MUSICALLY MOTIVATED AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORIES AND
THE LIFETIME SOUNDTRACK

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Abstract

Creating and reflecting upon autobiographical memory is an everyday practice that is typical within the human experience. When music becomes integrated into personal memories, an invitation to remember is provided through both purposeful listening activities and incidental engagement with music in the everyday. Connections between memory and music are reinforced over time, such that salient music becomes a part of who we are: a component of self-identity.

This thesis investigates musically motivated autobiographical memories in order to provide further understanding of their occurrence, content, and function. The thesis also examines the role that emotion may play in the processes of memory creation and reminiscence. In a qualitative approach to a topic that has been neglected in both psychological and sociological studies of memory, this research prioritises the subjective experience of the individual as the key to understanding the interaction between music and memory in everyday life. This study brings together psychological insights and sociological theory for an interdisciplinary discussion of music, emotion and autobiographical memory, producing an innovative and original discourse.

The research presented in this thesis is based on 28 one-on-one interviews conducted with Australians aged between 18 and 82 years. The interviews were carried out in South East Queensland, between March and May, 2012. Through an informal, yet in-depth approach, the interview process allowed research participants to provide personal and emotionally nuanced accounts of memories that involved music in some way. Interview participants were invited to describe their experiences with music in the context of their life story, enabling a chronology of musical memories to emerge. Thematic coding and analysis of participants’ narratives revealed that musically triggered memories play a significant role in creating meaning for an individual through self-reflection and identity consolidation. To facilitate the discussion of musical memories, I have devised the concept of the “lifetime soundtrack” to describe the metaphorical canon of music that accompanies life experiences. As a central tenet of this thesis, this concept acts as a comprehensive
term for the result of the interaction between memory and music, and additionally functions as a framework for the discussion of research findings.

The analysis of memory narratives demonstrates that the lifetime soundtrack is established through mediated listening experiences in childhood, where transmission of cultural values from parent to child acts as a partial determinant for an adults’ engagement with music over a lifetime. Participants’ narratives are shown to possess nuanced emotionality, expanding upon the representations of this concept within previous literature. This thesis suggests that the effectiveness of music as an archive for memory is due to elements inherent to and impacting upon musical experience acting as reservoirs for the details of memory. The analysis also considers the ways in which a deeper understanding of music can influence the interface between music and memory for individuals who identify as musicians.

As a whole, this thesis offers a renewed sociocultural perspective on musically motivated autobiographical memory. The significance of the research findings suggests that the concept of memory offers much to the expansion of music sociology, where it has been prominently neglected. Not only do the insights into musically motivated memory presented here provide a major contribution to memory studies and music sociology, but the development of new concepts, terminology, and methodological approaches can be seen as influential to many fields that involve memory in implicit and explicit ways.
Statement of Originality and Ethical Clearance

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

The research for this thesis was authorized by the Griffith University Ethics Committee under the protocol number HUM/16/11/HREC.

(Signed) __________________________

Lauren Istvandity
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INTRODUCTION

“Well I tried to make it Sunday, but I got so damn depressed
That I set my sights on Monday and I got myself undressed
I ain’t ready for the altar, but I do agree there’s times
When a woman sure can be a friend of mine”

( Beckley, 1975, Track 10)

Listing the afternoon away wandering our half-acre backyard, my five year old self steps from tree to tree, thinking simple thoughts, exploring the dirt, grass, and embracing the golden glow of late Spring. Looking up hopefully into the mulberry bush for signs of ripening handfuls of violet ready to stain my fingers (and clothes), I catch strains of America’s “Sister Golden Hair” being rehearsed by my parents’ covers band. Nearly, but not quite exasperated at having to be outside (it was just too noisy in the house), I listen for a moment. I know this one, it’s the one that goes, “I got so dandy-pressed”. Unassuming, I pick my way through the prickle patches to fetch an old ice-cream container, a nice, clean one for the mulberries.

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This is such a tiny speck of memory. It is barely there, and yet the quietness of the dappled afternoon, blurred vision of the mulberry bush and the seemingly endless run of my childhood backyard flood my senses when I hear this song. It’s not really an important memory. It wasn’t unusual for my parents to rehearse in the dining room; “Sister Golden Hair” wasn’t, and probably still isn’t, my favourite song. But that’s not why I’m recounting it. Here, one moment, one perspective, endowed with near palpable affect, is recreated in my mind, just in hearing the first few authoritative chords. As time goes on, the same memory is repeated, albeit obscured, the same
mondegreen springs to mind; although I am older and I can hear the song for what it really expresses, something entirely personal has been captured by the music. These items are paired in my mind, the memory and the music. In fact, there are many, many more memories – not just for me, but for you, and for most people – that have an inseparable connection with music.

This thesis presents extended discussions on the ways in which music is integrated into autobiographical memories: its focus is the everyday occurrence in which a personal memory is recalled upon hearing salient music. It seeks to explore the depths to which human experience, and the emotion of this experience, can be encapsulated and recalled through the medium of music. Through qualitative one-on-one interviews and interdisciplinary inquiry, this body of work delves into the lives of individuals whose volunteered narratives portray a range of everyday acts in which music has captured the essence of lived instances. This introductory chapter will establish the thesis focus, contextualising the topic and approaches to the research as extending the boundaries of research into autobiographical memory. The methodological practices and limitations of the study are clarified, and a guide to the progression of analytical ideas as they are presented throughout the thesis is provided.

**Studying Autobiographical Memory: Renewed Perspectives**

Due to its use within various fields of study, the term “memory” can be defined in a number of ways. In literal terms, it can be used to describe the human brain’s capacity to store and recall information. It can also be used in a more generalised, descriptive way when speaking of the contents of memories, on both a personal and collective level. These ideas and the many variations thereof, are prevalent in both philosophical and scientific study of human memory. In this thesis, the focus falls on those memories which are unique to an individual, involving the experiences of the self: that is, autobiographical memory. Although not mutually exclusive, this type of memory is distinct from
memory for general knowledge (semantic memory) \(^1\) and memories that are shared by many people\(^2\) (collective memory) due to the unique circumstances of an experience within the context of an individual’s life\(^3\).

The modern experimental study of memory began in the late 1800s when Hermann Ebbinghaus published the first psychological study of memory. Sir Francis Galton, an expert in scientific, anthropological and mathematic realms, is claimed to be the founder of the empirical study of autobiographical memory, and was also the first to describe a basic technique for studying memory – cue methods. Expanding rapidly from Galton’s contribution, the scientific literature on autobiographical memory is extensive. It spans through broad areas of study, such as the systems of memory organisation, classification of memories, cognition and memory, emotion and memory, social functions, memories for world events, the study of memory within certain age groups, as well as the flaws of the human mind. In more recent times, the scientific study of autobiographical memory has been applied to real-life events such as legal court cases, and the recollection of world atrocities for which eye-witness testimony is one of the few sources of information. A very small portion of research in autobiographical memory investigates the elicitation of an individual’s experiences through the use of associated sources such as words, scents, and music.

The development of collective and cultural memory theory, as first established by scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs (1952/1992) and Jan Assmann (1995), gave rise to an increased interest in memory across the humanities and social sciences in the 1980s (Radstone, 2008), leading to the introduction of the umbrella term for the field: “memory studies”. With an emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, memory studies plays host to memory research across contexts such as law, sociology, politics, history, architecture, business, and communication studies (Roediger &

\(^1\) As in, “the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.”
\(^2\) For example, the fall of the Berlin Wall.
\(^3\) Further disambiguation and exploration of autobiographical memory is provided in Chapter 2.
Wertsch, 2008). While it is still a relatively new field, research in this area contributes to broader understandings of memory, highlighting the application of memory research in real-life contexts.

In investigating autobiographical memories that are triggered by music this thesis encounters both the cognitive functions of memory and the prevalence of memory as a social construct in everyday life. An understanding of memory in this context necessitates an interdisciplinary view of memory, its applications, and meaning. In Chapter 2, literature from the fields of psychology and neuroscience that details the operations of autobiographical memory is synthesised in a review that facilitates a greater understanding of this aspect of the study. This overview provides information that underlies the greater investigation into the social and cultural functions of memory, which is explicated in the remainder of the thesis.

**Music and Memory: Absent in the Literature?**

The idea that music can trigger memories is not novel – it is a frequent, everyday occurrence that is ritualised in the commercial production of compilations and the domestic development of record collections and playlists by people on a global scale. It is therefore surprising that, as a topic of academic scrutiny, it has been largely neglected. In reviewing the existing literature on music and memory, Chapters 3 reveals that the relationship between music and memory is under-studied within both psychological and sociological literature.

Of the small body of research that is focussed on music and memory, a majority of studies originate in the scientific study of the mind (i.e. psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, etc.), utilising quantitative methods to investigate this relationship (e.g. Cady, Harris & Knappenberger, 2008; Janata, Tomic & Rakowski, 2007; Schulkind, Hennis & Rubin, 1999). At the time of writing, there were scarcely any studies of musically motivated memories that engaged with the topic on a qualitative level, with the exception of studies conducted by Ben Anderson (2004) and José van Dijck (2006, 2009). Within previous research collectively, the aims, demographic, and methods of memory
elicitation vary widely, rendering the infrastructure of existing literature for the most part inconsistent. With the breadth of existing study so wide, yet research projects so few, it is apparent that the intersection of memory and music has great potential for further research.

The paucity of research pertaining directly to the topic at hand from a memory studies perspective resulted in the pursuit of information in related areas. The concept of memory is frequently referred to in passing, such that the role of memory between human perception and the object of study is implied (e.g. DeNora, 2000; Gabrielsson, 2011; Kotarba, 2002). This occurs most frequently in the work of music sociologists such as Tia DeNora (2000), Simon Frith (1981, 1987), and Andy Bennett (2000, 2013). As such, this field became a dual focus with memory studies in contextualising the current research. Given the involvement of music in many disciplines further to those mentioned, this thesis also refers to literature from media studies and cultural studies, such as Michael Bull (2004, 2007) and David Hesmondhalgh (2008, 2013).

