



Organising Music

Theory, Practice, Performance

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1 Developments in organisation theory and organising music

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and Charlotte Gilmore*

The intention behind this book is to bring together two fields – music-making and organisation theory – in order to explore what might be learned. Learning may proceed in various directions within and between the fields. Within fields we are concerned with learning between alternative traditions and genres. For example, the learning between punk and indie music might entail small-scale translation, whereas ideas moving between large classical orchestras and small folk bands may need considerable adaptation. Similarly, within organisation theory, insights from storytelling may integrate easily with those from metaphorical analysis, while the movement is potentially wider between complexity theory and aesthetics. Learning between fields may require a degree of imagination and creativity, and ideas originating in one field may become generative in another as connections and disconnections are identified and examined. For example, insights from leadership theory might be directly helpful in thinking about organising a festival but may also stimulate a new way of understanding how to manage the kind of portfolio of projects that many musicians – and managers – juggle. Equally, understanding the challenges of staging the first performance of a new composition might throw some light on our understanding of markets and patterns of consumer behaviour. Hence, our aspiration is to encourage learning-oriented dialogue.

We see dialogue as a process of enquiry through which self-examination is stimulated by contact with ‘the other’. Such dialogue is particularly effective where the learning is less directed at the other (‘my ideas can help you’) and more directed towards reflexivity (‘having had an encounter with you, I now think differently about my own position’) in the style advocated by Shotter (2010) and Gergen et al. (2001). Because the dialogue is about learning (Hibbert and Huxham, 2011) it means that one needs to be open about things that have gone wrong as well as telling the ‘success stories’ – the sanitised version of reality that is often well-rehearsed (Sims, 2003). Hence, trust between storytellers and listeners/readers is paramount. Producing tales from the field in written form

therefore requires a ‘leap of trust’, in which readers are trusted to treat the material and characters of the stories with care and respect.

Dialogue is a process of finding sufficient lines of connection or translation between parties so that engagement can be productive. It is not about creating complete agreement or overlap (Bohm, 1996). In some of the literature on the creative industries there is a belief that the logic of creativity and the logic of organising are so different that they are often in conflict with each other (Caves, 2000). For example, a composer or songwriter may create a piece that involves so many musicians it is bound to make a financial loss, or managers might seek to influence musicians to produce popularist work so that audiences and revenues can be increased at the expense of artistic freedom. This implies that either the values of organising and performing are at odds with each other or there is something about the way they are practised that leads to conflict. In this book we will question this way of thinking. While some managers and musicians may inhabit oppositional world-views, we do not accept that there is a necessity for the opposition (Beech, 2011). Rather, practices of organising and performing interpenetrate and influence each other such that interconnected or hybrid practices can lead to value for a variety of stakeholders. However, achieving this is not easy and so it is useful to work through a series of empirical examples in order to develop a theoretically informed, empirically grounded perspective.

What we present below is not intended to be a classic ‘theory and cases’ book, in part because the cases in such books can be presented as both fairly ‘neat and complete’ and chosen in order to support the theory. Here, we hope that the tales from the field are brief but open – capable of interpretation from different angles and further exploration. Similarly, the theoretically oriented contributions are not written in the mode of classic theory chapters – seeking to produce a comprehensive view of a theory – but rather provide a set of ‘orienting ideas’ with which the reader can approach the tales from the field. Hence, these contributions are intended to provide materials for generative dialogue (Beech et al., 2010): clear but open to interpretation; informative but open to question; and theoretically informed but practically oriented.

We hope that the time is right for this dialogue. Organisation theorists have become increasingly interested in the ‘creative industries’. This may be because practices that have been common in organisations in the creative industries are of particular relevance more broadly as organisations in other sectors seek to work across organisational boundaries and to be creative, focused on performance, flexibly organised and engaged with customers/service users (Bilton and Cummings, 2014). The music industry is a prime example. It involves a variety of people in composing,

creating and performing. Live performance entails networks of experts enabling events in which venues, programming, marketing and sales, sound and light, among many other functions, are coordinated so that creative outcomes are achieved (Cloonan, 2011; Frith et al., 2009).

Audiences value experiences of events (such as going to concerts and festivals) for the music but also as part of lifestyle choices, and even as part of their identities. Workers (e.g. musicians, promoters, engineers) operate on several projects simultaneously (McLeod et al., 2009), often for different companies, and the musical field has many small entrepreneurial enterprises. Audience demand is affected by fashion: legitimacy is gained not only through expert opinion but also through informal reviews via social media (Gonzalez, 2010). The nature of production and consumption is not merely an economic exchange but is something incorporating aesthetics and a level of significance in people's lives and relationships. As change, innovation and flexible ways of working are central to the creative industries, there is potential for organisation theory to learn much from practices in music-making.

