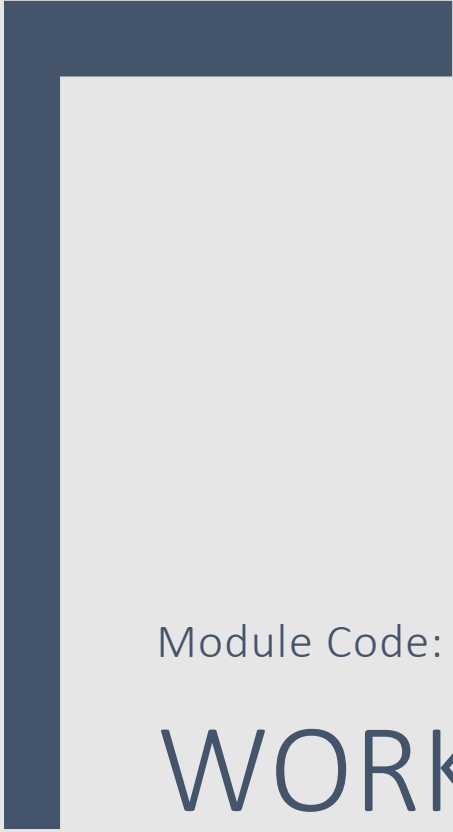


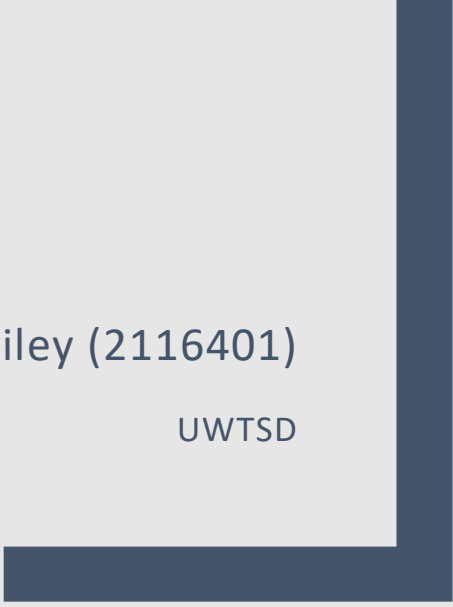


Module Code: ADAD6005

WORKING WITH MUSIC IN THE COMMUNITY

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Working with Music in the Community

Introduction

I've written this paper with the following aims:

- To study Ethnomusicology.
- To study the music community attached to being in a Progressive Rock band.
- To gain perspective through the study of historical and modern practices.
- To provide my process for conducting and editing an interview with someone within my chosen field of study.

Ethnomusicology

What is Ethnomusicology?

The study of music in its social and cultural contexts is known as ethnomusicology. Ethnomusicologists study music as a social process to better understand what it is and what it means to its creators and listeners. They seek to encourage and assist in the preservation and renewal of world music due to fear that certain practices and even whole music communities may be lost without doing so. (*Blum, Bohlman and Neuman, 1993*) According to the society for ethnomusicology, all ethnomusicologists share three critical approaches to their work. (*About Ethnomusicology - Society for Ethnomusicology, nd*)

1. Employing a global perspective on music (encompassing all geographic areas and types of music).
2. Understanding music as social practice (viewing music as a human activity interrelated with its social and cultural contexts).
3. Engaging in ethnographic fieldwork (observing and participating in music-making and related activities) and in historical research.

Ethnomusicology in Historical context

Historically, ethnomusicologists would have documented and showcased musicians using the technology available to them at the time. When media showcases were in their formative stages, the main ways to portray music as media would've been via radio broadcast, television broadcast or cinema showings. The radio and music industries formed a symbiotic relationship between 1920 and 1950, where recorded music established the basis for radio programming, and radio play became the foundation for record sales. Music broadcasting was an important aspect of radio stations' supposed obligation to educate and entertain their listeners and preserve national cultural heritage while promoting contemporary creativity. (*Frith, S. 2002*)