The shortage of research on memory and music, coupled with the disparity between quantitative and qualitative inquiry, has created a significant gap which the current research hopes to address. More than any other aspect, the review of the literature highlights the need for interdisciplinary research in the study of memory, whereby social, psychological and cognitive accounts of memory are combined to produce a more comprehensive understanding. This thesis will therefore illustrate that an appreciation of basic memory functions and processes can engender a more nuanced understanding of memory from sociological perspectives.

**Research Framework and Central Questions**

With the existing literature on music and memory still leaving many aspects of the area unexplored, the research questions at the heart of this thesis are necessarily broad. The aim of the thesis is not to canvass the domain within one body of work, but rather to explore the area in innovative ways. In investigating music and its relationship with autobiographical memory, inquiries regarding the
nature of the connection, as well as the content of such memories are instrumental in seeking a
deeper meaning in this everyday occurrence. Preliminary findings in this area revealed that ideas of
emotion and affect are almost inextricable from discussions of music and memory. As such, a third
issue regarding the involvement of emotion has been included as part of the main inquiry of this
thesis.

To conceptualise the relationship between music and memory, I have developed a new
term, “lifetime soundtrack”, not only to facilitate discussions around the topic, but also to establish
the topic as a discourse in its own right. The lifetime soundtrack is the metaphorical collection of
music that relates in unique and personal ways to a person’s autobiographical memories, and is
fundamental in responding to the research questions. The formulation of this idea is based on the
notion that autobiographical memory can be thought of as a primarily visual reconstruction
(Pillemer, 1998), comparable to film reel. In acknowledging this similarity, parallels can also be
drawn between the soundtrack to a film and music that “accompanies” personal memories. The
lifetime soundtrack is limited to music that one has experienced personally, but is not comprised
solely of music that is within the boundaries of an individual’s personal taste. In this way, my idea of
a soundtrack to accompany life experiences differs from the idea of the “sound track” that Bull
soundtrack is not limited to the mnemonic affect it engenders—it encompasses music that reminds
an individual of a range of personal experiences, potentially provoking both pleasant and unpleasant
emotions.

With this central tenet of the research established, the thesis seeks to answer the following
questions through analysis of qualitative responses from interview participants:

1. **What is the content of autobiographical memories that are triggered by music?**

   In asking respondents to describe musically motivated memories, the research aims to
determine what kinds of associations are made between the subjects of memory, and music
that is meaningful to the individual. The commonality and diversity of responses reveals clues as to why music is so easily integrated into memories of the self. As a relatively new area of academic inquiry, the discussion of mnemonic associations with music contributes new knowledge to the field of memory studies and also to music sociology. The elicitation of these memories within interviews also represents an expansion on the known methods for effectively assessing memory narratives.

2. In what ways can music become integrated into autobiographical memories to form the lifetime soundtrack?

The ways in which individuals engage with music is recognised as a factor that may influence the development of the lifetime soundtrack. This research emphasises facets of individual experience in examining the relationship between music and memory. It considers that music participation, access to music technology and cultural values are contributing factors to participants’ narratives and perspectives. The thesis also explores the voluntary and involuntary nature of memory and its interplay with music, and how this affects the development of the lifetime soundtrack.

3. How is emotion involved in musically motivated autobiographical memories?

The nature of emotion in relation to music has been a topic of both philosophical and scientific enquiry in previous literature; however, the connection between emotion, music and memory has been largely overlooked. This thesis focuses on the plurality of emotion within the music/memory relationship, and examines participants’ narratives to establish the extent to which emotion is implicated in this connection. Through further investigation of the role of emotion, this research captures unique information in the study of autobiographical memory.
The use of the term “music” in this study

As a key component of this thesis, the term and concept of “music” warrants definition. Arguably a universal concept, the notions of what constitutes music are wide-ranging. The term “music” as it is used for this research refers to a universal sense of music, resembling the description given by the Oxford Dictionary (2014): “vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion”. I am therefore including the infinite combinations of rhythm, texture, harmony and instrumentation that are part of cultural activities around the world and throughout the history of human existence. In using the word “music” and variations such as “song”, “piece”, “genre”, “artist”, “performer”, or “composer”, it was anticipated that research participants would interpret the concept to align with their own perceptions. No one genre or style of music was implied as the focus of the research, however due to various factors such as age and cultural background, many participants referred primarily to music that was commercially popular in Western countries during their lifetime.

Methods

This research applies a qualitative methodology that endeavours to make an original contribution to the existing methodological frameworks used in the study of memory. As will be shown in Chapter 3, much of the previous literature on memory and music often neglects to collect data from individual participants that can contextualise responses to questioning. Such information can change the ways in which narratives are perceived: the inclusion of this information within analysis allows researchers to compare the experiences of individuals and allows more meaning to be drawn from interview data. A review of data collection methods in previous qualitative research also revealed a lack of one-on-one discussions of memory between researchers and voluntary participants. Whilst written methods such as online forums and surveys were successful in eliciting one-off responses from

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4 This kind of music can be contrasted with broad stylistic categories such as classical and sacred music. The most common genres of music mentioned by participants were pop or rock music and jazz.
participants, as used by Gabrielsson (2002, 2010, 2011), and van Dijck (2006, 2009), studies that utilised interviews (e.g. Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Anderson, 2004) produced ostensibly richer data. With these factors in mind, the field work for the current research comprised one-to-one, semi-structured interviews with volunteers over 18 years of age. As described in Chapter 4, the interviews aimed to elicit memory narratives from participants by stimulating discussion on the individual’s life story. Questions guided interview participants to describe those experiences which were often brought to mind upon hearing certain music, and the context in which they occurred. This allowed for a conversational style of interaction between researcher and participant, such that participants freely added contextual information to their narratives.

Resulting from this process was a set of 28 interviews with adults residing in South East Queensland. These people ranged in age from 18 to 82 years and came from a variety of backgrounds. With the consent of participants, our interviews were recorded, and the transcripts were thematically coded and analysed to find both commonalities and unique opinions. Ultimately, four leading themes emerged - childhood, emotion, connection to music and musicians’ perspectives - each comprising one key chapter in this thesis that explores interview excerpts for the actions, beliefs and serendipity that bring music and memory together.

Chapter Outlines

As the first chapter to explore the analysis of narratives in the thesis, Chapter 5 seeks to understand the inception of the lifetime soundtrack in childhood. Within the boundaries of domestic spaces, such as the home and the family car, interactions between family members and music are played out in routine ways. Participants’ narratives describe a world of mediated listening in which the cultural preferences of parents or caregivers occupy their aural environment. As such, the foundation of an individual’s lifetime soundtrack can be understood as a product of mediated

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5 See Appendix 1 for demographic information of interview participants.
listening and music participation that is guided by the family. The chapter explores domestic spaces as sites of memory creation, and the influence that musical engagement in these spaces can have on the infrastructure of the lifetime soundtrack.

Chapter 6 focusses on the ways in which musically motivated autobiographical memory is infused with emotionality. An examination of participants’ narratives suggests that musical memories can entail nuanced and complex sensations, such that the feelings they engender are more accurately described as affect, rather than emotion. The triangulation between music, memory and emotion is shown to be fluid and dynamic; participants presented varying accounts of this interplay, suggesting that the relationship is more intricate than characterised in previous research. Within this chapter, emotion or affect is shown to alter the way an individual may perceive music as autobiographically resonant, subsequently imposing on the music/memory dichotomy. More generally, this analysis offers a new perspective on the use of music to enhance, reflect and memorialise emotion.

The idea that music has the ability to effectively and affectively encapsulate memories is at the heart of this research. Chapter 7 considers the ways in which participants were attracted to the music of their lifetime soundtrack, and in doing so, seeks to understand why music can act as an effective archive for memory. This leads to an examination of musical and para-musical elements for their interaction within participants’ memories. Chapter 7 suggests that the elements inherent within and impacting on the experience of music are able to effectively embody memory details, underlying the frequent integration of memory and music.

A high proportion (one-third) of research participants identified their experience as trained or regularly performing musicians. An examination of differences between these individuals and non-musicians in the cohort comprises Chapter 8. Within this analysis, an individuals’ perception of music is emphasised as an influential factor in the creation and reflection upon musical memories. Where non-musicians typically receive music solely as listeners, musicians additionally possess the
ability to create music and the expression of affect associated therein. In this way, musicians attribute a different meaning to their memories and the lifetime soundtrack due to a specialised affiliation with personal identity.

The final chapter considers the findings in terms of overarching contributions to the field of memory studies, and also to music sociology. It creates a holistic overview of musically motivated autobiographical memories as developed throughout the thesis and the usefulness of the lifetime soundtrack as a concept is reaffirmed. Future applications for theories and terminology established within the thesis are proffered, including the potential for the findings to be integrated into clinical care practices.

