
Article:
MacGregor, E.H. orcid.org/0000-0002-4026-8816 (2020) Participatory performance in the secondary music classroom and the paradox of belonging. Music Education Research, 22 (2). pp. 229-241. ISSN 1461-3808

https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2020.1737927

Participatory performance in the secondary music classroom and the paradox of belonging

Music Education Research

Elizabeth H. MacGregor

Selwyn College, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

elizabeth.h.macgregor@gmail.com
ORCiD: 0000-0002-4026-8816
Twitter: @EHMacGregor

Participatory performance, as defined by Thomas Turino, holds the potential to contribute to enhanced social bonding, cooperation, and the realisation of community among participants – despite the conflict or 'paradox' between self-expression and collective affiliation which it often provokes. This study considers how managing this underlying 'paradox of belonging' can positively contribute to the development of participatory performance's social benefits. It presents a case study of practitioner research situated in a UK secondary school, in which pupils (aged eleven to thirteen) faced the paradox of belonging during participatory performances of Terry Riley's *In C*. Pupils perceived an emerging conflict between individual ability and interpersonal affinity, and in response proposed and practised different models of leadership to avoid, activate, and transcend the paradox. The study concludes by evaluating how these same responses could allow other participatory practices in secondary music classrooms to equip pupils to negotiate the paradox of belonging.

Keywords: participatory performance; classroom; paradox; belonging; community; *In C*; practitioner research

Participatory performance and the paradox of belonging

In many societies, participatory music-making is at the heart of social life. Defined by the ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino (2008, 26) as 'a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential

participants', participatory performance is where 'ordinary citizens derive the musical and social benefits of performing' (Regelski 2014, 79). For many children, participatory practices are the mainstay of their spontaneous music-making outside the classroom, such as playground clapping games and chants (Campbell 2010; Harwood and Marsh 2012).

According to Turino (2009, 95), the inclusivity of participatory performance offers a significant experiential model for 'more sustainable ways of living among people in capitalist societies'. Sustainable living, he suggests, involves the social bonding, cooperation, and realisation of community necessary for enabling societies to meet their present needs without compromising the needs of future generations (Turino 2009; Maida and Beck 2018). However, most secondary music classrooms in the UK, such as the one investigated in this study, foreground presentational performance over participatory performance.

Presentational performance, in which pupils learn to prepare music for performance to an audience, emphasises the importance of a finished artistic product, inducting pupils into existing artistic practices through traditional 'master-apprentice' tuition. Even when taught in large groups – such as in whole-class instrumental teaching, typical of practices modelled on Venezuela's *El Sistema* and the English Wider Opportunities scheme (Fautley, Kinsella, and Whittaker 2017) – it prioritises the development of individual virtuosity over inclusive participation and collective negotiation. Participatory performance, on the other hand, regards individuals' participation as more important than a finished artistic product, replacing the self-aggrandisement associated with artistic achievement with self-effacement (Williams 2013). It may involve inclusive classroom activities such as group improvisation using body percussion, which provide an uncompetitive and supportive environment for

pupils to engage with the influence of their own music-making on that of the collective whole. Pupils are challenged to balance social assimilation and social differentiation by contributing to the group's wider interests as well as meeting their own musical aspirations, therefore engaging in possibilities for the realisation of community:

> As relatively cooperative, egalitarian spaces that are about sociality, bonding, and fun, rather than about hierarchy, competition, financial achievement, or the creation of arts objects for listening, participatory performance provides a powerful experiential model of alternative values and ways of being for people in capitalist societies. (Turino 2009, 112)

Turino describes this enhanced experience of social bonding and cooperation as resulting from factors including flow states and the synchrony of movement and sound. But he also recognises that participatory performance can stimulate the 'paradox of belonging': the underlying conflict between the desire for both self-expression and collective affiliation, which occurs when diverse individuals – each with unique skills and dispositions – are brought together to contribute to a group task which exceeds their own individual capacities (Smith and Berg 1987; Lewis 2000; Smith and Lewis 2011; Johansen 2018). 'Participatory values place a priority on performing in ways that invite participation, even if this might limit a given performer's desire for personal expression or experimentation' (Turino 2008, 33).

Though such a paradox may seem to oppose the enhanced social bonding and cooperation otherwise available through participatory performance, in the field of management studies, paradox theory posits that dealing with such conflicts is in fact essential for fostering community. Through challenging participants to find alternative means of self-expression that contribute appropriately to collective interests, the paradox of belonging helps promote the learning, creativity, flexibility, and resistance necessary for community cohesion (Smith and Lewis 2011).

Paradoxes – defined as 'contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time' (Smith and Lewis 2011, 386) – are integral to group life. They cannot, therefore, be untangled or resolved. Attempts to do so can prompt vicious cycles of rigid thinking, anxiety, and defensiveness, especially for those who struggle with social apprehension (Smith and Lewis 2011; Calic and Hélie 2018; Medaille and Usinger 2018). But when groups seek to understand, accept, and even embrace their internal paradoxes, they unlock successful participation (Murnighan and Conlon 1991), enhanced creativity (Smith and Lewis 2011; Calic and Hélie 2018), and the achievement of 'optimal distinctiveness' – simultaneously satisfying individuals' needs for social assimilation and differentiation, therefore aiding social bonding and cooperation (Brewer 1991; Sheldon and Bettencourt 2002). Virtuous cycles of response can involve separating either side of the conflict, attempting to balance or connect its contradictions, or transcending the paradox by using it as a starting point for developing new opportunities (Smith and Lewis 2011; Johansen 2018).