Alan Lomax

For nearly six decades, Alan Lomax laboured to raise awareness of folk music worldwide. He began working with his father, John Avery Lomax, in 1933. By 1934, the two had begun an attempt to extend the holdings of recorded folk music at the Library of Congress' Archive of American Folk Song. They collected thousands of field recordings of folk artists from all around the United States, Haiti and the Bahamas. Their efforts resulted in several well-

known and influential collections of American folk melodies. By the 1950s, Lomax had prepared and curated an 18-volume LP anthology of world folk music for Columbia Records. He continued his work appearing on radio and television until he died in 2002. (*About Alan / Association for Cultural Equity*, nd)

Ethnomusicology in Modern context

Nowadays, Ethnomusicologists have many opportunities to gain outreach, to listen, observe, be seen and heard. They're using the same techniques and ethical approaches as their predecessors, only the world is generally a far more accessible place in the present. We're seemingly intricately connected in a digital world using smartphones and portable technology; It's possible to conduct, film, and share media using a pocket-sized device. Media sharing platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and TikTok are responsible for creating a global audience which can happen instantaneously, 'Dust to Digital' is taking advantage of this with a following of over 600 thousand people on Instagram alone.

Dust To Digital

Founded in 2003, Dust to digital has been focusing on preservation, research, and production to increase access to hard to find, essential recordings. Many influential musicians and artists have recognised and cited their award-winning work. They provide access to many services, including live multimedia events, purchasable collated vinyl productions and various visual media compilations. (*Dust-to-Digital*, nd)

The main difference in ethnomusicology's historical and modern context is how the media is shared. However, from my research, I believe the ethical approaches to want to preserve and provide an accurate portrayal of each music community remain true today.

Progressive Rock in Historical Context

The origin of 'Prog'

Progressive rock music, known as 'Prog', is a subgenre of rock and roll; it emerged in the mid to late 1960s predominantly in the United Kingdom and the USA, then swiftly expanded across the world music market. The genre seemingly sprang out of psychedelic rock and LSD culture and encapsulated pre-existing popular musical forms such as R&B, blues, jazz, avant-garde, folk, classical and musique concrète. The community goal was to give rock music more artistic weight and respectability than generic pop, which the music industry was churning out at the time. This need for change resulted in much of prog's complexity, where artists were trying to push the genre by utilising new technology and musical instruments as they became available. This resulted in the emergence of a seemingly exclusive community of wealthy musicians whose equipment was costly and not widely available, which may have impacted the perception of the genre. (*Progressive Rock Guide: A Brief History of Prog Rock*, 2022)

Progressive Rock Community

Borthwick, S. et al. describe that by around 1970, the community response to music had changed dramatically; a rock concert had become a seated and often very sedate affair as

opposed to its lively 'get up and go' historic audience response. Standing or dancing was deemed unacceptable, and the structure of 'Prog' compositions may have contributed to this attitude. Many 'Prog' tracks featured complex musical ensembles, modulated guitar, synthesised elements, and orchestral elements, which would last several minutes. They also featured early examples of surround sound (quadraphonic audio) to emphasise the music's intensity and enhance how the community would sonically perceive it. The prog community perceived themselves as emotionally and aesthetically elevated by the experience, which empowered it to develop the scene further. (Borthwick, S., & Moy, R. 2004)

Dark Side of The Moon: A reflection of the community

A fantastic example of the effect of 'Prog' in the community is Pink Floyd's 1973 concept album 'Dark Side of the Moon' and how it came to fruition. It came in the years following the loss of former frontman Syd Barratt in 1968, after he became severely disturbed by the effects of LSD and the community attached. Syd's absence undoubtedly affected each member of the band and the community, which caused a catalytic reaction that irreversibly changed things. David Gilmour described, "We did sort of find where we were going", acknowledging the band's new direction and referring to the 1971 release, 'Meddle' specifically the track 'Echoes', which would now be described definitively as 'Prog'. I could speculate that Pink Floyd partly developed the Progressive rock genre due to the band's experience of significant change and emotional stress, which clearly impacted them. Nick Mason and Roger Waters of Pink Floyd said, 'Dark Side of The Moon' was based on "the pressures of life on young people; the worries, the travel, mortality and money". It was an honest reflection of the band's emotions and feelings, which were translated into music and became a raw reflection of reality for many people. Its powerful lyrics, heavy use of technologies and musique concrète style sampling created a memorable and meaningful record that has stood up to the test of time. When interviewed in 2003, David Gilmour expressed, "The big move forward was Roger's coming of age lyrically, having the ideas and the intelligence to take a subject and examine it in all its parts, in all of those different songs". This was in reference to his bandmate Roger Waters, Pink Floyd's lyricist and bassist during that era. (YellowLime, 2014)