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, the focus of this thesis has been established and the context of the research within the field of memory studies and music sociology has been summarised. Clear deficiencies in previous sociocultural research into autobiographical memory have been defined, leading to the basis of inquiry for this research. The concept of the lifetime soundtrack has been introduced as the nexus of the relationship between memory and music, and has been established as a core element in resolving the research questions. The following chapters will demonstrate that the construction of a lifetime soundtrack relates to aspects of self-identity, enhancing perspective and allowing individuals to reflect in meaningful ways upon their life. Methodologically, this research underscores the usefulness of qualitative inquiry in music and memory research. Through the use of the type of in-depth interview techniques found lacking in previous literature, this study reveals the breadth of data that can be captured through such an approach. In doing this, a significant contribution is made to qualitative aspects of memory studies at large, countering the imbalance between psychological, neurological and sociological study of autobiographical memory. Overall this research aims to produce an informed understanding of the relationship between autobiographical memory and music that is personally significant through an interdisciplinary approach. In order to
provide the reader with a balanced view of the topic at hand, the following chapter will present a concise overview of the characteristics and functions of autobiographical memory, including an explanation of concepts and terms that are used throughout the thesis.
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY: AN OVERVIEW

Before embarking on the main investigation of this research, it is necessary to gain an understanding of the basic concepts surrounding autobiographical memory. This chapter will explain, in principally non-scientific terms, the development, organisation, and function of autobiographical memory. Constituting a distinct part of the human brain’s ability to store information, autobiographical memory is a record of experiences central to oneself that is constructed over time. The understanding of this process presented in this chapter prefaces an appreciation for the ways in which memory and music may interface over a lifetime. An outline of the types of autobiographical memory encountered in interview analyses is provided to aid in the understanding of terminology and concepts that will be used throughout the thesis. A rationale for an awareness of personal memories is also explored, incorporating concepts such as identity and self-representation. Finally, a concise discussion on the fallible nature of human memory is presented – a perception of memory as a fluid and malleable concept will enhance an understanding of memory studies. The field of memory studies is broad and ever expanding; this review is necessarily brief and by no means exhaustive in terms of accessible knowledge about autobiographical memory. As such, this overview gives priority to an explanation of those terms and concepts pertaining to memory that are directly encountered in this thesis.

What is Autobiographical Memory?

Although notions of memory have existed in philosophical texts for centuries, the modern understanding of memory was developed relatively recently. In a seminal article designed to consolidate definitions of memory, psychologist and neuroscientist Endel Tulving (1972) introduced delineations between semantic and episodic memory, which have become some of the most cited
explanations in the contemporary study of memory. Tulving contends that memory as a whole can be thought of as consisting of short- and long-term memory, and broken down into further distinctions such as auditory and visual memory. Confirming the use of the concept of “semantic memory” within previous literature as memory for cognitive referents such as signs and symbols, necessary for understanding language (p. 386), Tulving introduced a contrasting system of memory, calling it “episodic memory”, which he defines as a store for “temporally dated episodes or events, and temporal-spatial relations among these events” organised in relation to the self (p. 385).

From “episodic memory” springs the concept of “autobiographical memory”, which many scholars have argued is a more nuanced approach. Used across various fields of research, “autobiographical memory” has come to be typically described in the literature as “memory for events or information concerning the self” (Brewer, 1988; Conway & Plydell-Pearce, 2000; Conway, Singer & Tagini, 2004; Wood & Conway, 2006). Some variations of the term also exist; for example, David B. Pillemer (1998, 2001) prefers to use the term “personal event memory”, defining it as a memory that represents a specific event that took place at a particular time and place. According to Pillemer such memories should contain a detailed account of the individual’s personal circumstances at the time and include sensory imagery; in addition, the “rememberer” must believe that the event actually happened (2001, p. 125). While in some studies the terms “episodic” and “autobiographical” are used more or less interchangeably, some researchers maintain these terms have alternative definitions. One of the most comprehensive arguments on the distinctions between these terms comes from child psychologist Robyn Fivush. She states that autobiographical memory can be distinguished from episodic memory as a “uniquely human form of memory that moves beyond recall of experienced events to integrate perspective, interpretation, and evaluation across self, other, and time to create a personal history” (2011, p. 560). From this we can deduce that autobiographical memory, while using elements of episodic memory, is a more complex system requiring self-reflection and comparison of life experiences in an introspective way over an individual’s lifetime. The use of several similar terms can be confusing and, as such, for the purposes
of this research the single term “autobiographical memory” will be used to describe an individual’s memories of their own personal experiences and knowledge for events concerning the self that occur within their lifetime.

**Lifetime periods and the development of autobiographical memory**

Connecting to the “lifetime soundtrack” as a central tenet of this thesis, the span of a “lifetime” — from the birth to the death of an individual — will be used in this study as the overarching temporal measure when talking about an individual’s life and experience with music. Within a lifetime there exist conceptual units of time that are generally common to the pace of most individual’s lives, deriving from culture-specific norms and expectations (Conway & Bekerian, 1987). To differentiate these within the present research, the concept of “lifetime periods” will be employed. Martin A. Conway and Christopher W. Plydell-Pearce describe a lifetime period as representing “general knowledge of significant others, common locations, actions, activities, plans, and goals, characteristic of a period . . . [they are] distinct periods of time with identifiable beginnings and endings, although these may be fuzzy rather than discrete” (2000, p. 262). Adding to this definition, lifetime periods in my research also refer to categorical age groups that are typically understood as encompassing developments in maturity, self-identity and common milestones. Classifications of childhood (0-12 years), adolescence (13-17 years), young adulthood (18-24 years), mature adulthood (25-39 years), middle age (40-59 years) and approximate retirement age (60-plus years) have been devised to not only aid analysis of interview narratives, but also as a useful referential lexicon for the thesis at large. The literature on autobiographical memory also utilises typical lifetime periods similar to those above. As well as being useful terms for discussing research findings, these delineations align with the development of memory over the life course.

The cognitive ability to create and reflect on one’s own autobiographical memory is developed throughout the life course but begins its development in childhood. Child psychologists have found that autobiographical memories begin to be verbalised by children at about three years
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack

of age (Nelson, 1993; Rubin, 2000) and are developed through a process of parental guidance (Fivush, 2008; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Reese & Fivush, 2008). Parents reinforce expectations of reminiscing styles though parent-child discussion of recent events. Children are presented with appropriate templates for memory sharing through listening to or contributing to family narratives (Fivush, 2008, 2011). This area of memory development incorporates much of the surrounding visual and aural environment, and also encompasses many “first experiences” that subsequently make childhood a significant time of memory production. Childhood memories and intersecting music are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The lifetime period of adolescence also brings with it a host of new experiences that can significantly influence the lifetime soundtrack and autobiographical memory at large. This period is a focus area for memory researchers in establishing ideas about the development of identity and mental maturity. Researchers Susan Bluck and Tilmann Habermas (2000, 2001), note that the time period of adolescence is critical for the development of a cognitive process used in reminiscing, which they call “autobiographical reasoning”. The authors describe this process as one of “self-reflective thinking or talking about the personal past that involves forming links between elements of one’s life and the self in an attempt to relate one’s personal past and present” (2001, p. 136). Such a skill is reflected in the earlier definition of autobiographical memory given by Fivush, which described the requirement for reflection and evaluation of experiences through the use of perspective (2011). The latter element is most notably missing from adolescents’ memory narratives due to their inability to temporally distance themselves from experiences due to age.

Autobiographical reasoning develops throughout and beyond adolescence in combination with the acquisition of value and identity systems. These factors have implications for the method of inquiry used in this study, which is detailed in Chapter 4.

Within existing literature there is a specific interest in memory development in adolescence and young adulthood. A large number of psychological studies on memory recall present a similar data trend revealing a disproportionate amount of memories recalled from when interview
participants were between the ages of 10 and 30. Known in the literature as the “reminiscence bump”, Rubin, Rahhal and Poon (1998) suggest that this period of time often produces the most vivid, important and autobiographically salient memories of a person’s life. Echoing this finding in terms of cultural memories, it has been shown that music that was listened to between the ages of 11 and 25 years remains the preferred subject of memories over those associated with books or films (Janssen, Chessa & Murre, 2007). The trend was studied in regards to musically triggered memories by Carol Lynne Krumhansl and Justin Adam Zupnick (2013), who showed that memories associated with music released after an individuals’ birthdate increased throughout adolescence and young adulthood. This aligns with sociological research into music interaction: Simon Frith (1987) notes that “people’s heaviest investment in popular music is when they are teenagers and young adults” (p. 143). He goes on to suggest that older people continue to engage with music but in different ways to youth – a point that is followed up in work by Paul Hodkinson (2011), Joseph Kotarba (2002) and Andy Bennett (2013). This mix of psychological and sociological evaluations of this trend together suggests that musically motivated memories are equally, if not more, likely to cluster around the adolescent-young adulthood life stages.

Indeed, as evidenced in the graphs below, the reminiscence bump pattern was generally reflected in the quantitative results from my research. Figure 2.1 represents the number of times references for lifetime periods were coded in interview transcriptions from research participants, showing that participants told more stories that were based in adolescence than in any other lifetime period.

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6 A more extensive description of this research and its findings is given in Chapter 3.
It should be noted that the statistics for Figure 2.1 equate to the total number of stories told that concerned each lifetime period. However, the age span of the demographic\(^7\) means that there were significantly less people aged over 60 able to provide stories for later lifetime periods. To rectify this, Figure 2.2 displays the percentage of individuals referring to lifetime periods, as a ratio of the amount of people who had lived within or beyond that age bracket.\(^8\) By presenting the data in this way, it is clear that memories from both childhood and adolescence are the most commonly mentioned lifetime period by the majority of participants.

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\(^7\) See Appendix 1.

\(^8\) I.e. there were 26 out of 28 participants who recounted memories of childhood, which equates to 93%. However, only nine out of 28 participants were aged over 60, and of that, only one recalled memories for the time period of retirement age, equating to coverage of 11%. 

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The data can be broken down further to exemplify the replication of data trends within age groups. In Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4, the overrepresentation of the adolescent lifetime period is comparable in the coding of older and middle-aged participants’ narratives.
The above graphs show that the importance of young adulthood in memory can vary between age groups. While this sway may be due to the development of cultural expectations over the 20th century, it nonetheless suggests that this lifetime period too can be host to increased interaction between music and memory. Overall, these patterns reflect the aforementioned idea that the most important or memorable experiences occur from childhood through to young adulthood.