On the other side of the coin, making music and the way the music 'industry' is understood may be able to pick up ideas from organisation theory. The 'creative industries' are regarded as an important part of modern economies (Caves, 2000). However, the term 'industry' is often criticised as leading to false assumptions about the degree of structure in supply chains, clear product demarcation and established competition between companies. This may represent part of the story but, as Hesmondhalgh (2007) points out, the organisations involved span many areas of activity, from leisure and commercial companies dealing in a variety of media and cultural forms to micro companies and amateur activities. Hence, it is unlikely that a single way of thinking about the variety of actors will be efficacious (MacDonald et al., 2002). Pratt and Jeffcutt (2009) have drawn attention to the changing nature of competition and dynamism within creative and cultural sections of economies. They argue that these sectors are typified by the speed of change of products and by a blurring of the boundaries between competition and collaboration. Companies, venues and artists who might be competing at one moment (for example, producing alternative concerts on a particular night and thus competing for audience numbers) may also be collaborating (for example, in staging a multi-venue festival that aims to bring larger audience numbers into an area). Creative and cultural industries, and music-making in particular, are engaged in the very issues that are of primary concern in current organisation theory. These include how people can operate in uncertain and changing environments; how traditional industrial structures of competition are becoming challenged by working

across organisational boundaries; how the natures of markets and marketing are being transformed by shifts in consumer behaviour; and how economic activity can be understood as a social phenomenon – something with broader and disputed meanings, identities and relationships.

We will now take a brief overview of the organisation of music, illustrated with examples from the music scene in Scotland, before discussing some relevant developments in recent organisation theory. We will then conclude this introduction with some reflections about how music-making and organisation theory may be complementary in various aspects that facilitate learning-oriented dialogue.

Organising music

When we think of how music is ‘organised’ we probably tend to think firstly of the observable structures that seem to govern the way music happens. These include the organisations, venues, promoters and funders that each play a role in organising the nature of the individual musical event by shaping each element; the aesthetic and commercial considerations that underpin the event; the musicians who participate and the nature of that participation; the music they play, both in outline (say, genre) and detail; the audience that chooses to attend; and the nature of the relationship between performers and audience encoded in the space in which the performance takes place and the manner in which performers and audience interact. We can sense, in general terms at least, that each of these elements is related to the others – that the process of organising is characterised by a network of interrelated considerations.

In addition, however, recent research has highlighted some of the hidden structures that may affect – and, in a slightly different sense, organise – music-making. To take just one example, Simon Frith and his colleagues (2011) have suggested that compulsory national service played an important role in the rapid growth of the guitar as the instrument of choice among young men in 1950s Britain. It was a light and portable instrument that could easily be taken on the long train journeys that were often a feature of national service, during which groups of young men were thrown together with leisure time to fill, learning from each other without formal tuition or authority figures. Similarly, Christopher Small’s (1988) ethnographic analyses of well-known musical structures like the orchestra, and the application of (for example) Bourdieu’s (1977) ‘tools for thinking’ to musical practices in a range of different contexts, also remind us of the many influencing factors that may play a more veiled role in organising musical practice.

In surveying the contemporary scene, we might try to consider both the more overt structures that shape musical practice and those that are not so obvious or easy to pin down. Most of the structuring elements mentioned above – the organisations, venues, promoters and funders – have seen some significant evolution in recent years, even if they remain more or less recognisable from previous times. So what has changed?

Audiences remain, but their nature changes

The study of patronage has always been an important way of understanding music's relationship to society, and historians of Western music traditionally trace the history of its patronage in the last 500 years as a gradual passing of responsibility from the church, via the aristocracy, to the middle classes, and finally to government and individuals. Surveying very briefly the current scene, the role of 'patronage' in its widest sense remains an important factor. Although the word carries with it connotations of 'high art', the notion of 'who pays the piper' – and why they choose to do so – is a key element that structures musical events.

Recent large-sample surveys of participation in culture and the arts (Widdop and Cutts, 2011) show that those who participate most tend to be least concerned with traditionally conceived notions of art form and genre. Rather than restrict themselves to favourite forms, the most avid consumers of art and culture increasingly tend to engage with as wide a spectrum of experiences as possible, cutting across old categories such as 'high' and popular art.

Thus, the notion that different genres of music have distinct audiences has rather less support now than it perhaps had in the past, and we can perceive significant implications in the way musical events and practices may be structured in the future as a result of this. The audiences of today and tomorrow may tend to be more stylistically promiscuous and enthusiastic to sample different musical experiences, and less concerned with the conventions and formalities of traditionally conceived musical events.

At first sight this seems to undercut the arguments of social theorists who posit consumption of the arts as the embodiment and reinforcing of a particular (and perhaps class-based) 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984). But it is possible that the notion of the 'promiscuous cultural consumer' is itself an identity with a strong cachet, reflecting an outlook that revels in its own confidence with diversity and accumulates its own capital. This may have the effect of eroding the conventions and practices of traditionally conceived musical events (the conventions of the orchestral concert or the jazz club, which can seem strange to the uninitiated), but it may also mean that

audiences will become increasingly focused on the unique qualities of individual events, rather than on the way they enact well-worn traditions.

We might see a reflection of this trend in so-called classical music when we observe the gradual shift away from event forms rooted in a sense of continuity and genre specialism – such as the orchestral or chamber concert series, the notion of a subscription series or concert season – and note the increasing importance of discrete events and ‘specials’, often linked to a particular time (an anniversary, for example) or place.

