wellbeing (Ensemble)*', the participant described a sense of improved wellbeing through increased social connectedness, experienced through collaborating and sharing experiences with her band, as well as an affirmation of identity through an experiential mutuality with other music-makers. In '*Feeling Undervalued (Flat Notes)*' 'Maria' makes sense of how music-making work is viewed by others, understood as being shaped by media portrayals and how this contributes to an undervaluing of the work because of the feeling that others think she is lucky to be doing it. Other (yet to be drafted) themes related to 'Maria's' wellbeing as a music-maker include: Family tensions and Parental Considerations; Gender-related Challenges in Music-work; Income Stress; and Working Conditions.

Superordinate Theme 1: Enhanced Social Well-being (Ensemble)

The participant variously described enhanced social well-being as an aspect of music work. Wellbeing was enhanced through the shared experience of creating and performing with others, while also feeling a sense of belonging and mutuality with other music-makers.

1. Subtheme: Increased Social Connection through Music-making
2. Subtheme: Beyond Language

Subtheme: Increased Social Connection through Music-making

Deepened connections through creating and performing music with others was experienced by the participant as a benefit of music-making and described as an interplay (intermingling?) of 'energy'. While 'playing' is commonly used by music-makers to describe performing together or engaging with an instrument, at times in the interview it was used to describe a means of learning to manage interpersonal relationships, alluded to as "[playing] in the sandpit" or by 'having fun' 'playing' with other people. A sense of enjoyment was derived from musical interaction:

'when we're doing this, it's in there in the studio and it kind of morphs into the final song within the studio. And I guess the most enjoyable part is just like feeding off each other or their energy. Because even if you're the one doing the track, there's often other people in the room and everyone's sort of talking and going, what about this'

Here 'Maria' speaks about how she enjoys 'feeding off each other' as a way to describe how the group energises each other when working on songs by receiving and contributing 'energy' as they work towards a common purpose. This is in harmony with research showing that social interaction centred

around music-making supports group identity, collaborative learning, social support, and a feeling of belonging (Creech et al., 2014).

'[We're] sharing like the same language. There is a commonality, you know, everyone kind of comes together and it's just like, it will all wash away as soon as you start jamming with someone. You find common ground'

Here 'Maria' describes experiencing musical interaction as like communicating in a language that only music-makers understand. This indicates a feeling of understanding and being understood by other music-makers in a way that perhaps isn't possible with others. 'Maria' describes this as a 'common ground' in which all else will 'wash away' leaving only the immediate experience of being-in-music. While the ubiquity of music and its diffusion through myriad aspects of people's lives is testament to some underlying universality, 'Maria's' experience is dualistic: while she is seemingly describing an exclusive language for music-makers in constructing musical arrangements, musical interaction can also serve as a non-verbal being-with. Harmony achieved through (setting aside lyrical content) non-verbal sound.

Superordinate Theme 2: Feeling Undervalued (Flat Notes/Bum Notes)

'Maria' described feeling her work was undervalued, perceived as an underappreciation by both the general public and some venue owners of neither the significant amount of work that goes into being an accomplished musician, or the conditions under which musicians often work. This was spoken about as contractors playing 'a game' to pay as little as possible ("people are trying to pay you off in booze"), while public perception of what musicians do was experienced as misleadingly 'glorified' and 'preconceived'.

Subtheme 1: Misleading Public Perception

Subtheme 2: "Paid in piss and food": Big Investment, Small Returns

Subtheme 1: Misleading Public Perception

'Maria' understood public perception of music-making work as something wider society has developed ideas of 'glitz and glamour' about through media discourse, described as 'glorified like in the movies'. 'Maria' countered this perception by describing her contrasting experience of the work at times as 'pretty grim' and 'fuckin tiring'.

'They perceive things to be glorified like in the movies, but it's really not. I don't think people maybe understand that. They might think "You were lucky to do this". And it's like am I lucky? Or have I spent like, all my life, hours and hours and hours of practice, you know, to get like, to get prepared for a moment that may never.'