The creation of new memories in the lifetime period of middle age has been given little attention in studies of autobiographical memory, perhaps because this is a time of relatively little change in terms of the use of memory. The figures above show that while, statistically, there are a reduced number of memories occurring in this age range, it is still a relevant area of memory creation. The lifetime period in which retirement typically occurs is of great interest to memory researchers, particularly in the field of geriatric health where the loss of memory, rather than the creation of it, is the focus. As memory declines with age, everyday activities can become increasingly difficult. Memory disorders affecting the elderly, especially dementia and its variations, are of special concern in psychological and neurological domains of memory research, and is a growing
area in terms of using music as an alternative approach to treatment (e.g. Foster & Valentine, 2001; Garcia et al., 2011; Irish et al., 2006; Janata, 2012). This last point is one that is discussed in more detail in the closing chapter of this thesis, where I consider the practical applications for the current research.

**Manifestations of Autobiographical Memory**

Beyond the contents of autobiographical memory, the ways in which memory becomes apparent in the mind is also a topic of much investigation. Memories can be recalled in great detail, or at times they can seem distant and dim. In this thesis, recollections of various qualities were encountered; here an overview of typical manifestations is given to preface the use of certain descriptive terms throughout the dissertation.

One of the most significant traits of autobiographical memory is that it comprises an ongoing reconstruction of past encounters, rather than a faithful replication of an individual’s experience. Further to this, autobiographical memory does not act as a compendium for everything that ever happened to an individual - memories vary in availability and are coded selectively. Psychologist Daniel Schacter explains succinctly the nature of autobiographical memory:

> . . . we do not record our experiences the way a camera records them . . . . We extract key elements from our experiences and store them. We then recreate or reconstruct our experiences rather than retrieve copies of them. Sometimes, in the process of reconstructing we add on feelings, beliefs, or even knowledge we obtained after the experience (2001, p.9).

This explanation corresponds with Fivush’s definition used at the start of this chapter, when she notes that autobiographical memory interprets and evaluates experiences for the self (2011). Schacter’s account of memory implies that facets of experience are pulled together and re-evaluated through subsequent experience. This process requires what is commonly referred to in the literature as memory ‘rehearsal’. Memory rehearsal is the activity of remembering purposefully, usually in
order to retell the story in social contexts. It is at the point of recounting a story that the
reconstruction of the memory using selective details takes place. Each element of an experience that
is recorded in memory can be redesigned, exaggerated or omitted by the individual in accordance
with the social situation, which can impact the way in which the event is subsequently remembered
and re-told by the conveyer (Skowronski & Walker, 2004). This cyclic, self-informing process of
rehearsal at once consolidates and confounds autobiographical memory.

A similarly interesting aspect of autobiographical memory that is of particular relevance to
the current research is the idea that memory often includes sensory elements, such as images,
sounds or smells that accompany the information for an event or experience. Pillemer (1998, p. 53)
notes that while traumatic or highly intense memories almost always comprise a visual element, the
same is true for memories in other circumstances. In a review of literature on episodic memory,
Conway (2009) notes that the highly visual content of these memories allows much more
information to be recorded along with the experience.

Two types of autobiographical memory are predominantly reliant on a visual element: vivid
memory and “flashbulb memory”. A frequently referred to phenomenon, with special implications
for court proceedings and eyewitness testimony, “flashbulb memories” were first defined by Roger
Brown and James Kulik as “memories for the circumstances in which one first learned of a very
surprising and consequential (or emotionally arousing) event” (1977, p. 73). Since their initial
investigation, the term has regularly been used to describe an individual’s recollection of significant
events that have affected whole societies. For example, Brown and Kulik refer to the assassination of
United States President John F. Kennedy, and in a later example, Cohen, Conway and Maylor (1994)
test for flashbulb memories for the resignation of United Kingdom Prime Minister Margaret
Thatcher. Flashbulb memories are so called due to their stark imagery and ease of recall over long
periods of time – much like a photograph (hence the descriptor “flashbulb”). The apparent clarity of
such memories is juxtaposed against the typical processes of recall which can often produce errors:
the authenticity of flashbulb memories is highly contentious. Brown and Kulik note that this term applies to “highly newsworthy events and personally significant events” (ibid.); individuals can therefore also possess flashbulb memories for autobiographical events, such as the sudden loss of a loved one, rather than events that affect a population.

A similar term that is often used to describe this kind of recollection is “vivid memory”. In an article working directly from Brown and Kulik’s 1977 paper, David C. Rubin and Marc Kozin (1984) outline the differences between flashbulb memories and vivid memories, defining a vivid memory as “a report that a subject indicates is one of his or her clearest, most vivid, most lifelike, autobiographical memories” (p. 82). In opposition to flashbulb memories, Rubin and Kozin state that a vivid memory does not need to be caused by surprising or consequential events.

Pillemer (1998, 2001) has also used the term vivid memories as distinct from flashbulb memories (see 1998, pp. 34-40). However, Pillemer extends these definitions to conceptualise what may become important moments in a life history. He creates a series of categories such as “anchoring events” and “turning points” to explain how an original event (now framed in memory) may have influenced the direction of the life path. The latter term “turning points” has been adopted for this study, retaining Pillemer’s definition, whereby “a specific episode, or series of episodes, appears to alter or redirect the ongoing flow of the life course.” (1998, p. 76). Examples of these are events that feature a change in attitude or perspective, such as a career or behavioural change. The use of this concept in this thesis is a blanket term for any major life changes that can then be discussed concurrently with music that triggers memories of those times.

For clarity in this research, the term “flashbulb memories” will be used to categorize memories that are personally and emotionally significant, not only for the individual but also for a large group of people, and for which the individual can remember specific details. A possibility that has not been discussed in the literature is that these kinds of memories may be accompanied by

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9 Further discussion into the fallibility of memory appears towards the end of this chapter.
music as a sensory factor of memory. The following excerpt from the narratives collected for my research exemplifies a flashbulb memory that is associated with music:

The first music I ever remember was on V.E. Day in 1945, in August,\textsuperscript{10} when the Japanese surrendered and I was in Nambour [Queensland]. It was holidays, I walked up the street and down the street - now you have to remember ... from the mid-30s til the mid-40s the only source of any music generally speaking was the ABC,\textsuperscript{11} on a wireless if you happened to have a wireless, and not everybody had a wireless ... so we didn’t have a lot of music. But walking up the street, every shopfront doorway I went to, there were the young women who worked in there, and they were all singing the same song, and this really impressed me, and the same song was in my mind when I started talking and now it’s faded out for a second. They’d linked arms and they were waltzing back and forth, waltzing back and forth kicking their legs up and doing everything else ... but every time I heard that song I was immediately back on V.E. Day, walking out Currie Street, Nambour ... [Later in the interview it is revealed the song was “The Hokey Pokey”\textsuperscript{12}] 

— Vincent, age 77

Vincent’s memory describes his experience of celebrations in his home town upon the declaration of the end of World War Two. Certainly, celebrations like those described would have occurred in many different places and been experienced by many different people. Although each individual may have a different recollection of what occurred at that particular time, it is the notion that many people can relate a memory to the same day in history that makes this a flashbulb memory.

\textsuperscript{10} The participant has referred to “Victory in Europe Day”, which marks officially the end of the Second World War, celebrated in Australia on 8 May 1945. Given his description, it is more likely that the participant is referring to V.J. Day (Victory over Japan Day, also called V.P. Day, for Victory in the Pacific Day), which occurred on August 14, 1945.

\textsuperscript{11} Refers to the national public radio and news broadcaster, Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

\textsuperscript{12} A traditional song with gestures implied in the lyrics.
Contrastingly, the term “vivid memories” will be used in this thesis to describe experiences that are remembered in fine detail, but which are chiefly relevant to the individual. These too are susceptible to be accompanied by music that will later form part of the lifetime soundtrack. Below is an example of a vivid memory described by a research participant:

... I’ve got very vivid memories of the first time I heard [Billy Bragg’s] music, and it’s a particular song called “The Saturday Boy” ... he sings in a sort of a deep, south London accent, ... even though he’s quite a skilled musician he comes from a punk aesthetic so he was playing quite rough guitar, he was singing “The Saturday Boy”, [it] is basically an unrequited love song and in the middle of it there’s a gorgeous trumpet or flugal horn solo, so there’s this beautiful contrast between this real roughness of the guitar playing, the kind of almost clumsy song lyrics and then this quite sublime trumpet solo in the middle of the piece ... And um, I must have been 15 or 16 and after a night of drinking at a friend’s place, drinking cask wine and that kind of thing. He had an older brother who came home and who had just been to a sex worker. And so I was having a good time kind of drinking with my friend ... and then his brother came home and he was a bit of a cave man and he was describing to us what he’d done with this sex worker ... and I remember feeling deeply uncomfortable in this situation thinking “oh I’m a long way from home and I really just want to go home. It doesn’t seem quite right, this seems quite rough to me, like I don’t really belong here” and anyway um then, that song was put on and I don’t think it was communally put on ... it just happened to be on in the background and that trumpet solo came and I thought, well - I was very moved by the music at that time. It seemed quite sublime even in its roughness, so there’s something about the very particular situation, I could draw the room we were in actually if necessary like a map of it anyway, and, yeah ... from that moment I felt well, beauty can come from the most awful ugly places, that it’s possible to connect with your friends very deeply over music.

— Paul, age 42
This description from Paul incorporates both visual and aural aspects that contribute to the intensity of the memory. The jarring contrast between the awkwardness of the situation and Paul’s perception of the music as beautiful seem to be mirrored in his description of the song itself. The musical analogy seems to dually serve as a description of Paul’s physical surroundings, further embedding the visual details of the situation into memory.

In presenting the varying ways in which music can trigger memory, an underlying concept about the link between autobiographical memory and music can be broached. The acknowledgement by scholars that sensory information, especially a visual aspect, is usually incorporated into memory suggests that music would form part of the recollected aural environment at the time of the experience. Unlike other atmospheric sounds that might be typical of a memory, such as traffic noise, the singing of birds, or the chatter in a café, music as an aural aspect of memory can be reproduced, for the most part, to sound as it did at the time of encoding. Therefore, rather than fulfilling a role purely as a background sound, music creates a strong connection between aural and visual elements of memory, with the re-hearing of music triggering often visual mementos of experience.