Venues remain, but the way we use them changes

Venues are far from neutral in the way they shape the unfolding of musical events: the old Gewandhaus in Leipzig – in which Mendelssohn regularly conducted – had seating arranged in rows lengthways down the hall rather than crossing it, as we would now expect. Thus, concert-goers sat facing each other, with the music emerging from a performance space that was not a visual focus. Compare this with the modern concert hall or theatre, in which the orientation of each seat is planned in such a way as to maximise the sense of linear transmission from the performers on stage to the occupant of the seat: the rest of the audience – the social dimension of the experience – is clearly played down in such a formation.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a great number of large new venues constructed, often to replace Victorian halls that were considered unfit for purpose. These super-venues are still being built, but we can perceive the way they operate as signifiers of different kinds of musical experience, and in the evolving relationship between generic spaces and those that celebrate a unique identity. The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (GRCH) illustrates an evolution of use that mirrors many other similar venues. In its opening month, October 1990, performances were given by the Scottish National Orchestra, the Band of the Royal Marines, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Bolshoi Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The few non-classical events included a performance by the Count Basie Orchestra, a jazz evening in the smaller Strathclyde Suite, a single stand-up performance and some concerts by Runrig. This initial programming was part of the identity-forming process of the Hall, with the ‘high-art’ orientation of the programmes mirrored by the visual art on show (an exhibition of the ‘Glasgow Boys’) and even in the way the catering was promoted (‘Why not entertain your guests in the ambience of the 1930s in our superbly appointed restaurant . . . or dally awhile in the sophisticated decadence of the cocktail bar?’).

In October 2013, the GRCH programme still included performances by the (now) Royal Scottish National Orchestra, but these were the only orchestral events. They took their place among performances by Petula Clark, Alison Moyet, Daniel O'Donnell, The Hollies and Barbara Dickson, together with special shows such as 'Dancing Queen' and 'Bootleg Sixties', plus two performances of *The Wizard of Oz*. The comparison could be analysed from a wide range of perspectives, but focusing on the way the venue inflects the nature of the event, we might note that a large, highly formalised and mostly seated space is reshaping musical events that might previously have taken place in less formal spaces – perhaps those designed principally for dancing rather than seated appreciation. The physical formality of 'art' music, encoded in the building's design, now shapes the experience of a much wider range of genres. This changing use of space may also reflect cultural priorities and political requirements for arts venues to pay for themselves rather than relying on local government, charities and other funding bodies to help cover costs.

'Place' matters more

One of the main events in the GRCH calendar is now the Celtic Connections festival, held each January – a very diverse gathering of musical events, densely programmed with such intensity that the qualitative experience of the festival itself becomes more significant than the individual musical events that comprise it. The host city, Glasgow, is important in the 'feel' of Celtic Connections.

Other, more modest festivals – such as Aberdeenshire's Sound Festival or Llupallu (which, linguistically and metaphorically, turns Ullapull inside out) – are even more rooted in their locations. At Llupallu, it is the experience of hearing (say) Franz Ferdinand against the backdrop of Loch Broom that gives the event its particular quality: the place itself, with all its individual qualities, becomes an organising element in a way that is more thoroughgoing than a mere change of venue. Llupallu – as its name makes clear – would not be Llupallu if it were hosted somewhere else.

Of course, such festivals are not in themselves new, but their relative importance has certainly increased. In art music, this shift is reflected at various levels, with the growing importance of locationally specific festivals (e.g. St Magnus, Lammermuir, East Neuk) and of location in the working practices of artists (e.g. the rise of retreats such as Cove Park or Crear as places that offer the time and intellectual space for new work to develop). It is also reflected in the increasing standing of unique or idiosyncratic venues such as Glasgow's Fruitmarket, which is a repurposing (with minimal alteration) of the city's long-mothballed fruit market,

adjacent to the City Halls and still complete with stall signs and other reminders of its former life.

That the Fruitmarket has become a significant venue for new and experimental music while the GRCH hosts less of the supposedly ‘high art’ performances than it did in 1990 is clearly not on account of their different capacities alone. Even with its raw acoustic, the Fruitmarket is attractive to innovating artists because it is a genuinely unique space. Somehow the paraphernalia of its old life as a marketplace is less loaded with cultural significance than the supposedly neutral space of the modern concert hall, designed to the highest acoustic specification and with a minimum of visual distraction for the listening audience. Place – and perhaps a sense of uniqueness – matters.

Genres are still significant, but they are related in new ways

Alongside the new use of venues and the rising significance of place, the use of genre as an organising concept has shifted. The new significance, for audiences, of ‘genre hopping’ was mentioned above, but in fact the way we use and understand the concept of genre has evolved too. In some contexts, the notion of genre continues more or less unperturbed by recent developments: the orchestral world, for example, still inhabits a fairly unified genre context of ‘art’ music, with occasional forays into related orchestral fields such as film music.