In this extract, 'Maria' describes experiencing public perception as out of step with many of the realities of music-making, explicating that 'it's really not' glorious. Public perception is described as a belief that it is fortunate to work as a music-maker ('They might think "You were lucky to do this"'), while 'Maria' understands her work as a music-maker as borne from preparing "all my life, hours and hours and hours of practice" before describing her experience of profound risk, her life's work as

potentially fruitless if the moment she understands as making it all worthwhile doesn't come to fruition ('to get prepared for a moment that may never').

'if you're doing it for all the glitz and glamour or what people perceive it to be so that's not going to be your driver. Like [if you] really truly like love it or you have it in your bones pursue it in some form or another and don't rely on it as a source of money'

Here 'Maria' understands public perception of music-making as constituting 'glitz and glamour or what people perceive it to be'. She describes how while that perception might draw people into wanting to be music-makers ('if you're doing it all for the glitz and glamour'), her experience of the work is that seeking 'glitz and glamour' is not going to be sustainable motivation for working as a music-maker ('that's not going to be your driver'). 'Maria' describes music-making as something embodied, understanding it as something you can 'have in your bones', as work that music-makers do despite the money.

References

Creech, A., Hallam, S., Varvarigou, M. & McQueen, H. (2014). *Active Ageing with Music: Supporting Wellbeing in the Third and Fourth Ages*. IOE Press.

Appendix C: Mind-map example of thematic development





MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Well-being and the experiences of music-makers in Aotearoa New Zealand

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Authority for Release of Transcripts

Page 1 of 1

Well-being and the experiences of music-makers in Aotearoa New Zealand

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study. I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time within the two weeks immediately following the interview.

Please circle the following that apply:

1. I am taking part via: In-person interview Zoom Interview
2. I agree to my interview being audio recorded for transcription and used in the analysis, final thesis, and results (all identifying information will be removed/replaced with a pseudonym) –

Yes No

3. I would like to review my transcript following transcription – **Yes No**
4. **I would like a summary of the project results emailed to me – Yes No**
5. **I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet**

Yes No

Below are some demographic questions. Providing this information is entirely optional. If you do provide this information, I may use it to inform my interview questions (for example, asking questions how this relates to your experiences working in music). I may also use this information to describe the dataset as a whole when I write my report (for example I might say how many of the study participants were Māori or Pākehā). However, I will not use this information to generalise from your specific experience to all people of a community you belong to.

What is your ethnic identification? _____

Please state your preferred gender pronouns _____

If you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community please explain how _____

Are there any other aspects of your identity or community that you belong to that you feel impact on your experiences of wellbeing working in music? (e.g., sexuality, gender, class, family socio- economic status, parental status, illness, disability etc) _____

Please tick 'YES' if you are happy for me to include a question about your music-making experiences relating to any of the demographic information you have shared. **YES**

Declaration by Participant:

I _____ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____ Or initial here:

Appendix F: Example Excerpt of Coded Transcript

	PARTICIPANT #	Interpretative Codes –
If I don't do something with other career now, never will	406 407 Participant 7	
Pandemic stalled progress	408 Yeah, I mean, I guess until last year, last year. I started to have this feeling like fuck, I need to do something with this. Otherwise, I'm never going to and that partly like I think was like, because nothing had been	an internalisation of social expectations of success – pursue other career
Wants socially accepted version of success	409 happening with the band due to the pandemic like we hadn't been progressing in an external sense of progress. Like we've been recording but we had I hadn't been seeing progress in a way that was validated by society. So maybe I felt like oh shit, I should actually go and be a [area of study]. So that society sees me as a success	
Feels authentic	410 411 412 413 414 415 Interviewer	
Instills sense of purpose	416 Okay, I guess just sort of, just to kind of wrap up what would you say, are the most beneficial things that being a music-maker has given you or enabled you to experience?	Music-making as an authentic sense of purpose
The only thing I do that isn't driven by outside expectations	417 418 419 Participant 7	Music-making as not driven by others agendas
The association of drugs and alcohol with music is harmful.	420 A sense of purpose that feels like true to myself, and not one that I can like justify outside of any like, societal expectation. Like I just truly believe that it is the best thing for me to be doing. And I can't say that about anything else in my life. Everything else like I feel like there's some other like agenda or like, there's an influence that's come from somebody that it's not like it's not truly me.	
All drugs have benefits when used correctly	421 422 423 424 425 Interviewer	Alcohol and drugs as beneficial to health when used correctly, but harmfully associated with music
Consumption of music is surrounded by harmful consumption of drugs & alcohol	426 Is there anything else that you think that I should ask or that or that you think should be thought of around well-being and music-making that I maybe haven't addressed?	
	427 428 429 Participant 7	
	430 I feel really strongly about I'm really deeply troubled, I should say by the association of alcohol and drugs and music in particular. And in a way that's like really harmful because they can be like really great. They have really great health benefits. All drugs. When used correctly, but we've designed the consumption of music to also be surrounded by like harmful consumption of alcohol and drugs. And that's just like I'm just I'm really troubled by that and I don't know how to fix it.	
	431 432 433 434 435 436 Interviewer	
	437 Maybe there are a lot of people I've talked to that. That's a really big player in everybody's experience.	
	438 439 Participant 7	