While vivid memories reveal the power of our minds to re-generate past events in detail, another style of remembering was encountered within research interviews that illustrates the ability of memory to abbreviate the past. In contrast to singular memories which generally comprised an intermediate level of detail, some participants referred to memories that generalised a feeling or way of being over a particular time frame. A survey of the literature found that Groves and colleagues had devised the term “generic memory” to describe a memory in which a number of similar experiences accumulate over time causing events to blur together (2004, p. 216). This term is somewhat problematic in its implication that such memories are inconsequential or of little significance, and so the term was avoided when speaking with interview participants for this research. As an alternative, I devised the term “cloud memories” to describe these recollections. The term appeared to resonate with interview participants, perhaps because it evokes the sense of a
collection that is roughly outlined, occupying non-uniform sections of time. As a concept in its own right, I define a cloud memory as a representation of a collection of experiences over a self-imposed temporal period that takes precedents from the idea of a lifetime period. Analysis showed that these cloud memories are roughly delineated by the individual and typically comprise repeated experiences within physical places and locations. Cloud memories can also be characterised by an atmosphere or affect that is perceived by the individual as representative of the time period collectively.

Cloud memories revolve around the most significant circumstance that prefaces a collection of memories within a set temporal period, which then differentiates these experiences from their possible repetition throughout a lifetime. Participants often recalled music genres or albums that reminded them of these temporal periods, rather than associating individual songs. The following excerpt from a research participant’s interview is a good example of a cloud memory:

“Yeah there’s Strung Out, *Suburban Teenage Wasteland Blues*. It wouldn’t have been when I first listened to it but they’re probably one of my favourite punk rock bands ever, and for some reason, that album reminds me of when I lived in Calgary [Canada], and, yeah I don’t know why, I think I listened to that and then I think their new album came out when I was living there and that was awesome. I remember putting it on a lot when I was going to sleep.”

— Jeremy, age 36

In Jeremy’s description, it is interesting to observe the sense of time that is implied. He notes that this particular album characterises a certain period of his life that is also denoted by his geographic location at the time. Further to this, it is intriguing to recognise the music’s integration with a repeated activity (sleeping), which further enhances the association between the music and a certain temporal period. The temporal references that mean this memory is played out repeatedly over time indicate Jeremy’s narrative is a cloud memory.
Memory narratives gathered for this study range greatly in detail. Some have less detail than Jeremy’s cloud memory above, and others vary in descriptions up to some of the very vivid examples given previously. The significance of flashbulb, vivid, or more generalised memories is contestable – the value of an individual’s memories is nearly always dependent on the circumstances in which they were formed, and indeed, are subject to the context of a lifetime of experiences.

**Recollection of Memories**

Memories for the self can be retrieved in two ways – voluntarily and involuntarily. An involuntary autobiographical memory is defined by Dorthe Berntsen (1996, p. 435) as a “memory of a personal experience brought to consciousness with apparent spontaneity, this is, without preceding attempts at retrieving it”. Donald P. Spence (1988) has also discussed this process, calling it “passive remembering”. Conversely, voluntary memories are personal memories that “follow a controlled, strategic retrieval process” (Rubin & Berntsen, 2009, p. 679). They are less specific, more frequently rehearsed and less emotionally positive than involuntary memories (Berntsen, 1998). It was a long-held belief by cognitive theorists that involuntary memories were rare and that voluntary memory was the standard retrieval mechanism. This was disproven through a study of over 900 adults by Rubin and Berntsen (2009), which showed both types of retrieval occur with similar regularity.

In terms of the current research, memories that are associated with or are triggered by music can be both voluntary and involuntary memories, within certain circumstances. According to Ben Anderson (2004, p. 13), a voluntary musical memory involves “the deliberate use of music to recollect, reminisce or recreate the content or mood of an already defined memory”. Through analysis of my interview data it was found that there are two planes of interaction in which purposeful, voluntary recollection can occur. In the first instance, the music may have been chosen deliberately to accompany an experience in the original setting, e.g. music at a wedding or funeral, music for a party. Henceforth, this music is bound to this experience on a voluntary level. The second tier of this function is in the reconstruction of memories and the emotions that accompany them.
This involves the conscious choice to replay certain music in order to relive the associated event and any feelings or emotions that it conjures. These processes are further described in Chapter 6 in terms of emotional involvement in musical memories.

Involuntary musical memories are those that are unbidden, but are triggered by the presence of music that has not been deliberately chosen. The context of the original intersection between music and a potential memory subject is usually beyond the control of the listener. Prime examples of what might be termed “passive listening” occur in childhood where in most instances the music is mediated by adults in authority, such as in the home (see Chapter 5) or at times when the individual is not fully engaged with, but aware of, music that is present in their environment. Such associations are only realised when the memory is subsequently brought to mind through hearing integrated music a significant amount of time after the original occurrence. This could occur, for example, when listening to the radio or hearing music in public spaces such as shopping centres, waiting rooms, pubs and bars. Instances of both voluntary and involuntary remembering were present in interview participant’s narratives and are evidenced in Chapters 5-8.

**Defining Collective Memory**

The definition and function of autobiographical memory has been well explored in this chapter so far. There is, however, a counterpart to this type of memory that has not yet received definition within this thesis: collective memory. These two styles of memory exist simultaneously, and while they can be extricated, a disambiguation of terms is needed. To define collective memory is problematic; the concept has developed and its applications broadened since its origin in the work of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in the 1950s. Halbwachs states that collective memory, rather than being simply the sum of an individual’s memory, is a greater concept that works upon, within and beyond that memory to “reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of a society” (1952/1992, p. 40). Since the publication of Halbwachs’ ideas, scholars have argued for the division of the concept into narrower discourses that describe more
effectively the nuances of collective memories. Subsequently, terms such as social memory (reflecting Halbwachs’ definition), generational memory, cultural memory, and political memory have come to be used within niche areas in the study of memory and societies (Assmann, 2006).

The idea of the collective is pertinent in the current research due to the larger cultural discourse to which music belongs. In broad accounts of collective or social memory, such as that offered by Barbara A. Misztal (2003), collective memory is defined as “the representation of the past, both the past shared by a group and the past that is collectively commemorated, that enacts and gives substance to the group’s identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future” (p. 25). This definition expands on Halbwachs’ work by categorising collective memory as a function of a community’s identity. An effective analysis of the interaction between autobiographical and collective memory of music is given by Catherine Strong in her study of memory, media and grunge music (2011, see also Chapter 3). Although Strong interviews individuals for their memories of grunge at the time of its popularity in the 1990s, her focus is on the collective memory that was developed and expressed through the media. Strong views her participants as part of a subculture, that is, a community that shares “a common understanding of grunge, without having come into contact with each other” (p. 65) and is therefore able to infer a sense of collectivity upon her participants.

In contrast, my research focuses in the first instance on the micro-social interaction between individuals, their memory and music. On a secondary level my research also considers that influences on the lifetime soundtrack may originate from collective social spheres, however autobiographical memory remains distinctly contrasted in definition. This idea is explored again with reference to participants’ experience in Chapter 5.
Functions of Autobiographical Memory

The nature of memory to be collective as well as individual has implications for the function of autobiographical memory. An understanding of these functions allows for the perception of how autobiographical memory interfaces with actions in everyday life. Scholars agree that memory for personal experience serves three principal functions: self, social, and directive (Alea & Bluck, 2003; Bluck 2003; Cohen, 1996; Fivush, 2011; Williams, Cohen & Conway, 2008).

Developing a sense of self-identity is one of the primary purposes of autobiographical memory. We can create our concept of personal identity through what we choose to remember (and retell) about ourselves. Fivush (2011) notes this as one unique process of autobiographical memory over episodic memory: although we can recall distinct singular events, autobiographical memory links events into what becomes an overarching life narrative, allowing an individual to have a sense of self as continuous throughout time. Several authors note the dichotomy of autobiographical memory and its link to the self – memories of experiences are required to define the self, yet the present attitudes of the self denote the value and accessibility of these memories. Concurrently, musical taste can serve as an outward indicator of personal identity (DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1981; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Perhaps it is ultimately for this reason that music and memory become easily intertwined: music can come to represent memories and the personal identity that is constructed therein is most easily shared and represented through the personal ownership and peer-group sharing of salient music.

The social function of autobiographical memory relates the individual to the collective. Specialists in social memory Nicole Alea and Susan Bluck (2003) note that social functions of autobiographical memory include creating and maintaining relationships, passing on knowledge, and showing or eliciting empathy. All these purposes are achieved through sharing memories with others. While these first proposed functions of autobiographical memory are seen by most academics as the dominating functions, Pillemer (1998, 2003) argues the “directive” function
remains crucial in everyday life. “Memory directives” as he describes them, are remembered events that can have an enduring influence that extends beyond the immediate circumstance (1998, p. 65). Situations in which we use memory directives are those where we rely on our past experiences to guide our actions. This function relates strongly to semantic and procedural memory, in that information for everyday tasks is enacted. Memory directives could also take the form of storytelling and therefore align with Alea and Bluck’s account of functional purpose.

**Narrating Memory**

Together, the social and individual functions of autobiographical memory are actualised in the overarching narrative that an individual develops throughout life; in psychology, this is referred to as the “life story”. According to Dan P. McAdams (2001), life stories are psychosocial constructions: stories that individuals select as significant aspects of their experience that portray an individual’s identity, cultural values and general attitudes. They are used not only introspectively but as a medium to communicate with others. McAdams notes that the life story is a function of autobiographical memory rather than a replication of it – a life story does not contain all remembered aspects of experience, rather it “consists of a more delimited set of temporally and thematically organised scenes and scripts that together constitute identity” (p. 117).