Though paradox theory has developed principally in the field of management studies, it has the potential to constitute a valuable lens through which to understand the possible social benefits of participatory performance. There already exists some precedent for applying it to wider participatory practices: Jane Lê and Rebecca Bednarek (2016) argue that paradoxes are socially constructed within everyday practices, both inside and outside large-scale institutions; the successful application of paradox theory to collaborative learning situations in higher education (Medaille and Usinger 2018) and the working practices of string quartets (Murnighan and Conlon 1991) demonstrates this to be the case. In music studies specifically, Stephanie Pitts' (2005) research into the nature of musical participation identifies potential paradoxes

including individuals' experience of conflicting personal and social goals, personal and corporate responsibilities, and self-discovery and group coherence.

This study therefore aims to mobilise the paradox of belonging as a means of investigating the social bonding and cooperation associated with participatory performance, exploring how participants respond when faced with conflicts between desires for self-expression and collective affiliation. In particular, it addresses the implementation of participatory performance in a UK secondary music classroom. Given the significance of the apparent social benefits of participatory performance – and the ever-growing calls to make music education more relevant to pupils' typically participatory music-making outside the classroom (Green 2008; Tobias 2015; Kruse 2016; Pitts and Robinson 2016; Pitts 2017; Youth Music 2019) – it seems remarkable that participatory performance remains side-lined in most secondary music classrooms. Both in the UK and countries such as the US (Harwood and Marsh 2012; Regelski 2014; Thibeault 2015) teachers' professional expertise tends to concentrate on presentational performance, meaning that classroom music often emulates university models and devalues the potential of participatory performance to aid pupils' long-term musical and social wellbeing (Regelski 2014). Though curriculum documents such as the English National Curriculum stipulate that pupils should be taught to 'play and perform confidently in a range of solo *and ensemble* contexts' (DfE 2014, 259; emphasis mine), their stress on increasing self-confidence, fluency, and accuracy foregrounds individual capability and virtuosity over collective participation.

Yet if participatory performance has the potential to equip pupils to negotiate the paradox of belonging, it should be in the interests of society to introduce it into classrooms. Although simulating traditional participatory practices within the bounds of a classroom will inevitably result in only a superficial fabrication of Turino's (2009, 98)

'interactive social occasions' – with the demands of classroom performativity conflicting with the aims of inclusivity and creativity (Ball 2003; Burnard and White 2008) – similar practices can be facilitated and fostered. Turino himself (2008, 227) acknowledges that the possibilities of participatory performance for 'social bonding' and 'integration of individual selves' are available through numerous practices, and not just those of certain cultures. Therefore, if the classroom is transformed into a space where participation is always of highest value – so the paradox of belonging is brought to the fore – there is potential for these possibilities to be realised (Thibeault 2015).

With this in mind, the following case study of pupils' performances of Terry Riley's *In C* aims to investigate how pupils respond to the paradox of belonging during participatory performance in the classroom. It explores pupils' perceptions of an emerging conflict between individual ability and interpersonal affinity; considers how they propose and practise different models of leadership to avoid, activate, and transcend this paradox; and evaluates how these same responses could be achieved through other participatory practices in secondary music classrooms.

Case study: performing Terry Riley's *In C*

Context

My research was carried out in a small, independent preparatory school in Cambridgeshire, an affluent county in the East of England. The school has an average class size of sixteen (whereas state school classes may number around thirty), and comprises mainly pupils from the UK, with some international pupils from Europe and East Asia. In total, my study involved thirty-one pupils: one Year Seven class and one Year Eight class. The Year Seven class comprised seventeen pupils, twelve boys and five girls, aged between eleven and twelve. The Year Eight class comprised fourteen

pupils, seven boys and seven girls, aged between twelve and thirteen. At the time of the study, I was employed as a part-time music teacher at the school and was able to carry out my study as 'practitioner research' (Pring 2015) while teaching the classes' weekly seventy-minute classroom music lessons.

In my role as both practitioner and researcher, I quickly became aware of my dual responsibilities and influences in the classroom. As teacher, I remained responsible for all aspects of classroom management – from the social and behavioural to the educational and musical – while delivering the pedagogy that I was researching. This meant that my teaching was unavoidably influenced by my biases as researcher, and my observations as researcher were necessarily influenced by my relative strengths and weaknesses as teacher. In acknowledging how 'professional judgement is always value-laden' (Wilson 2013, 5), I saw how my values and attitudes influenced my interactions with pupils, and were consequently replicated or reflected in the values they expressed and their responses to the paradox of belonging. This became particularly obvious in class discussions, in which my tendency to encourage product-oriented evaluation ('anything we could have done to make it sound less boring?') was reciprocated in pupils' comments about their performances being 'boring', 'messed up', 'good', or 'flow[ing]'. I therefore avoided making direct remarks about issues of participation and belonging in the hope that pupils would not be unduly biased by my implicit aims and expectations.