In other contexts, however, we see new developments. Genres, far from being ‘found’ categories that emerge neutrally from music itself, are being continuously created and reshaped. The creation of ‘world music’ in a record company sales meeting (Frootsmag, 1987) is only one famous example of a trend that we can see continuing both locally and globally. It would not be too much to say that the Celtic Connections festival – along with the Festival Interceltique in Lorient, Brittany – has been instrumental in creating a new genre of Celtic music: a genre that, within certain broad geographic and musical contexts, nonetheless embraces a fabulous variety of sounds, styles, media, performance interactions and cultural references. Along with this new genre concept comes a new way of conceptualising this music as in some way unified – as with the ‘style’ concept used by music historians, genre is, at root, a tool for organising and distinguishing different musics. When we create genres, we are creating new ways of organising our understanding of music, and new ways of understanding can stimulate new ideas of performance and composition so that the flow of inspiration can operate in both directions between the stage and the marketing office.

At the same time, we can see other trends that specifically eschew, or at the very least play off, the notion of genre and any concept of order. Cryptic Nights – a series of performance events ‘ravishing the senses’ – is an example of this. It offers events and experiences as diverse as ‘Why Scotland, Why East Kilbride’ (a wonderfully wacky evening of music and chemistry experiments woven around an East Kilbride Development Corporation promotional film and a fictitious gender-shifting scientist and musician) and ‘The Cabinet of Curiosities’ (an evening showcasing sonic curios – junk, machines and antiques, refashioned into musical instruments). While it is difficult to imagine where these events would have found an easy home in the traditional structures of art music, it is also worth noting that in creating a home for themselves through organisations like Cryptic, the artists doing this work have also created new structures – perhaps not genres, but frames or settings in which their one-off experiments can be shared and understood.

Therefore, organising music-making is a field of diverse actors, practices, influences and performances. Engaging with this field requires a degree of dynamism and flexibility in theorising, and in the next section we will outline two approaches we think are particularly appropriate to this task.

Developments in organisation theory

The ways we think about, study and act in organisations are related to our view of the world and the way we think society works: i.e. our paradigm. Some paradigms view the social world as a given reality that exists independently from the people living within it – one in which structures, systems and roles can be observed and form the basis for being an effective member of society. This is known as a ‘realist’ view of the world. It includes, for example, the views that managers have a position in a formal organisation structure that determines their goals, responsibilities and authority; and that people behave according to particular laws and principles. Researchers can observe these phenomena, categorise behaviour and determine a manager’s source of power and whether s/he is performing the role as s/he should. By referring to these structures, categories and systems, we can identify the causal mechanisms and the factors and variables that influence effective management performance. This paradigm, known as structural-functionalism, assumes that efficiency and effectiveness occur by conforming to these external requirements and mechanisms and by behaving in a ‘rational’ way. Changes to an organisation or work process occur by modifying structures, systems, goals, etc.

Alternative paradigms have a different understanding of the nature of our social world. For example, researchers working from a ‘subjectivist’

view of the world believe that the social world is not separate from us, but that people shape and maintain social and organisational realities in their everyday interactions and conversations. This is known as the social constructionist paradigm. Analysis within this paradigm focuses on the meanings that people give to their world – how they simultaneously interpret and shape what’s going on around them. Cause and effect are not that clear; neither is there one rationality, because social life is complex and open to many different interpretations by the people living it. Researchers therefore need to ask those involved in a situation what it means to them, and to look for both similar and different meanings. For example, managers interpret and enact their goals and ‘roles’ in different ways: some may have a great deal of influence and good relationships with employees and colleagues, while others in the same role may not. We discover this by talking to different members of the organisation and seeking to understand the way they conceive and enact their work and relationships with others.

Social constructionist researchers and managers therefore see organisations not as independent structures and systems to be measured and manipulated, but as communities of people with both shared and different ways of making sense of what’s going on. While some social constructionists study the interactions and conversations between people and how these might influence strategy or teamwork, for example, others take a broader perspective to look at how language, interpretations of symbols and written documents might construct the culture of an organisation, and how that culture plays back into employees’ interactions. Whichever approach is taken, it is assumed that relationships and interpretations are dynamic and change over time and place. For example, as an employee, customer or hospital patient, we can probably all identify with the old saying that ‘the only thing that is constant is change’, as we get different advice from different people. And what may be perceived as ‘good customer service’ in one organisation is interpreted differently in another. In this paradigm, therefore, language, meanings and actions are not universal and generalisable as in the structural-functionalist paradigm, but are localised to the context. It is thus important for researchers to interpret the local meaning-making and activities of people.

The paradigms outlined above are just two of many. While the former structural-functionalist paradigm still predominates, especially in North America, over the last thirty years organisation and management theory has become more pluralistic. The so called ‘paradigm wars’ of the 1980s and 1990s, which sprang from Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) book *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis*, raised debate about whether there should be just one paradigm for organisation studies. The

debate played out in North America with exchanges between Jeffrey Pfeffer and John Van Maanen, and in Europe notably within the journal *Organization Studies* in 1991. Pfeffer (1993; 1995) claimed that diversity leads to a lack of progress and that consensus is necessary to advance knowledge because it provides the basis for greater development within the principal paradigm (i.e. structural-functionalism) and a more effective evaluation of contributions to scientific knowledge, grant allocations and publications. Van Maanen's (1995a; 1995b) counterargument was that such a high-consensus paradigm – which he termed a Pfefferdigm – is too narrow and leads to a lack of imagination and insight. For Van Maanen, pluralism was crucial: 'The goal is to learn from one another such that our ink-on-a-page theories and consequent understandings of organizations can be improved' (1995a: 140). As Chris Stout (Chapter 19, pp. 298–304), a fiddle player, composer and producer from the Shetland Islands whose diverse style of playing and composing is rooted in traditional, contemporary and classical styles, notes:

In a successful collaboration I aim to make music where you can't tell where the genre-specific boundaries are. I think when you start to consider where the elements are from, there is something that maybe hasn't been achieved in really making honest music, if it's too obvious where the styles are. And so my aim is to work with musicians regardless of genre and make an emotional connection with a musician rather than a connection through a style or other people's perceptions of what you should play like.