Tales from the life story are relayed between individuals via narrative. This thesis understands and expounds upon the definition of narrative as the primary form through which human experience is made meaningful (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narratives resulting from interviews with participants are the prime object of analysis for the current research. This term is analogous with “story-telling” and it is this term that is the focus of a contentious paper by Roger C. Schank and Robert P. Abelson (1995). The authors contend that stories are the basis of our understanding, and that in order to remember our experiences we must recall and retell stories of them. According to them, “telling stories is fundamentally a memory reinforcing process. The more you tell, the more you remember” (p. 44). While other authors argue that not all memory is reliant on stories (e.g.
Brewer, 1995), it stands to reason that the prevalence of narrative forms in social circumstances is a result of memory rehearsal, which reinforces the function of self-identity as outlined above.

**Recall issues in autobiographical memory**

Many factors can impact upon the way an individual remembers an event, including age, health, and stages of psychological development. Previous research has found that the memory is not infallible, that it is subject to certain foibles regardless of age or other factors affecting the individual. Such shortfalls must be taken into account when researching memory to protect content from being corrupted by various research methodologies. Memories can be affected by brain injury, trauma, and repression, among other factors. For reasons that are not entirely accounted for in previous studies, humans can also develop false memories for events that never happened in that individual’s lifespan – although these are extremely difficult to prove or disprove (Cohen, 1996; Loftus, 2005).

Psychologist Daniel Schacter has produced a comprehensive evaluation of everyday memory problems. He has categorised them as the “seven sins of memory”, and discusses them at length in a book by the same title (2001). They include: transience, absent-mindedness, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence, as outlined in Table 1, below.
Rather than see these factors as weaknesses, Schacter believes that the “Seven Sins” are by-products of normal and necessary functions of memory: we can accept these as naturally occurring parts of everyday life. The effect of these occurrences on memory can also have critical outcomes, especially in legal settings. The narratives expressed by interview participants are vulnerable to all of the “Seven Sins”. See for example the excerpt from participant Vincent, featured on page 24, in which he experiences “blocking” for a song title, which is afterwards cued to recall via an arbitrary part of my interview dialogue. Agents such as the “Seven Sins” do not necessarily change the outcome of analysis of the autobiographical memories gathered for this research; nevertheless, an awareness of them aided both the interview and analysis processes.

**Collective remembering and memory reconstruction**

Collective memory has already been mentioned in this chapter, specifically in the context of its relationship to autobiographical memory and music. The conditions of collectively sharing and reminiscing about an event have implications for the memories of the participating individuals. As such, this warrants further discussion in terms of possible complications within qualitative memory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The “Seven Sins”</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Transience</td>
<td>Weakening/loss of memory over time</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Absent-mindedness</td>
<td>Errors in the interface between attention and memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Blocking</td>
<td>Temporary limitation of memory access to known information</td>
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<td>4. Misattribution</td>
<td>Misattributing certain information in memory to the wrong source</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Suggestibility</td>
<td>Memories are influenced by outside information or suggestions</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Bias</td>
<td>Present beliefs can lead us to reconstruct old memories to fit within current discourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Persistence</td>
<td>Traumatic memories that replay repeatedly in the mind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: The Seven Sins of Memory (Schacter, 2001)*
research methodologies. When individuals share similar stories they are susceptible to both the
group discussion provided
lengthier recollections than they did beforehand: these people have incorporated details heard in
the collective discussion into their own narrative (p. 220). Both of these descriptions exemplify an
act of misattribution: the development of an incorrect perspective on where information in our
memories came from. This adds to the dilemma of identifying what parts of a memory narrative are
faithful to the actual experience, and which are suggested additions.

The accuracy of individual memories is affected after collective discussions via the
suggestibility of certain details or facts. This can occur when an incorrect detail is introduced, either
intentionally or accidentally in collective remembering, and is taken as truth and reincorporated into
an individual’s account. A good example of this occurring is in “eye-witness” testimony, in which a
witness’ account can be altered by a range of things including the type of questioning given by
authorities, or any news footage or reports the witness engaged with after the event (Harris,
Paterson & Kemp, 2008; Loftus, 1975). Such suggestion of details post-event is also well known as
the “misinformation effect” (see Loftus & Hoffman, 1989). The effects of remembering collectively
have ramifications for the choice of methodologies when undertaking research where
autobiographical memories are the focus. The findings from the literature presented above suggest
that interviewing individuals in a focus-group scenario would yield collaboratively constructed
memories, given the inclination for narratives to incorporate information outside a person’s actual
experience. This was taken into consideration when designing the methods for the current research,
resulting in one-on-one interviews being the principal method of data collection. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

**Perspectives on Autobiographical Memory**

The majority of the previous research on autobiographical memory as reviewed in this chapter describes the characteristics of memory, establishing its forms, functions and varying reliability. These aspects underlie an understanding of memory as a narrative medium, and while participants’ engagement with memory will be affected by these things, the goal of the current research is not to ascertain a particular level of authenticity or truth within their interviews. Rather, the research seeks to identify personalised interactions between autobiographical memory and music, and the meaning of this action to the individual, both of which are yet to receive sufficient attention in the humanities and social sciences.

Indeed, the social and self-developmental functions of memory described in this chapter are enhanced through the integration of music in the remembering process. Music has been shown in previous research to comprise similar functions though social activities such as peer-to-peer sharing of music and the role of music in identity construction (e.g. Bennett, 2000; DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1987; North & Hargreaves, 1999). In combining these agents, my research will show how autobiographical memory draws on music in order to validate emotion and experience. Throughout the thesis, the concept of autobiographical memory is advanced beyond the typical psychological definitions outlined in this chapter to develop a sociocultural perspective on the creation, development and meaning of autobiographical memory. It is this former aspect in particular which marks the departure of my research from that which has gone before: this thesis demonstrates that the practice of self-reflection through music serves to further nuance and substantiate life experience. In doing this, individuals construct their own sense of meaning within life, where music allows reflection upon the self in the past, and the construction of the self in the present.
Conclusion

This chapter has briefly outlined some of the basic concepts that should be considered when investigating autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory is a unique individual creation that develops in varying intensity over a lifetime. It comes in numerous forms on a scale that runs from highly vivid details to a hazy collection of similar experiences. The function of autobiographical memory as a tool for the development of self-identity is treated as a principal discourse that underlies this thesis. The notion that music is also closely tied with identity representations feeds into this function in the context of the present research. The analysis of interview data will reveal the impact of cultural factors on musically triggered autobiographical memory to be considerable during the formative years of the development of the autonomy of cultural taste; this is something that continues to shape individual perceptions of both music and memory throughout the life course. The material presented in this chapter serves as a basis for what is to follow; an understanding of autobiographical memory will enrich connections between the reader and excerpts of interview narratives whilst also allowing for further engagement with analyses of collected memory narratives. Having acknowledged the central discourses of autobiographical memory, the succeeding chapter is able to provide a focussed overview of previous research concerning music and autobiographical memories in detail.
BETWEEN MUSIC, MEMORY AND EMOTION

In Chapter 1 it was established that research within the field of memory studies is often interdisciplinary, which accommodates the use of literature from fields of sociology, psychology, and music studies necessary for the current inquiry. The inclusion of literature from these areas is rationalised in this chapter: to provide a broad perspective on the range of studies into musically motivated memory, existing research on memory is supplemented with research from music sociology and the greater area of cultural and media studies. This chapter will encapsulate a review of research pertaining to the relationship between music and autobiographical memory within a discussion of the guiding concepts of this thesis: the “lifetime soundtrack”, the individual, and contextualised memory experiences. In critiquing music and memory literature this chapter will present, in the first instance, an overview of existing studies that inform an understanding of the area, whilst also revealing areas of neglect within the research. Further to this, the review considers the extent to which emotion has been implicated in processes of musically motivated memory within previous studies.

As noted in Chapter 2, the field of study concerned with memory proffers a wide breadth of research, however the basic overview provided therein affords the following critique a narrower focus. This review positions my research at the junction of several fields of academic study revealing a significant lack of focussed research into the interpolation of music into personal memory. Literature is discussed within two basic methodological delineations of qualitative or quantitative research. The majority of studies focussing on music and memory arise from scientific fields that generally favour stringent quantitative designs, whilst methods that examine more closely the contents of these memories via qualitative enquiry have been neglected. By way of filling this gap, I
have chosen to conduct my research using a qualitative approach (detailed in Chapter 4), whilst the underpinning theories of memory used in the thesis have foundations in scientific research.

The qualitative studies reviewed in this chapter move beyond laboratory settings and contextualise musical memories within the social and personal circumstances of their creation and recreation. However, such studies are few in number. Such is the state of detailed, empirical research on musically motivated memories that only two studies engaging the subject directly were found during the four year span of my research. This necessitated further research into studies that despite not focussing directly on memory and music make references to the state of this relationship, especially in connection to social structures and everyday life for the individual. These studies are included in the overview presented here as part of an extended discussion on qualitative memory research at large.

Specifically, the overview of the literature presented below is guided by aspects that characterise my research: a focus on an individual’s contextualised experience, the idea of the lifetime soundtrack, and circumstances of musical memory creation. Its structure, by delineation of methodological approaches, emphasises the importance of cross-disciplinary research in addressing these aspects to obtain a more realistic picture of how my research is positioned between sociology, psychology, and music within the overarching umbrella of memory studies.

**Music as a Trigger for Memory: Quantitative Studies**

The idea that music has the ability to trigger autobiographical memories is one that is accepted as an idiosyncrasy of everyday life, although until recently this phenomenon was not one that was considered worthy of academic focus. The increased interest in the subject is reflected in both sociological and scientific fields of research, with both areas underpinning the current research. The following section prioritises the discussion of studies using quantitative methods to study musically motivated autobiographical memory. Predominantly originating in psychological science, the
previous research is evaluated in terms of its methodology and outcomes, but most significantly for its approach to the study of autobiographical memory and its association with music.