The study was granted ethical approval by the Cambridge University Faculty of Music Research Ethics Committee and the senior management of the school. Informed consent was obtained from pupils and their parents or guardians. All participants were

made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and assured that their personal data would be stored securely and anonymised using changed names.

Methods

My practitioner research took the form of a qualitative, ethnographic investigation. Over six months of immersion in the classroom context, I became familiar with my pupils' cultures and worldviews, and came to terms with my own positionality in influencing and later interpreting their comments and actions (Wilson 2013; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2017). The case study presented here comprises 'an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system' (Merriam and Tisdell 2016, 37), examining a particular four-week performance project undertaken during the wider ethnographic investigation. This project focussed on Riley's 1964 composition *In C* (Figure 1), and aimed to explore how pupils responded to the paradox of belonging in participatory performance.

The inclusivity of *In C* made it particularly appropriate for investigating participatory performance in the classroom. Comprising fifty-three ostinati, the piece can be played by any number of performers on any number of instruments. Beginning in unison, performers gradually diverge as they individually determine how many times to repeat each ostinato. Since this allows participants to progress at their own pace, it can accommodate pupils from across a broad spectrum of instrumental experience, such as those in my Year Seven and Eight classes – many of whom had little to no experience of playing an instrument. *In C* also shares a number of other musical attributes with traditional participatory practices, eliminating artist-audience distinctions, inviting everyone to participate, and foregrounding collective activity over individual virtuosity. It requires individual self-expression to be channelled through a collective vehicle (Potter 2000; Fink 2005; Carl 2009), as individuals act 'as a group rather than as a group of multiplied soloists' (Nyman 1999, 146). Its use of repeated patterns provides

'security in constancy', and its dense texture creates a 'cloaking function' which inspires participation and reduces emphasis on individual contributions (Turino 2008, 40-46). It therefore provides the musical qualities from which opportunities for enhanced social bonding and cooperation could develop.

Within the four-week project of collectively performing *In C*, each class began with two weeks to learn to play the piece from the score, practising individually, in pairs, as a class, and through workshopping a small-group demonstration. Most pupils (primarily those with little previous experience of instrumental playing) chose to work at electronic keyboards, though in Year Seven Lavinia played her flute and Jared his guitar, and in Year Eight Renée played her 'cello. In order to fulfil Riley's ([1964] 2005, 2) directive 'that everyone plays the figures correctly', I provided pupils with a keyboard diagram, ensured they could play the correct pitches and rhythms, and organised some practice time for playing extracts of the piece as a whole class. In the third week, we attempted to play the piece collectively. In preparation, we watched a short video of a wildebeest stampede, to illustrate Riley's ([1964] 2005, 1) performance directions: 'above all, performers must not wander ahead or lag behind the nucleus of the ensemble in order to avoid being separated from the context'. We then played the piece several times (while I kept the pulse on woodblocks) and discussed and appraised our attempts with reference to the wildebeest herd analogy. After their final performance, Year Eight then filled in a worksheet describing their experiences (see Table 1 – due to time constraints, Year Seven did not complete the worksheet). The following week both classes listened to and shared feedback on audio recordings of their performances.

Data collection took place throughout the performance project, encompassing lesson plans, observational field notes, recordings of performances and class

discussions, and the worksheets completed by Year Eight. Using multiple sources of data allowed triangulation of methods to establish the study's internal validity. Class discussion – an essential but limited means of negotiation and evaluation during performance – could be triangulated with my own lesson observations, recordings of performances, and pupils' completed worksheets. This was particularly necessary since pupils' contributions to discussions were not directly representative of their musical participation: though all pupils participated in performances, not all actively partook in discussions.

After transcribing the recorded class discussions, the data were collated for qualitative analysis using multiple cycles of coding and categorisation. The initial cycles of coding analysed the data from each class separately using values coding (Saldaña 2009). The musical values and preferences that pupils expressed during the performance project were identified using codes such as 'consonant harmony' and 'coherent structure', with further codes showing supporting factors such as 'help from peers' and 'help from teacher'. The following cycles of coding then triangulated the data from both classes and arranged the codes into categories – of values, conflicts between values, and reactions to such conflicts – indicating pupils' responses to the paradox of belonging. While seeking to retain the authentic pupil voice wherever possible in transcriptions, it was beyond the scope of the analysis to consider the additional interpretational value of extra-verbal vocalisations. The extracts presented in the following discussion have therefore been edited for ease of reading: spellings have been corrected, and vocalisations such as 'err', 'um', 'like', and repeated words have been removed. Clarifications of context are provided where necessary in square brackets, and where longer portions of transcripts have been removed (such as behavioural disruptions) these cuts have been marked using [...].