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

To get a really good understanding of what it's like to be a musician from your perspective and how that impacts on your well-being, I'm going to ask you about particular moments and experiences, and then I'm going to ask you some more broad, general questions.

- Can you tell me how you would describe your own music?
- How did you come to make music? Why did you begin making music in the first place?
 - o So it sounds like it's been a way for you to connect with others/find a sense of identity/experience catharsis?
- At what point do you think you started becoming aware of a financial aspect of making music?

Prior to this interview I asked you to keep in mind some particular moments or experiences relating to music, so I will start off by asking you about these:

- **Can you tell me about a specific favourite experience or peak moment for you relating to music**
 - o For this research I'm interested in how we feel our experiences, can you remember what you were feeling/thinking? What contributed to those feelings?
 - o Where did this happen?
 - o Do you remember what was going on for you in your life more generally at that time? how did it fit into that?
 - o It's obviously an important experience for you, how did it affect you subsequently/afterwards?/ looking back on that moment what are your thoughts about it now?
 - o and taking that moment as an example, can you say something about how those kinds of (exciting/happy/whatever phrase may be used to describe it) experiences impact on your sense of overall well-being or health?
- **Can you tell me about a specific experience relating to music which was mundane or boring for you? (e.g. waiting around at soundcheck)**
 - o Again, can you remember what you were feeling/thinking? What contributed to those feelings?
 - o Where did this happen?
 - o Do you remember what was going on for you in your life more generally at that time? how did it fit into that?
 - o How do you think it affected you subsequently/afterwards?/ looking back on that moment what are your thoughts about it now?
 - o and taking that moment as an example, can you say something about how those kinds of (exciting/happy/whatever phrase may be used to describe it) experiences impact on your sense of overall well-being or health?
- **Can you tell me about a moment or experience working in music where you feel like your wellbeing was undermined?**

- Again, can you remember what you were feeling/thinking? What contributed to those feelings?
- Where did it happen?
- Do you remember what was going on for you in your life more generally at that time? how did it fit into that?
- How do you think it affected you subsequently/afterwards?/ looking back on that moment what are your thoughts about it now?
- and taking that moment as an example, can you say something about how those kinds of (upsetting/unhealthy/whatever phrase may be used to describe it) experiences impact on your sense of overall well-being or health?

And more generally

- What other things make you feel good about working as a music-maker?
- What other things about working as a music-maker that you think are damaging to your wellbeing?
- How similar are your experiences to other musicians do you think?
- What do you think that other people might find beneficial about working as a music-maker?
- What do you think other people might find difficult about working as a music-maker?

[Questions to ask if not already covered]

We have covered issues about well-being on tour already, but is there anything else that you think is useful for me to know?

- What is your experience of going away on tour and how this affects your wellbeing positively and/or negatively?
- What do you think other people (say non-working musicians) think life is like for people who work as music-makers?
 - And what do you think their attitudes towards music-makers are like?
- How do you supplement your income?
 - What is your experience of trying to balance music with other vocational responsibilities?
- What is your experience of finding places to write, compose, and practise in?
 - How has this contributed to or constrained your ability to make music?

- What is your experience of finding suitable places to perform in?
 - o How has this contributed to or constrained your ability to perform?

And finally (compulsory question)

If we sent you to another solar system to try and convince some aliens that they should start a band, what might you tell them?

And how might you convince them that they should tour Earth?