Chris has established a range of cross-genre collaborations with musicians from around the world and combining folk and electronica, and provides an example of how pluralism can operate very effectively in music.

Also up for debate was whether paradigms should be commensurable or should stand alone because they are incommensurable – in other words, whether we can use the standards from one paradigm to evaluate work in another. Those for incommensurability argued that the fundamental ontological (the nature of social reality) and epistemological (the nature of 'good' knowledge) assumptions underpinning each are different and so we cannot evaluate work in one paradigm by using criteria from another. Good knowledge from a structural-functionalist paradigm means identifying cause and effect and relationships between structures and systems, measuring variables, testing hypotheses and developing a theory that predicts behaviour and can be generalised across contexts. Good knowledge from a social constructionist perspective means developing rich and in-depth descriptions and explanations, and possibly different interpretations, of what's happening in a particular context. The argument for incommensurability was eloquently led by Jackson and

Carter, who saw different paradigms as a challenge to the ‘intellectual imperialism’ of structural-functionalism (1991: 110). They suggested that we could expand the plurality and vitality of organisation studies by establishing a way of legitimising the integrity and validity of work within each paradigm rather than across paradigms.¹

Our foray into this debate is to make the point that although this ‘war’ is still unresolved, it did draw attention to the potential of diverse ways of theorising organisations and management. Indeed, back in 1999 Karl Weick applauded the turbulence and urged us to ‘get over it, get on with it, and write differently’ (1999: 797). Taking the pluralist line, he suggested we adopt the law of requisite variety – because we are studying complex organisations and complex behaviours, we need to think in more complex and imaginative ways. This is what we seek to do in this book. An underlying principle applied here is to allow pluralistic voices to be heard and experimented with. Each chapter is written by an expert who is deeply embedded in a community that has a particular view on organising and/or music. When writing for their own community it is normal for them to take their way of thinking for granted and to use short-cuts in technical vocabulary. But here they have sought to write for people outside their normal community, so that there is a deliberate attempt to communicate across boundaries in such a way that the boundaries might change.

There have been a number of challenges to structuralism, including the linguistic turn, the reflexive turn, the postmodern/poststructuralist turn and the practice turn. What these ‘turns’ represent is a challenge to the prevailing structural-functional way of doing scholarship based on questioning the fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning our work. Each ‘turn’ questions our ability to represent – accurately – what we see in the field, and offers an alternative way of thinking about how we generate knowledge. As such, they symbolise the enactment of pluralism and an effort to move thinking and action beyond the confines of traditional fields (Gulledge and Townley, 2010). In this introductory chapter we will map two such turns – the linguistic turn and the practice turn – each having its own internal logic around which research is rigorously crafted (Cunliffe, 2011). These are relevant in the chapters that follow because they are of particular relevance to the question of how organising can be achieved in musical performance. This overarching question invites further, more detailed questions. To what extent is there a contradiction between the language and practice of organisation and creativity? Where and when should

¹ See Hassard’s (1991) argument for commensurability, and Parker and McHugh (1991).

compromises be made? Who should be involved in the various activities? What are the consequences of adopting a pluralistic approach to analysis and practice?

The linguistic turn

The linguistic turn arose in philosophy and the social sciences because of a dissatisfaction with the realist view of the world and its associated 'scientific' epistemology. Philosophers such as Rorty (1967), Wittgenstein (1951), Foucault (1972) and Derrida (1978) questioned the relationship between language, power, knowledge and how the social world comes into being. Within organisation studies, while a number of linguistic scholars draw on these more philosophical and critical approaches, some focus purely on language and discourse (Deetz, 2003). The linguistic turn is predicated on the belief that language (talk, text, symbols) constitutes social realities, and is complex in the sense that multiple meanings occur as people use and interpret words and conversations differently in and across time and space. While it is most often associated with a social constructionist perspective, linguistic scholars do work from different paradigms and there have been a number of attempts to map the various approaches (e.g. Cunliffe, 2008; Grant et al., 1998). Probably the best known is that by Alvesson and Kärreman (2000, updated 2011), who proposed a framework based on two dimensions.

- The first dimension is big 'D' macro Discourses of talk and language systems and little 'd' micro discourses of local talk and texts. Big 'D' Discourse relates to regular ways of talking and thinking on a societal or organisational level. Such Discourses are underpinned by a set of assumptions and ideas that give cultural and social meanings to actions. They may be political (e.g. socialism), economic (e.g. capitalism), ideological (e.g. managerialism, the American Dream), disciplinary/functional (e.g. business process reengineering, transformational leadership) and so on. Little 'd' discourse relates to everyday ways of talking and writing that influence how people understand an issue and act, and how they make sense of their identity in that context. Discourses influence discourses and vice versa. However, formal Discourses (e.g. organisational vision and value statements) may differ from the everyday discourses of employees.
- The second dimension is the study of discourse and language abstracted from the context of use, and the study of how discourse constructs meanings and actions in specific contexts. The latter might examine how organisational culture or managerial identities are

discursively constructed within a particular organisation – as a lived experience – while the former might examine the broader Discourses of gender or race that play across organisations at large.