Findings and discussion

My close analysis of the data suggested that pupils experienced the paradox of belonging during participatory performance through two primary conflicting desires – for individual ability and interpersonal affinity. Pupils' desire to further their individual ability included striving for individual confidence and progress, and was bound up with the importance of musical accuracy – being able to read the music, play the correct pitches and rhythms, and stay in tempo. But simultaneously, pupils sought a high degree of interpersonal affinity. They took encouragement from their peers' confidence and from their collective progress, and perceived collective like-mindedness as necessary for achieving musical variety and interest.

Within this tension between individual ability and interpersonal affinity, pupils responded through proposing different models of leadership. In some circumstances, they followed the direction of a designated leader 'like in a chain reaction'. On other occasions, they suggested predetermining the musical structure so that the class would stay 'a bit closer together', or using gestures as a means of communicating. Table 2 summarises the relationship between individual ability, interpersonal affinity, and models of leadership, each of which will be addressed in turn in the findings that follow.

Individual ability

It was clear from the outset of the performance project that pupils were acutely aware of their own individual ability. Pupils who lacked confidence in their own abilities felt unable to make progress. In response to the question 'how did you improve between the first and last performance?', Sophie wrote 'I didn't. I only did 1-4 so'. On the contrary, pupils who were the most confident and made most progress were attributed a certain degree of prestige. Year Seven pupils were always keen to know who had made the most progress:

EFFIE:	Who got the furthest?
ME:	Who got the furthest? I'm not sure, I think we all stopped around...
SEBASTIAN:	I got to eleven.
ME:	I don't think many people got past eleven. We're going to talk about...
MIKHAIL:	I got past eleven.
ME:	Did you? Where did you get to Mikhail?
MIKHAIL:	Twelve.

After Year Seven's final performance, it transpired that Hannah had reached pattern sixteen – three patterns further than anyone else. Paul and Charlie called her a 'show off': a backhanded compliment only reinforced by Hannah playing extracts of *Für Elise* during class discussion.

But pupils also acknowledged that individual ability was necessary for making progress, and not just for gaining prestige. They realised that in order to keep up with one another they needed to be able to play with musical accuracy. This was particularly evident while pupils rehearsed in the first two weeks of the project. Pupils regularly asked for help playing the correct pitches and rhythms: some annotated their scores, labelled the keys of their keyboards, or relied heavily on the keyboard diagram. Others articulated the musical benefits of accurate playing: Jackson commended the steady tempo and rhythmic playing of his classmates who demonstrated *In C*, and Cecilia and Sophie highlighted the importance of maintaining an accurate tempo in their written responses to the question 'what could we have improved if we played it again?'.

Although nine pupils in Year Eight wrote that they found reading and playing the correct pitches and rhythms the most challenging aspect of performing *In C*, six cited their ability to play more of the patterns correctly as their primary improvement between the first and last performances. Though this may have been related to their

desire to please me – since I spent much time encouraging them to read the music correctly – those pupils with greatest ability and confidence also instilled a desire for musical accuracy in their peers. Their enthusiastic contributions to discussion highlighted the prestige associated with correct theoretical knowledge of pitch and rhythm:

ME:	Who can tell me which note value is in number eleven? Yes?
HANNAH:	They're quarters.
ME:	They're quarters of crotchets, so what do we call them?
PAUL:	Crotchets.
HANNAH:	Semiquavers.
ME:	Semiquavers. Great, thanks Hannah. Now I am tapping quavers [taps quavers]. So semiquavers are [sings semiquavers, the class joins in clapping and playing].

Interpersonal affinity

Pupils' concern with each other's knowledge and ability began to reveal the importance they attributed to interpersonal affinity. They found their individual confidence to be bolstered by that of their like-minded peers, and made the most of opportunities to practise together. Sophie, for example, worked diligently when practising with her partner Renée; but when Renée played the 'cello in the performances, Sophie became more apprehensive over her own ability at the keyboard.

Pupils' collective confidence also contributed to their perceptions of successful outcomes. Naomi wrote that the greatest improvement between the first and last performances in Year Eight was that 'we carried on further in the piece despite the jumbled middle section'. Through responding to the confidence of their peers, pupils overcame mistakes, made greater individual progress, and so achieved greater collective progress. Pietro described the benefits of Year Eight's collective progress:

ME:	What was particularly good about that performance? Pietro?
PIETRO:	We got quite far.
ME:	We got quite far, good. So why is getting far good in this piece, from a listening perspective Pietro?
PIETRO:	Because if it's just the same thing over and over again it's boring.

Pietro showed awareness that the collective progress of the class created a degree of musical interest which would not be available to the participants as individuals. Through their joint enterprise, pupils were able to create musical variety which, in Paul's words, was 'interesting' and 'can't get boring'.

But this desire for musical variety was sometimes felt to be in tension with musical accuracy. After Year Seven's first performance, Joshua described how, as the parts diverged, increasing musical variety conflicted with musical accuracy and caused messiness:

JOSHUA:	Towards the end it got really messy and you couldn't really tell where we were.
ME:	Good. Why do you think that was?
JOSHUA:	Because everyone starts in the same place, right...
ME:	Yes...
JOSHUA:	But as we get further on different people leave it until later or earlier, and then that other person follows that earlier person or the later person, and [it] just expands.