Progressive Rock in Modern Context

'Prog' in the present day

Over 50 years since 'Prog' was coined, it has evolved into many sub-genres; they still come from the exact origins but are drastically different from one sub-genre to the next. Some examples include Canterbury Scene, Crossover Prog, Eclectic Prog, Experimental/Post, Metal, Heavy Prog, Indo-Prog/Raga Rock, Jazz-Rock/Fusion, Krautrock, Neo-Prog and Post Rock/Math rock. (*Progressive Rock - Definition, Genres & Articles*, nd) Currently, anyone can pick up an affordable computer or mobile device capable of producing music which opens the door to new creatives who historically may have been unable to join the scene. There are plenty of active bands on the live gig circuit and a demand for new music.

Modern 'Prog' Community

After a quick web search, I discovered many websites and forums dedicated to prog-rock.

A Reddit forum, 'R/progrockmusic', has a dedicated thread to submit new music, which indicates that the genre is still very active today, with this community alone having 47 thousand members. (*ProgressiveRock: Reddit Progressive Rock Community*, nd)
There are even dedicated printed magazines, such as 'Prog Mag', sold in the UK from WHSmith's stores. Pink Floyd's fan base is an example of 'Prog' consumption in a modern context. They have over 15 million monthly listeners on Spotify alone, yet more proof of the genre's prevalence and legacy. (*Spotify*, 2022)

Interpreting words from a Prog Artist in 2022

I interviewed Sam Easter from two Norfolk based prog-rock bands; he gave me his perspective on many topics relating to playing in bands and the community attached. It was clear from speaking to him that there are definitive parallels between a prog-rock band in 2022 and a prog-rock band in 1968, especially the idea of having a strict aesthetic and code of conduct. He insisted that his online presence was strictly to portray the music instead of any lifestyle or satirical posts you'd typically see on Instagram or TikTok. It's almost reflective of attending one of the gigs as there isn't very much dancing to speak of, just more a sense of the crowd absorbing and digesting the music they heard. I could feel the sense of pride he felt when talking about the music and the creative choices he'd made regarding various projects and endeavours. It was interesting to hear how he made a conscious effort to branch out into his community during the Covid-19 lockdowns by hosting three live video internet broadcasts. He explained how the outreach had benefitted his community, and he had received a positive response from the fan base. It seemed like an incredibly gratifying process, and I found the interview very inspiring.

The Interview

Venue: Norwich, Home Studio

Interview Date: 19/03/2022

Interviewee: Sam Easter – The Fool's Moon & Jomo Tuun

Interview Time: 13:00

Background info

Sam is a member of 'The Fool's Moon', a Norfolk based prog-rock band. After attending his gigs, we first became acquainted, and I said my thanks and appreciation for the performance. Around 10th March, I asked him if he would be willing to participate in an interview with me to discuss what he's been doing, and he thankfully agreed.

Aim

To learn about the Progressive Rock music community from a band member's perspective, Sam's experience in a Prog Rock band and his work collaborating with others. His experience creating music for live performances and studio recordings and discussing the impact of Covid-19 and what that meant for him, and how he dealt with things.

Venue

As I have my studio set up at home, I thought it was relevant to stage the interview there. I am based in Norwich, and as is Sam, I would have preferred to produce the interview at Tileyard for aesthetic purposes.

Setup

I set up the interview space in my music studio. I chose the music studio because it's a familiar and comfortable space for us both being recording musicians. It also enabled a secure sound environment that wouldn't require me to apply much sound reinforcement. With Sam positioned opposite me, two cameras were recording simultaneously to capture each of our faces. I set up a Logic project with two microphone inputs, one for each of us and checked the recording levels accordingly to ensure there wouldn't be any problems reaching the editing phase. I wanted to capture the interview to reflect a genuine conversation and give a view of both our facial expressions and emotional response to questions and answers. I was inspired by watching various filmed interviews, especially the interview with Jimmy Page at Oxford Student Union pictured below in fig 1. See fig 2 to observe the similarities in my interview setup.