Their 2011 article updating this framework was subject to critique by others in the same journal issue (see *Human Relations*, 64(9)).

One area of research drawing on the linguistic turn relates to the social and/or co-constructed nature of organisational life. For example, Barge and Fairhurst argue that leaders ‘co-create their subjectivities – personal and professional identities, relationships, communities, and cultures – in communication through linguistic and embodied performances’ (2008: 228). They do so by choosing which elements of Discourse and discourse to use to connect with people. This may involve telling stories around events that help make individual and collective sense around an issue.

The linguistic turn also focuses on language use and how metaphors, framing, words and phrases can be used to construct a sense of ‘reality’ and persuade others. Samra-Fredericks (2003) studied how the talk-in-interaction of a group of six managers in a day-long meeting worked to shape the strategy. She examined not just the language but also how it was spoken, and the rhetorical moves used by individuals in the conversation to shape the strategic direction. Framing – using language to shape interpretations and actions – is seen as basic to managing meaning and shaping organisational culture, strategy and identities (e.g. Ybema et al., 2009; Cornelissen et al., 2011; Deetz et al., 2000; Fairhurst, 2005). For example, framing a situation as either ‘a problem’ or ‘an opportunity’ can greatly influence how people perceive and deal with the situation.

Another area of research based on poststructuralist linguistic perspectives is that relating to the D/discursive struggles that occur with society and organisations (e.g. Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011). For example, Laine and Vaara examined how corporate managers in an engineering and consulting organisation use a particular Discourse around strategy (for example around ‘value-added services’ and ‘shareholder value’) to control employees’ views and actions. However, middle managers and project managers resisted this Discourse by using their own form of entrepreneurial discourse such as ‘strategic control from the unit’ (as opposed to top management) and situated themselves as ‘progressive strategic entrepreneurs’, which challenged the authority and control of top management (2007: 45).

Finally, a number of researchers working within the linguistic turn explore how people construct their identities within everyday interactions and conversations (e.g. Brown and Lewis, 2011). A significant difference between studying identity from a social constructionist paradigm or from a structural-functionalist paradigm is that the former focuses on how

people shape their sense of who they are and what they do in their interactions, while the latter develops generalised categories of roles and identities. Tony Watson (2009) argues from a social constructionist perspective that we need to study identity from the perspective of the whole person – that our organisational identities are just one part of who we are. This means considering how identities emerge and are shaped across time and space as we draw on both social and personal narratives of identity. For example, we find social narratives of what it means to be a manager in books, the media and education, and connect these with what we want to be like as a person. In doing so, we actively shape our identity by weaving together narratives – accounts of events and experiences organised into a sequence – into a life story.

The practice turn

The practice turn also draws on the work of a range of philosophers, including Bourdieu (1977), Foucault (1977), Garfinkel (1967), Giddens (1984) and Heidegger (1962), to contend that practices are ‘embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understanding’ (Schatzki, 2001: 2). As with the linguistic turn, practice theorists work in a number of disciplines across the social sciences, science and technology. Within organisation studies, practice scholars study a variety of topics, including strategy (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Vaara and Whittington, 2012), work practices (e.g. Nicolini, 2011), technology (Orlikowski, 2007), organising (Feldman and Pentland, 2003), aesthetics (Strati, 1999) and knowledge and learning (Gherardi, 2009b). Consequently, approaches to practice differ, ranging from socio-material practices and discursive practices to embedded interactions.

Several common characteristics of practices are shared within the range of practice studies.

- Practices are situated in everyday social actions and contexts, yet are different from action. Gherardi (2009a: 115) highlights the distinction between theories of action and theories of practice: the former assume that action is the result of human intentions, while the latter view practice as happening in a network of connections.
- Practices are concerned with producing and reproducing social order and organising. How this occurs is an important focus of study. In other words, practice studies identify not just what the practices are but also why they occur, what gives them legitimacy and why they may need to be changed (Geiger, 2009).
- Practices are integrative – about how work, actors, knowledge, tools, methods, etc. come together in the enactment of a practice.

Kaplan (2011), for example, studies how actors mobilise PowerPoint and related documents in their discursive practices in the enactment of strategy making. Practice theorists often assume that knowing and practising are inseparable in the sense that knowing constitutes and is constituted in practice – and vice versa (e.g. Gherardi, 2009b). Gherardi argues that rather than talking about communities of practice, where priority is often given to a pre-existing community possessing knowledge, we should study the knowing-in-practice that constitutes and is created within communities – i.e. practices of communities.