Matthew referred to a similar problem at the end of Year Seven's second performance. Yet in this case, some pupils' focus on their own musical accuracy and individual progress meant that they did not pay sufficient attention to the collective efforts of the rest of the class:

MATTHEW:	I don't think it was good.
ME:	OK, why not?

MATTHEW: It was all messed up.
ME: Why was it all messed up though?
MATTHEW: I don't know.
HANNAH: Because people kept on playing.

In instances like these, pupils were disappointed when the quality of their performances was undermined by a lack of interpersonal affinity and awareness. Lawrence criticised his Year Eight classmates for 'just smashing their keyboards', since this meant that they were unable to hear each other:

ME: Were there any bits of that which you particularly thought, 'I would never listen to this'?
LAWRENCE: I mean, when everyone was getting really loud, and there was kind of like... there was some stuff, and then some people were just smashing their keyboards, and you kind of couldn't hear.

Some pupils described exactly how the importance they attributed to interpersonal affinity caused direct conflict with their own longing for individual progress. After one performance attempt with Year Eight, Naomi said 'I was trying to go onto the next sequence, but I think everyone was [out of time]'. Her desire to respond appropriately to those around her meant she felt unable to progress with her own part. Her confidence dwindled when she was unable to rely on that of her peers, and she was paralysed by the paradox of belonging: no longer able to navigate between the competing demands of her own individual desires and the interests of the collective whole.

Proposing models of leadership

In both classes, pupils proposed and practised varying models of leadership to manage the conflict between individual ability and interpersonal affinity. Emerging patterns of leading and following became means of recognising the importance of individual ability

while simultaneously advocating a democratic process of collective engagement (Murnighan and Conlon 1991). In Naomi's case, she concluded that 'someone just needs to be brave and just play another one'. It did not matter who the leader was, provided that they were prepared to bring their part to the fore for others to follow.

Others in Naomi's class recognised that they would need to moderate their individual progress according to the leadership of their peers. This could mean moving more quickly through the patterns to catch up with others: Joe suggested 'if they're playing pattern number twenty-four, we could go up to pattern twenty'. On the other hand, it could mean taking a subservient role and playing more sensitively:

ME:	How could we have improved that further? Jason?
JASON:	It's very loud in the middle, and you can't hear anything, so someone should just break [drop out], or something.
ME:	Good.
PIETRO:	Or turn their piano down...

Pupils recognised that sacrificing individual progress may be necessary to serve the collective endeavour. In this 'paradox of regression', pupils would have to 'regress in the service of the group's development' (Smith and Berg 1987, 129), perhaps having to 'turn the sound [down] quietly to listen better to each other' or 'exit at certain points' so as to contribute to something larger than themselves.

In Year Eight, the predominant model of leadership grew out of pupils' reactions to each other's confidence, and in particular to that of Jason, the pupil attributed greatest individual prestige:

ME:	What do you think was particularly good about that attempt? Yes Jason?
JASON:	The first three bars changed quite a lot [...] there was a lot less at the sixth and seventh [patterns] trying to change where no-one was changing, moving at the same time.

ME: Good, so in those first few bars a lot of people changed, we had points where there were lots of different overlapping patterns [...] But yes, after that Jason, people kind of stopped changing. People lost the confidence to play things other people weren't playing. Go on Jason...

JASON: I think I know why people stopped – the sixth one I played really, really not very loud, so they [did] not hear.

By the final performance, Asil acknowledged an emerging 'chain reaction' in response to Jason's leadership. Pupils were describing the way in which they overcame the particularly muddled section in the middle of their performance:

ME: What happened afterwards?

JASON: I came in.

[...]

PIETRO: Jason was the main thing – he could play everything. He was good.

RENÉE: He went onto the other...

ME: So Jason moved pattern, which meant that it reduced that texture a bit. What else happened, as a result of that perhaps?

JOE: It quietened down a bit...

ME: Joe, thanks. Yes, it quietened down, and people got back into tempo. Asil?

ASIL: And just like in the [wildebeest] video you showed us Miss, we all followed, like if Jason was the man at the head, we all followed him like in a chain reaction, because we saw what people were playing next to us, and what they were playing we were playing too.

As Year Eight progressed through performances, pupils increasingly looked to Jason's individual ability as a source of confidence and leadership. This was no doubt partly influenced by the importance he attributed to himself ('*I* came in'), but also seemed to have been considered a genuinely effective means of achieving their collective endeavour to follow the model of the wildebeest stampede.

In Year Seven, pupils more often sought my leadership as teacher. In discussing how to know when to stop, Paul and Charlie suggested that either they should listen for when I stopped playing the pulse, or arrange for one other person to make 'such a loud noise' that everyone stops. Their former suggestion proved successful, as Paul commented after the final performance: 'that was closer than the other one [...] because we stopped way earlier'.

Paul was also responsible for suggesting a model of leadership which would allow the class to exercise more control over the balance between individual ability and interpersonal affinity. Although time constraints meant we were unable to try out his suggestion, his system of 'staying a bit closer together' suggested that limiting different pupils' repetitions of each pattern would help musical variety aid rather than detract from musical accuracy:

PAUL:	Be closer together, like one person [/] different groups in the room do the same thing. So [...] the first one [group] does everything two times, the other group does everything three times, like that.