Fig 1 (*Oxford Union, 2017*)



Fig 2 (*Still image taken from my interview with Sam Easter, 2022*)

Technology

Equipment Used	Quantity
Focusrite Saffire Pro 24 Interface	1
Mac Pro 3.1	1
LG Monitor	1
XLR Cable	2
Røde M3 Vocal Microphone	2
Logic Pro X	1
Final Cut Pro X	1
GoPro Hero 9 Black Edition	1
Huawei P30 Pro New Edition	1

I used the Røde M3 mics for their 80hz high-pass filter to avoid the proximity effect, enabling me to record high-quality vocals. (*Røde Microphones*, nd) The GoPro and the Huawei feature ultra-wide-angle camera lenses, perfect for capturing the interview in a small space. I made sure to set their video settings to the same 1080p 24fps for clear continuity in the video. I used Logic Pro X and Final Cut Pro X to capture and edit my interview as they meet the industry-standard audio and video production parameters.

Methodology

Before interviewing Sam, I looked at different interviewing techniques. I decided the 'STAR technique' was the most suitable for obtaining relevant information on the topic and getting the most out of our time together. I found it appealing due to its simplicity, and it wouldn't detract from my attention when asking questions. The 'STAR' method is a four-step process of answering questions; however, I thought using it reversed would achieve great results. As I had done prior research on what his band had been doing, I applied this technique to the questions I was asking, and it proved very effective. (*How to Use the STAR Interview Method to Get the Job*, nd)

My adapted version of the star technique:

Situation: Ask Sam to describe a scenario and when it took place.

Task: Ask Sam to explain the task and what was the goal.

Action: Ask Sam to provide details about his steps to attain this.

Result: Ask Sam to conclude with the results of his actions.

Interview Schedule

The interview took place in three stages; I recorded each stage over 30 minutes, followed by a break which enabled plenty of free-flowing back and forth conversation and didn't add any pressure to the situation.

Stage 1	To talk about the origins of 'The Fools Moon', gaining a background of their influences and what they were doing historically.
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Stage 2	To talk about 'The Fools Moon' about lockdown and Covid-19 and how to mitigate being an active band during the lockdown. To talk about the band's current ambitions and what Sam would like to see for them in the future.
Stage 3	To talk about 'Jomo Tuun', their writing and recording process, and the community response to the new band.

Conclusion

Writing this paper has been educational and enlightening; to learn about the process and the dedication of Ethnomusicologists is incredibly inspiring. I hadn't previously known that studying and preserving music communities was a dedicated job role. Learning this has seemingly opened my eyes to a future career I might enjoy pursuing.

I studied the origins of 'prog' and what it meant to be a part of that community. I was somewhat surprised to read about the aesthetic nature of the genre and how it may have been perceived as a closed-off community, especially where dancing and similar expression were deemed unacceptable. It seems odd; however, I can reflect on when I have used 'prog' music to meditate and found some cathartic meaning within it, so perhaps the aesthetic and passive approach to live gig attendance was more natural than a forced affair. Historically, it would have cost thousands of pounds to acquire just one synthesiser, let alone a whole array of pedals and effects boards available to the yesteryear supergroups. It makes me wonder how many artists were put off by this and how it would have been an exclusive club that could physically produce this music. Taking a contrasting view to today, where we have everything imaginable simply built into inexpensive DAWs, there is potential for a vast community of new music producers of many different ages, which was impossible in the 1970s. I found the process of producing the interview with Sam delightful; however, the only drawback was editing out a lot of gaps in dialogue and condensing such a lengthy interview to fit the brief parameters. I had some audio issues with a faulty XLR cable but managed to splice the bad audio with the audio captured from the GoPro. Sam has since agreed to let me publish the interview in its entirety as he believed it reflected him in a positive light, which is excellent news.

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