- Practices are fluid and continually created rather than fixed, and therefore practice theorists use active verbs such as organising, ordering and coordinating as opposed to nouns such as organisation or order. Jarzabkowski et al. (2012) argue that coordinating is a social accomplishment, and frame coordinating mechanisms as a dynamic social practice. They examine how actors' performances enact coordinating during an organisation's restructuring.
- Practices are recursive and interconnected at different levels in and across time and space. In his study of telemedicine in Italy, Nicolini argues that practices become durable as local individual practices become part of larger social and structural practices, which are then reproduced back at local levels. In other words, a specific practice is always immersed in a 'texture of relationships that connects it to other practices' (2011: 605). A number of practice scholars take a structuration approach to study how structural conditions and practical actions enable and constrain each other.

The aim of practice scholars is to shed light not just on practices but also on subjectivity, language and power. Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) argue that a practice lens covers:

1. empirical work that focuses on the practical activities, the routines and improvisations of people (e.g. Feldman and Pentland, 2003);
2. theoretical work that focuses on how practices are produced and changed (e.g. Simpson, 2009); and
3. a philosophical approach that addresses the ontology and epistemology of practice and how this can be used to resituate the phenomenon being studied.

For example, Sandberg and Tsoukas (2011) argue that we need to find better ways of studying how actors enact their practice, and propose a form of 'practical rationality' (as opposed to the abstraction of scientific rationality) that focuses on identifying relationships between practices and exploring the significance of temporary breakdowns in practices.

Practice theories differ significantly from the structuralist way of thinking. A classic approach is to seek to understand organisational phenomena

by analysing in 'levels' – typically the individual, the group and the organisation. Explanations of behaviour are formed by analysing the motivations and abilities of individuals and their interactions in – and the dynamics of – groups and organisational forces, which enable and constrain particular behaviours. Practice theories do not see practices as being simply the behaviour of individuals. Rather, practices are collections of activities that have patterns over time and do not simply rely on individuals.

The shape and nature of a practice also relies on the available material, the historical context and significant identities. For example, a musician who was interviewed as part of the project that has led to this book explained her approach to songwriting and musical arrangement for touring. Her band played a contemporary folk style, which is now very popular, commanding big audiences and top billing at festivals. However, at an earlier career stage there was a real question of how to finance a tour. If she wrote song arrangements that would require a double bass and full acoustic drum kit, it would mean that the band had to tour in a van. This would put the costs up considerably when one considers fuel costs, ferry prices to move between countries and accommodation costs and fees for a larger band. Alternatively, arranging songs to be played by a three-piece band on fiddle, guitar/banjo and accordion meant that the whole band could fit into an estate car and hence tour much less expensively. This had the consequence that the band could play in smaller venues, and thus sell fewer tickets but still cover the costs and even make a small profit. Asked whether this meant a compromise on creativity and the nature of composition, the musician was quite clear that it helped creativity. Working out how to produce a percussive sound on non-percussive instruments, filling out the sound with more complicated vocal harmonies and emphasising variety and 'colours' of the instruments led to an exciting and distinctive style of playing.

Hence, in this form of practice, both organising and musical elements are intertwined. Commercial considerations interact with creative ones. The musicians have some open decisions, but others are constrained by socio-material reality. Nevertheless, the direction of causation is not simple or singular. The musicians have intentions that they seek to enact, but they do so within constraining factors of their socio-historical context – for example, audience sizes and normal ticket spends in the folk market. However, by practising in the way they do, they also have an impact on the nature of the market, and the very practices of producing and performing folk music. They are enacting identities of folk musicians, but also identities of commercial musicians who have careers and make a living from the music.

Thus, a practice focus enables us to seek to understand the complex web of interactions in which people and their circumstances mutually constitute each other. Of particular significance in this ‘turn’ is the question of how people learn and how practices can transfer from one setting to another – often changing and adapting as they do so. This latter question is pertinent to this book as we open up experiences in different settings so that the reader can participate in picking up ideas of practice and considering what might be learned from them for new practices in the future and application in other contexts.

Conclusions

The traditional structures of organisation in music and the creative industries more generally are breaking down (Bilton and Cummings, 2010) with wide-ranging consequences for performers. In the past, organisations such as orchestras may have seen their players essentially as fulfilling a well-defined role (such as orchestra leader), and valued the individual for their ability to meet the requirements of this role. Now, however, we can perceive a shift away from this essentially generic view of the person-as-role towards a greater emphasis on the unique cocktail of skills, attitudes and perspectives that each person brings.

Small chamber ensembles may always have been about individuals, but we can now see a shift in the balance for larger ensembles, and speculate about how this trend could influence even the largest of artist groupings in the future. Ensembles like RedNote are essentially focused around an artistic director and chief executive, with a pool of musicians who are drawn on according to the unique demands of the repertoire for a specific set of performances. Some of these are ‘regulars’, employed frequently; others will join the ensemble only rarely, when they are needed to fulfil highly specialised requirements. The ensemble becomes a group of performers rather than a collection of instruments: ‘we need a bass flautist’ becomes ‘we need [name]’. The move is, therefore, away from the musical ensemble as a collection of role-oriented practitioners towards one in which individuals cluster around one-off artistic projects on the basis of what they, uniquely, can bring to the project – a network of practitioners focused on the needs of a specific project. This pattern is replicated in many genres such as folk and jazz, where one also sees leadership of projects by musicians as well as/instead of by managers, or those traditionally associated with organisational roles.