In Year Eight, Jason's suggestion that 'we can just use gestures' seemed to have a similar aim. Jason explained that using gestures to indicate movement from pattern to pattern could help avoid pupils losing the confidence to move onto new patterns when they could not hear their peers moving on too:

ME:	Anything else we could have done to make it sound less boring? Jason?
JASON:	We can just use gestures. Like you do that [indicates with his hand] – that means six, and you could move up to six.

However, Jason's idea was not met with great enthusiasm. Partly this was a result of my reaction, as I explained to Jason that moving in unison from pattern to

pattern would mean no harmony would be generated. Joe and Pietro agreed that this might make the piece more boring. Naomi and Evie also jettisoned his suggestion:

ME:	Why should I not need to signal six? Naomi?
NAOMI:	Because you shouldn't have to tell them you're doing six...
EVIE:	It should just flow together.

It is possible that Naomi and Evie's emphasis on 'flow' was trying to drive home to their class the importance of interpersonal affinity: if everyone was working together, no-one should have to indicate when they have changed pattern – others should be able to hear when that was the case. But perhaps that is a superficial reading of their remarks. Perhaps their rebuke of Jason's desire to predetermine the musical structure actually indicated a deeper appreciation of music's unique capacity as 'a medium of active participation' (Cross 2014, 812). Maybe they recognised the value of music's semantic indeterminacy to transcend the conflict between individual ability and interpersonal affinity: that simply listening to one another could give the impression of direct and instructive musical meaning (Jason has changed pattern; I should change pattern), but then actually allow performers to respond in their own idiosyncratic manner (Jason has changed pattern; I could change back to an earlier pattern, or not change pattern at all). Through this 'floating intentionality', participants could maintain their own sense of individual autonomy without 'coming into conflict with the interpretations of others' (Cross 2014, 814) (Jason has changed pattern; I have not changed pattern – and no-one else minds). Using gestures, though perhaps useful in some circumstances, could generate greater potential for conflict by making visible the contradictions between pupils' desires to pursue both individual ability and interpersonal affinity.

Conclusions and implications: transcending the paradox of belonging

Over the course of this study, several pupils in addition to Naomi and Evie mentioned the significance of musical 'flow'. The 'overall flow' was described as essential for unifying participants in a performance that 'can't get boring'; the most successful performance was described as having 'flowed quite nicely'; and flow was associated with the classes' 'ability to get through every note'. Though pupils' interpretations of flow all differed to some extent, they were all marked by an appreciation of growing collective unity, similar to that which Turino (2008) identifies in participatory practices such as contra dancing.

This desire for flow suggests that pupils aspired to overcome the paradox of belonging – experienced in the conflict between individual ability and interpersonal affinity – through 'transcendence' tactics (Johansen 2018, 157). They strove to exceed the paradoxical tensions they faced through hoping that musical participation would generate a new unity which would wholly integrate both aspects of the paradox. Naomi and Evie's insistence against using extra-musical means of instruction implies that they sought an experience within which musical collaboration would be sufficient for achieving successful participation (Seddon and Biasutti 2009). They perhaps implicitly expected that music's semantic indeterminacy, motor resonance, and social synchrony would contribute to a sense of enhanced social bonding and cooperation, integration of individual selves, and merged subjectivity (Turino 2008; Rabinowitch, Cross, and Burnard 2012a, 2012b; Cross 2014; Burnard and Dragovic 2015).

However, that is not to say that pupils must have considered such musical qualities as paramount in responding to the paradox of belonging. As Pitts (2005, 44) points out, 'it is perhaps more helpful to see music not as being objectively unique or special, but rather as becoming so to participants through continued engagement'. This

certainly seemed to be the case in my pupils' performances of Riley's *In C*. Though they aspired toward transcending the paradox of belonging through the experience of flow, their practical responses primarily oscillated between 'avoidance' and 'activation' tactics (Johansen 2018, 134).

In the 'messy' instances that Joshua, Matthew, and Lawrence described, pupils attempted to avoid the paradoxical tension between individual ability and interpersonal affinity through separating them, focussing on only one side of the paradox at a time. But since this quickly became detrimental to the relationship between musical variety and musical accuracy, it then prompted pupils to propose and practise models of leadership as an alternative, balancing tactic. Through following a designated leader such as Jason, or simply whoever was brave enough to 'just play another one', pupils were able to activate the paradox of belonging, recognising the value of individual ability while simultaneously advocating democratic involvement and achieving a sense of interpersonal affinity (Murnighan and Conlon 1991; Johansen 2018).

Pupils' experimentation with avoidance and activation in the face of the paradox of belonging was a clear reminder that the enhanced experiences of social bonding and cooperation that Turino associates with participatory performance may 'seem impractical and unlikely' in their own lives, in which participatory practices are not the cultural norm (Turino 2008, 226). It is unsurprising that pupils participating in *In C* did not immediately experience a heightened sense of egalitarianism and sociality. Rather, they experienced irresolvable tensions between desires to explore their individual ability and to develop their interpersonal affinity. This study suggests that it was only by working through these tensions by separating, balancing, and then transcending them by pursuing musical flow, that pupils gradually learnt the value of foregrounding democratic involvement and mutual engagement.