The majority of research available in the field of autobiographical memory and music relies on laboratory-based psychological methodologies and produces quantitative results. Cumulatively, the results of such studies establish the conditions under which music may trigger memories, and also the type of information that may be recalled, informing the aims of the current research questions as well as the methodological approach. One of the earliest studies on episodic memory and music, James C. Bartlett and Paul Snelus (1980) tested middle-aged and elderly subjects for recall of lyrics and temporal information (e.g. year of popularity) for songs that were popular in their participant’s youth. This kind of information, while arguably episodic in nature, does not form part of autobiographical memory, in that the investigators did not ask participants to contextualise their recall processes with information about personal circumstances that may impact upon the individual’s ability to recall certain information. What the article did conclude, however, is that it is possible to probe long-term memory for popular songs from defined lifetime periods; this finding legitimized the area and paved the way for future research.

Using “cue methods” to incite memory retrieval is a common technique used in the scientific study of autobiographical memory, although the experiment by Bartlett and Snelus appears to be the first use of this method specifically in the study of memories associated with music. Using music as a cue for memories from different lifetime periods is common to several psychological studies conducted after the study by Bartlett and Snelus, confirming that this was an effective method of studying the intersection of memory and music. However, the use of music that is assumed to be known by participants is rather problematic from a methodological standpoint: the presumption of what musical material will be salient for participants predisposes the outcomes to bias. Despite this, previous studies utilising cue methods are notable for other contributions towards an understanding of the connections between music and memory.
Studies from Schulkind, Hennis and Rubin (1999) and Cady, Harris and Knappenberger (2008) made use of popular music cues that are drawn from five or more different decades of the 20th century. While Schulkind et al. only used recorded excerpts of carefully chosen songs, Cady et al. tested the strength of recall under various sensory conditions – these conditions are all related to the song selections but differ in presentation. In all conditions, participants were given a list of songs from five different temporal lifetime periods (early childhood, grade school, middle school, high school, and college) and asked to rate which track triggered the strongest positive memory. The control group was only given the title of tracks, the auditory group were given one minute excerpts, the visual lyrics group were provided with lyric sheets, and the picture group were shown a picture of the album cover and a picture of the artist/s. Cady et al. concur with the findings from Bartlett and Snelus (1980) that music is a valid cue for evoking memories; they also found that not only did music cues evoke a memory in nearly all cases, but also that the imposed sensory conditions did little to alter the effect of recall. The latter point was significant in formulating the methodology for the current research, in that it substantiated the use of stimuli other than music to evoke memories (see Chapter 4).

The methods and results of Cady and colleagues’ study extended upon the most common approach to quantitatively studying the relationship between music and memory by showing not only that memories can be elicited upon hearing the song (e.g. as used in Bartlett & Snelus, 1980; Baumgartner, 1992; Janata, Tomic & Rakowski, 2007; Schulkind et al., 1999), but also that the music itself does not need to be present in order to conjure an associated memory. This significantly influenced the methodological design in the current research. In order to moderate fair and consistent conditions for interview participants, it was deemed most appropriate for discussions to be carried out without musical triggers on hand. Findings from Cady et al. confirmed that this method of inquiry would prove effective.13

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13 Further detail on the methodological approach used in this research can be found in Chapter 4.
While Cady and colleagues’ results lend legitimacy to varied methodological approaches, the study is also limited in that the tested demographic consisted only of college students aged between 18-22 years, and as such the findings from Cady et al. regarding musically triggered memory content should not be generalised. More data on music-cued memory recall in older adults can be found in Schulkind et al. (1999), in which an investigation into long-term memory is carried out using a comparison between a group of older adults (aged 65-70) and younger adults (aged 18-21). The authors acknowledged the similarity of their methodology to Bartlett and Snelus (1980), in that the participants were asked for temporal and semantic information (artist, song title, year of popularity) in response to musical excerpts. The principal aim of the experiment was to establish correlations between emotion and memory through music cues, and so participants were additionally asked to rate reactions of emotionality and preference. The results pertaining to emotion are of interest and will be discussed later in this chapter. Other significant findings from this study involved age groups and recall. Schulkind and colleagues found that older adults recalled stronger memories when triggered by music from their youth than from any other time period, and also that this group remembered general temporal periods rather than specific events. Younger subjects dated and titled songs more accurately and were able to respond with more specific memories than older adults. An outcome such as this is not unexpected given the proclivity of memory to deteriorate with age, especially in terms of specific details. In spite of this, it has also been found that music can trigger vivid recollections in the elderly, including those with expedited memory loss such as occurs in dementia (Cuddy & Duffin, 2005; El Haj, Fasotti & Allain, 2012; Garcia et al. 2011).

Both Schulkind et al. and Cady et al. examined the ability of music to trigger emotion with favourable outcomes; however, what neither study refers to is the “real life” process via which this connection is made available. An investigation by Hans Baumgartner (1992) that interestingly precedes both of these studies is prefaced by the everyday occurrence that allows for this phenomenon. Baumgartner begins his article by stating: “It sometimes happens that a piece of music becomes associated with an event from a person’s life so that hearing the piece of music
evokes memories of the original experience” (p. 613). This experience is central to all experiments that discuss the effects of music on autobiographical memory, yet many of them fail to acknowledge it. Through this appraisal, however, the investigator must also then accept that music responsible for triggering memories in an individual will differ significantly between participants. In order to counter this, Baumgartner did not use the typical method of playing musical excerpts to his subjects; rather, he asked college-aged respondents to self-select an instance where music had triggered an autobiographical memory. In support of this method, Baumgartner, like Cady et al. found that all subjects related to the idea of memories being triggered by music, and had no difficulty recalling an instance in which this had occurred. Whereas Cady et al., Bartlett and Snelus, and Schulkind et al. examined temporal or semantic information pertaining to the recalled memories, e.g. lifetime period of origin, emotional response, or vividness, Baumgartner’s study is one of the few quantitative studies to actually look at the content of recalled memories. Results showed that a substantial number of responses (64%) related to past or current romantic partners and friends, and also that overall there was a tendency to report positive events. Just as in Cady et al., Baumgartner’s investigation is only performed with young adults as subjects; as such, the findings are only indicative of responses within that age group and cannot be mapped onto a greater age range. This limitation is removed in the current research through recruitment of participants from between 18 to over 80 years of age.

Another study, this one conducted by Janata, Tomic and Rakowski (2007), was also found to examine the content of memories triggered by music. Termed “MEAMs”, that is, music-evoked autobiographical memories, the investigators prefaced their study by acknowledging work by Bartlett and Snelus (1980) and Schulkind et al. (1999), noting that while the results of these studies focus on memory attributes, the ability to recall information about a piece of music is only one way of examining the relationship between music and autobiographical memory. Janata et al. therefore set out to look at “characteristics” of memories from undergraduate-aged participants evoked through pre-selected music cues. Each of the excerpts for the study, which were selected from the
Billboard Top 100 Pop and R&B lists, was followed by a questionnaire regarding familiarity, autobiographical salience, and emotional response relating to both the memory and the song; a description of the memory was also requested. In stark contrast to studies mentioned previously in this review, Janata et al. found that 71% of the songs elicited no association, while their content analysis revealed that the most common situations mentioned in musically evoked memories were dancing, and driving in a car. Contradicting this outcome, responses from participants in the current research revealed a much broader pattern of musically motivated memories; this is explored in Chapters 5-8.

The study from Janata et al. appeared to be more concerned with the trial of new methodological tools (i.e. using excerpts from iTunes as well as administering some questionnaires online) than investigating the content of the memories and the relationship between this content and the music that prompted its recall. It is interesting to note the lack of response displayed by their subjects in noting songs as autobiographically salient in a situation where the source was supplied by the research team. This was an effective method for Cady et al. (2008) and Schulkind et al. (1999) but does not seem to act as a preferred method in Janata and colleagues’ study. This aspect of the study is not sufficiently investigated within the research article; I suggest that the reason for the ineffectiveness of the method is founded in the researchers’ generalisations regarding music that would evoke memories in their cohort. Although the investigators gained contextual data from participants regarding musical background and listening preferences, this information was not used to alter the music played to each individual. It is therefore unsurprising that a low level of autobiographical salience was recorded by research participants.

The ability for music to aid certain types of short-term memory has been observed since the early 1980s (e.g. Bartlett & Snelus, 1980). However research utilising music cue methods depended on self-reporting from experiment participants, and investigators could neither prove nor disprove that music was interacting with memory in a cognitive way. Present-day technology has now enabled researchers to undertake investigations of the working brain using functional magnetic
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack

resonance imaging (fMRI). A 2009 study by Petr Janata showed, using fMRI technology, that the medial prefrontal cortex of the human brain makes associations between music and autobiographical memories when those memories are triggered by salient music. Supporting this neurological finding is the recognition of physiological processes by Jeremy Joseph Senske (2008). Submitted as a doctoral thesis, Senske’s exposition is primarily based on a review of existing literature with the view to constructing a new theory regarding music’s ability to elicit and facilitate autobiographical memory. Senske arrived at a 17-step process of physiological actions and reactions that flow from the aural perception of music to memory retrieval to justify the existence of this phenomenon. The paper was mainly concerned with psychological and physiological theories; Senske provides a suggested framework for future research without carrying out an empirical study and as such, the resulting theory remains unverified.