This change is a part of the shift in music towards the ‘portfolio career’ (Townley et al., 2009) in which the musician balances a number of roles

and specialisms, and the significance of this evolution is evidenced in the way today's student musicians prepare themselves for a career in music. Increasingly, students seek out distinctive performance specialisms and, alongside their deep immersion in that specialism, develop parallel skills in complementary areas such as community music or promotion. Thus – perhaps paradoxically – tomorrow's musicians may be at once more specialised *and* have a wider skill base.

Shifting patterns in audiences, venues, instruments and the possibilities afforded by technology, composition and the nature of organising mean that understanding how 'the music industry' works is itself a polyphonic and dispersed task. Audiences are far from single identity groups, attached to particular venues, artists or genres. Rather, they are composed of people with quite diverse reasons for attending a performance, so that dedicated fans may sit alongside people who are simply on a night out. Musicians are self-organising and being organised in increasingly flexible ways as they pursue portfolios of activities. They may operate in a generic role as a freelancer in orchestras at the same time as leading their own projects. This may entail considerable adaptability in skills. For example, freelancing in the woodwind section of a small orchestra/band in musical theatre may require the player to be able to play several instruments, while running their own project may require them to be able to organise other players, agree contracts and devise marketing ideas.

Chia (1999) argued against the reification of 'organisation' in favour of a processual perspective on the practices of 'organising'. Fineman et al. (2010) conceptualise organising as a meaning-making process entailing embodiment, emotion, performance and identity formation. It is both a personal and a social process, as people interact with each other during their working lives, bringing with them their personal histories, anxieties and hopes for the future, all of which have an impact on what the work task in hand means for the person. We see this perspective, exemplified through the linguistic and practice turns, as being particularly fruitful for engaging with the complexity of music-making. Adopting this perspective means that the supposed opposition between art and commerce or, in our case, music and organising, is not as stark as might be imagined. The skills of organising require improvisation, not being constrained by the 'script' of a traditional role, and engaging with others in shared meaning-making. Being creative entails discipline, practice and repetition. In short, there is a basis for dialogue on the grounds of both similarities and differences between organising and music-making. We would concur with Becker et al., who argued that what is needed is the co-creation of a new conversation: one in which we avoid the old debates

merely for their own sake, take risks (and hence trust others) and ‘prepare for a journey into the new’ (2003: 187).

Structure of the book

The rest of the book is divided into two main parts and a **concluding chapter**. **Part I**, ‘Orienting ideas: perspectives from organisation theory’, is a set of concise chapters that introduce key ideas from current theories, which might be of help in thinking about, and acting in, music-making. The chapters are not producing a historical overview but are rather drawing upon current thinking and seeking to make it accessible to readers from other fields. They include ‘application questions’, which can help with analysing empirical situations, and short illustrations of how this might be achieved. **Part I** is split into three sections. The **first**, ‘Organisation and organising’, emphasises social construction, practice, identity, change and creativity. The **second**, ‘Markets and engagement between production and consumption’, explores how markets may be constructed, the multiple roles of producers and consumers and the significance of networks and connections. The **third section**, ‘Organising in complex environments’, explores the break-down of traditional boundaries, complex interactions across networks and fluidity in time, role and action as actors negotiate new socio-economic realities.

Part II is entitled ‘Tales of experience: organising and performing’. In this section, people working in music lay out an experience or event that has been important in the development of their practice. The stories come from diverse settings and are deliberately experiential in nature – i.e. they are stories told ‘from the inside’. Therefore, they are not necessarily detached or objective: they do come from a particular stance and so are rather different from many case studies. What they provide is an insight into the immediacy of practice, the interconnectedness of different aspects of practice and meaning-making and an engagement with the emotion, embodiment and context-specificity of practice. The stories include ‘key lessons’ and ‘discussion questions’, which draw out the themes discussed and offer opportunities for further consideration. **Part II** is divided into two sections. The first, ‘**Organising playing**’, starts from the perspective of organising, firstly of festivals, and then proceeds to consider managing bands, organising and promoting orchestras, and lastly more diverse forms of organisation: around a university town, in a large city and the establishment of a recording label. The second section, ‘**Playing and organising**’, starts from the perspective of performance. Here performers talk through some notable experiences of playing and the implications for how things are managed. The section starts with traditional music and

then moves on to indie and rock before closing with examples from the orchestral world.

The [final chapter](#), ‘Next steps in the dialogue: insights for practising and theorising’, takes an inductive approach, drawing together themes that occur through the empirical chapters and posing the question: What might we learn more generally from these examples? The intention is not to produce a unifying theory: this would be inconsistent with the constructionist approach adopted here and would fail to acknowledge the diversity of the experiences and settings incorporated in the tales from the field. Therefore, we are not seeking ‘one best way’ or a traditional ‘best practices’ approach. Rather, we are interested in ‘promising practices’ (Delbridge et al., 2007), which are conceived as stimulation for learning rather than overly directive prescriptions. Promising practices are those providing examples that can be adapted, selected from and reinvented in new situations. Hence, in line with the dialogical approach, the themes emerging are intended to be generative of new ways of doing things rather than a source for imitation.

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