However, this study represents only one possible participatory practice in the secondary music classroom, and its limitations in time, its context specificity, and the situatedness of the practitioner-researcher mean that its findings cannot be extrapolated to other practices or settings. But it is not impossible to imagine that sustained participation in similar musical practices could further equip pupils to negotiate the paradox of belonging. Take, for example, a whole-class composition assignment (MacGregor, forthcoming). Working individually, pupils could compose sections of a piece such as a rondo form or theme and variations. Once completed, they would be challenged to combine their contributions into a whole-class composition. To join their sections together, pupils would have to activate the paradox of belonging, evaluating their own work and that of their peers, and assessing whether changes needed to be made to aid the overall musical outcome. Sections would have to be adjusted, corrected, or rewritten. But the arrival at a complete, larger-scale piece of music would potentially transcend the paradox altogether, establishing the realisation that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Through exemplifying how individual ability can work in tandem with interpersonal affinity to achieve successful participation, greater creativity, and a sense of optimal distinctiveness, participatory practices could therefore equip pupils to understand, accept, and embrace the paradox of belonging. By exploring the relative possibilities of avoiding, activating, and transcending such paradoxes, pupils could well develop the flexibility and resistance necessary for enhanced social bonding, cooperation, and the realisation of community – especially if such practices were to become the norm in the secondary music classroom.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the many people who gave up their time to support this study, not least Peter McMurray, for supervising my original MPhil dissertation, and John Finney, Stephanie Pitts, and two anonymous reviewers for providing valuable feedback on drafts of this article. I am also indebted to the senior management and music department of the school at which my project took place – and to all the pupils in my Year Seven and Eight classes – for so kindly facilitating my research.

Funding

This work was supported by a Cambridge Arts and Humanities Research Council (DTP) studentship, award reference AH/L503897/1.

Declaration of interest statement

I declare no potential conflict of interest.

Word count

6071 (without references); 7038 (with references).

References

Ball, S. J. 2003. "The Teacher's Soul and the Terrors of Performativity." *Journal of Education Policy* 18 (2): 215-228. doi:10.1080/0268093022000043065.

Brewer, M. B. 1991. "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17 (5): 475-482. doi:10.1177/0146167291175001.

Burnard, P., and T. Dragovic. 2015. "Collaborative Creativity in Instrumental Group Music Learning as a Site for Enhanced Pupil Wellbeing." *Cambridge Journal of Education* 45 (3): 371-392. doi:10.1080/0305764X.2014.934204.

Burnard, P., and J. White. 2008. "Creativity and Performativity: Counterpoints in British and Australian Education." *British Educational Research Journal* 34 (5): 667-682. doi:10.1080/01411920802224238.

Calic, G., and S. Hélie. 2018. "Creative Sparks or Paralysis Traps? The Effects of Contradictions on Creative Processing and Creative Products." *Frontiers in Psychology* 9: 1-17. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01489.

Campbell, P. S. 2010. *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children's Lives*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carl, R. 2009. *Terry Riley's In C*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cohen, L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. 2017. *Research Methods in Education*. 8th ed. London: Routledge.

Cross, I. 2014. "Music and Communication in Music Psychology." *Psychology of Music* 42 (6): 809-819. doi:10.1177/0305735614543968.

DfE (GREAT BRITAIN, Department for Education). 2014. *The National Curriculum in England: Framework Document*. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381344/Master_final_national_curriculum_28_Nov.pdf.

Fautley, M., V. Kinsella, and A. Whittaker. 2017. *Whole Class Ensemble Teaching Research Report*. Birmingham: Birmingham City University.

Fink, R. 2005. *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Green, L. 2008. *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Harwood, E., and K. Marsh. 2012. "Children's Ways of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom." In Vol. 1 of *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education*, edited by G. E. McPherson, and G. F. Welch, 322-340. New York: Oxford University Press.

Johansen, J. H. 2018. *Paradox Management: Contradictions and Tensions in Complex Organisations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Kruse, A. J. 2016. "'They Wasn't Makin' my Kinda Music': A Hip-Hop Musician's Perspective on School, Schooling, and School Music." *Music Education Research* 18 (3): 240-253. doi:10.1080/14613808.2015.1060954.

Lê, J. K., and R. Bednarek. 2016. "Towards a Social-Practice Theory of Paradox." *Academy of Management Annual Meeting Proceedings* 2016 (1): 777-783. doi:10.5465/ambpp.2016.313.

Lewis, M. W. 2000. "Exploring Paradox: Toward a More Comprehensive Guide." *Academy of Management Review* 25 (4): 760-776. doi:10.2307/259204.

MacGregor, E. H., forthcoming. "Repeats and Refrains: Creating Form and Structure." In *Critical and Creative Projects in Classroom Music Education: Fifty Years of Sound and Silence*, edited by J. Finney, C. Philpott, and G. Spruce. Abingdon: Routledge.

Maida, C. A., and S. Beck. 2018. “Introduction: Towards Global Sustainability and Communities of Practice.” In *Global Sustainability and Communities of Practice*, edited by C. A. Maida, and S. Beck, 1-19. New York: Berghahn Books.

Medaille, A., and J. Usinger. 2018. ““That’s Going to be the Hardest Thing for Me”: Tensions Experienced by Quiet Students during Collaborative Learning Situations.” *Educational Studies*: 1-18. doi:10.1080/03055698.2018.1555456.

Merriam, S. B., and E. J. Tisdell. 2016. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. 4th ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Murnighan, J. K., and D. E. Conlon. 1991. “The Dynamics of Intense Work Groups: A Study of British String Quartets.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 36 (2): 165-186. doi:10.2307/2393352.

Nyman, M. 1999. *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pitts, S. E. 2005. *Valuing Musical Participation*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Pitts, S. E. 2017. “What is Music Education for? Understanding and Fostering Routes into Lifelong Musical Engagement.” *Music Education Research* 19 (2): 160-168. doi:10.1080/14613808.2016.1166196.

Pitts, S. E., and K. Robinson. 2016. “Dropping In and Dropping Out: Experiences of Sustaining and Ceasing Amateur Participation in Classical Music.” *British Journal of Music Education* 33 (3): 327-346. doi:10.1017/S0265051716000152.

Potter, K. 2000. *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pring, R. 2015. *Philosophy of Educational Research*. 3rd ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Rabinowitch, T-C., I. Cross, and P. Burnard. 2012a. “Long-Term Musical Group Interaction has a Positive Influence on Empathy in Children.” *Psychology of Music* 41 (4): 484-498. doi:10.1177/0305735612440609.

Rabinowitch, T-C., I. Cross, and P. Burnard. 2012b. “Musical Group Interaction, Intersubjectivity and Merged Subjectivity.” In *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, edited by D. Reynolds, and M. Reason, 111-120. Bristol: Intellect Press.

Regelski, T. A. 2014. “Resisting Elephants Lurking in the Music Education Classroom.” *Music Educators Journal* 100 (4): 77-86. doi:10.1177/0027432114531798.

Riley, T. [1964] 2005. *In C*. Berlin: E. R. P. Musikverlag Eckart Rahn.

Saldaña, J. 2009. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: SAGE Publications.

Seddon, F., and M. Biasutti. 2009. “A Comparison of Modes of Communication between Members of a String Quartet and a Jazz Sextet.” *Psychology of Music* 37 (4): 395-415. doi:10.1177/0305735608100375.

Sheldon, K. M., and B. A. Bettencourt. 2002. “Psychological Need-Satisfaction and Subjective Well-Being within Social Groups.” *British Journal of Social Psychology* 41: 25-38. doi:10.1348/014466602165036.

Smith, K. K., and D. N. Berg. 1987. *Paradoxes of Group Life: Understanding Conflict, Paralysis, and Movement in Group Dynamics*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Smith, W. K., and M. W. Lewis. 2011. “Toward a Theory of Paradox: A Dynamic Equilibrium Model of Organising.” *Academy of Management Review* 36 (2): 381-403. doi:10.5465/amr.2009.0223.

Thibeault, M. D. 2015. “Music Education for All through Participatory Ensembles.” *Music Educators Journal* 102 (2): 54-61. doi:10.1177/0027432115610170.

Tobias, E. S. 2015. “Crossfading Music Education: Connections between Secondary Students’ In- and Out-of-School Music Experience.” *International Journal of Music Education* 33 (1): 18-35. doi:10.1177/0255761413515809.

Turino, T. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Turino, T. 2009. “Four Fields of Music Making and Sustainable Living.” *The World of Music* 51 (1): 95-117.

Williams, S. 2013. “Uncaged: John Cage and Conceptual Approaches to Participatory Music-Making.” *Malaysian Music Journal* 2 (2): 90-103.

Wilson, E., ed. 2013. *School-Based Research: A Guide for Education Students*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE Publications.

Youth Music. 2019. *Exchanging Notes: Research Summary Report*. London: Youth Music. https://www.youthmusic.org.uk/file/4697/download?token=MhB_6n95.

Figure 1. The opening of Riley's *In C*.

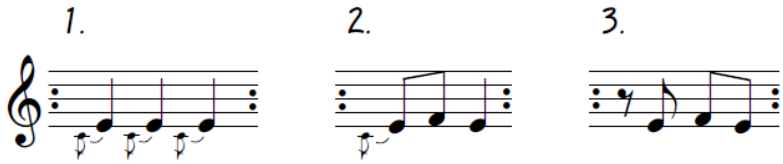

Table 1. Year Eight worksheet.

Evaluating Riley's *In C*	
1.	What was most successful about our class performance of *In C*?
2.	What could we have improved if we played it again?
3.	What did you find most challenging about performing *In C*?
4.	How did you improve between the first and last performances?

Table 2. Pupils' responses to the paradox between individual ability and interpersonal affinity.

PARADOX OF BELONGING	Individual ability Individual confidence Individual progress Musical accuracy	Interpersonal affinity Peers' confidence Collective progress Musical variety
RESPONSE	Proposing models of leadership 'Like in a chain reaction' Staying 'a bit closer together' 'We can just use gestures'	