Working to extend on Janata’s 2009 publication, Ford, Addis and Giovanello (2011) undertook a similar neuroimaging study that aimed to test the use of music to cue memories containing differing levels of detail. Their detailed method required young adult participants (aged 18-23) to listen to carefully selected excerpts of popular songs from the previous decade whilst within an fMRI scanner. During each song, participants were asked to focus on any memory that might come to mind. The subjects then recalled some of these memories verbally during an interview and were asked to complete ten measures in regards to the memories’ intensity, emotion, vividness, rehearsal and age of the memory, as well as their preferences towards songs and genres of music. Ford and colleagues’ principal finding in this investigation was the confirmation that musical cues are effective in prompting the recall of memories that are vivid, generalised, or for factual autobiographical information (e.g. in 1991, I lived in Vancouver). The authors recognise previous studies such as Cady et al. (2008), and Janata et al. (2007) as providing some foundations for their research. Among other outcomes in their investigation, the authors note their confirmation of previous research from Conway and Plydell-Pierce (2000) that “musical cues that are particularly salient to an individual may allow one to retrieve a more complex and detailed memory
representation” (p. 2524). While Ford et al. describe a pilot study undertaken to ensure the salience of their musical cue material, their selection still comprised an assumption of the cultural background and preferences of their sample. This issue is overcome in the methodology of the current research through the absence of cue material; as such, the statement that familiar musical cues will produce detailed memories is proven to be much more potent within the context of my investigation.

One of the most recent studies to incorporate music as a cue for autobiographical memory seeks to ascertain the compliance of musically triggered memories with the common data trend: the “reminiscence bump” (covered in Chapter 2). Krumhansl and Zupnick (2013) used Billboard magazine’s ratings for popular music hits to compile a list of musical excerpts for the time period 1955 to 2009. Participants were required to listen to music clips and report on a number of factors including familiarity with songs, cultural preferences, emotional responses and association with personal memories, in a fashion similar to Schulkind et al. (1999) and Janata et al. (2007). Krumhansl and Zupnick confirmed their hypothesis that music can shape reminiscence bumps through generational transmission of cultural trends. By comparing the release date of music associated with memories with the approximate year of the memory itself, the authors revealed a significant proportion of individuals’ memories were associated with music that was popular when their parents were young adults. In describing these memories, participants indicated that the music was experienced in the company of parents, as well as in social groups or alone. They additionally found that associations with music released after a participant’s birthdate increased steadily through to young adulthood. Accompanying this increase was the rate at which individual’s indicated that they listened to the music in groups or by themselves, rather than with parents. These findings relate strongly to childhood memory trends in the current research, which is explored in Chapter 5. As the authors acknowledge, these findings are biased through levels of familiarity, time spent listening to music, and emotional response that were reported to affect participant’s responses. Unlike many of the quantitative studies in this review, Krumhansl and Zupnick collected some demographic
information pertaining to participants’ backgrounds and musical preferences; the latter was not used to filter participation in the study, although it was used to rationalise the choice of chart-topping pop music as the cue material. Whilst many participants indicated that pop, rap/hip-hop, electronic, rock and alternative/indie music was their preferred music, the cohort still contained individuals with preferences for other kinds of music. I would argue that although efforts had been made to choose appropriate musical cues, the evidence of differing tastes among the sample suggests that the method would not have been equally effective in triggering memories for all individuals.

The tendency to make assumptions regarding participants’ backgrounds and tastes is a factor that affects the optimization of results in all of the quantitative studies that investigated the relationship between music and autobiographical memory included in this review. What is absent from the above studies is a consideration of how their data may be skewed by perspectives and attitudes of individual participants. Although these studies included familiarity or preference ratings to gauge in some way how individual taste may affect the results, acknowledgement of individual experience and contexts of memory occurrence has been largely neglected. Arguably, the most effective way of gathering and analysing this information is through qualitative inquiry that allows the participant’s experience to inform the interpretation of their memory narratives. It is through this process that the current research emphasises the individual, rather than the collective, as the nexus of essential interaction in music and memory studies.

These studies also make the assumption that all participants throughout their lives had access to a particular style of music, and that all participants have lived in very similar Western cultures. This in turn leads to generalised choices of Western music cues based on popular songs of various time periods. I would emphasise that what is lacking in these studies is a consideration of how music becomes part of autobiographical memory in terms of an individual’s life experience. It is acknowledged that the current research also uses a Western demographic; as such, this thesis utilises culture-centric understandings of music and society to address the experience of the cohort.
Rather than promoting the findings of this research as representative of a region or culture, my study aims to find the relationship between the lifetime soundtrack and the individual’s unique experiences whilst recognising their place within a specific culture and/or society. This again highlights the need for more considered approaches to the study of musically triggered autobiographical memory.

**How Important is the Individual? Qualitative and Theoretical Studies**

In investigating qualitative literature to further determine the extent of knowledge in the area of music and autobiographical memory, two studies were found to explicitly explore this area, while another refers to the interaction of collective memory and music. In addition, a theoretical exposition involving personal memory and music has been included. A further five studies were found to contribute knowledge to the area, and while these may not refer directly to autobiographical memory, they do imply understandings of memory and music. Worth noting is the relatively recent publication dates of all studies discussed in this section; while quantitative studies of memory and music can be traced to the early 1980s, most qualitative studies of relevance are published as of the year 2000 or later, marking the growing interest in deeper investigations into music and memory. The two primary research initiatives found in the review comprise work by José van Dijck (2006, 2009), and a study by Ben Anderson (2004). Both used qualitative analysis of written or verbal memory narratives. While these two authors concur as to the existence of an intense relationship between memory and music, they present contrasting approaches and understandings.

In a 2006 article, van Dijck outlined her examination of online written responses to the annual “Dutch Top 2000” radio poll event. Interaction from listeners on the web resulted in aesthetic commentary as well as memory narratives; the latter of these were analysed by van Dijck who used
these recollections to explore the relationship between personal and collective memory. The author contends that human memory is “simultaneously embodied, enabled and embedded” (p. 358, emphasis in original) and that this is particularly evident in musical memories. In her exploration of the topic, Van Dijck emphasises a mind-body connection - she views memories as being embodied in their creation through every day routines; as enabled by listening technologies; and as embedded through the stimulation of memories in the present, bound by cultural contexts outside of the self. She supports each of these notions through direct quotes from the online respondents. Memory narratives in the current research portray essentially the same values, although some variances and expansions on these notions are evidenced in the analysis chapters. The author also argues that musical memories primarily exist at the intersection of personal and collective memory and identity:

People nourish emotional and tangible connections to songs before entrusting them to their personal (mental and material) reservoirs, but they also need to share musical preferences with others before songs become part of a collective repertoire that, in turn, provides new resources for personal engagement with recorded music (2006, p. 358).

This contention is supported by the data collected for the present research; indeed, identity and collective memory practices cannot be denied their contribution to autobiographical memory.

Despite this, I would argue that the lifetime soundtrack is very much a reflexive activity. While outside agents may influence aspects of a personal soundtrack’s creation, the association between music and tropes of experience is primarily a task for the individual. This idea is explored further in Chapter 5 with reference to findings from the analysis of collected memory narratives.

Van Dijck’s study is limited in several ways by the method of collection. Typically an aspect of special interest to studies on memory is the age of individual participants, and the age range of the cohort. Demographic information was not collected in a consistent manner in the research carried

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14 The data and results from this study also appear in other publications by van Dijck, including a book chapter in Bijsterveld and van Dijck, 2009.
out by van Dijck. Indeed, there was no requirement for respondents to supply these details such as the apparent policy of the radio program that was hosting the poll. Van Dijck notes that age was sometimes self-reported, or was otherwise evident, however this was only reported in-text in comparisons between singular narratives – there was no quantitative evaluation of demographic information, including country of birth, occupation, education level, and so on, that might have enabled further analysis.

The study conducted by van Dijck does not explicitly gather contextual information surrounding participants’ narratives. This is primarily due to the pre-existence of the dataset, which therefore did not entail the use of guided interview questions to obtain this information. Contextual detail surrounding the memory is usually provided within the quote, e.g. “this song came out when I was [age x] and I remember [event y] and I was with [person z]”. While this is more information than was collected in the quantitative studies previously reviewed in this chapter, van Dijck does not take into account the individual’s unique circumstances and experience. My research resolves this issue by placing emphasis on the use of contextual information in the discussion of musically motivated memory narratives due to the highly individualised nature not only of a person’s autobiographical experience, but also the personal interpretation of music, which is grounded in memories of the self.

Engaging with music and memory from the perspective of cultural geography, Anderson (2004) focused closely on voluntary and involuntary memories evoked by music and their connection to domestic spaces. Like van Dijck, Anderson supports the idea of “embodiment”, describing musical memories as being fortified through everyday activities; however Anderson’s focus, rather than being on the mind-body connection, centres on temporal and geographical connections between music and autobiographical memories. In a somewhat philosophical exposition couched in social and cultural theory, the author describes three contrasting “practices of remembering”: habitual remembering, involuntary remembering, and intentional remembering.

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15 These types of memory are defined in Chapter 2.
While these practices are evidenced in psychology literature on memory, as exemplified in Chapter 2, here Anderson passes over the cognitive abilities of memory in favour of analyses of how the above practices play out in physical and temporal sequences as described by interview participants. Data collection for the study took place in the UK, with the occupants of 17 domestic dwellings in lower-middle class areas taking part in the research. In using interview excerpts as evidence of memory practices, Anderson scaffolds quotes with contextual information on the participant. These details are posed in such a way as to show their significance to the analysis. Anderson’s paper therefore underlines the importance of contextual considerations in qualitative memory research – a notion that is maintained in the current research. While this account, like that of van Dijck, presents a certain understanding of music and memory, it fills but one small gap in a large body of potential research; such gaps necessitate broad studies such as the current enquiry which aim to create firm foundations for future explorations in music and memory studies.

In a contribution that offers the most comprehensive account of the interaction between memory and music to date, Catherine Strong (2011) examines the relationship between grunge music, media and memory. Using a qualitative approach comprising semi-structured interviews with 43 Australian grunge fans and textual analysis of 1990s media coverage, Strong contrasts the interpretation of grunge discourses through these two perspectives. In doing this, the author includes the “voice of fans” which she states is absent from much of the previous literature on grunge music (p. 9). Incorporating these perspectives essentially involves investigation of autobiographical memory and although there is some mention of this, Strong’s research is firmly centred on the collective memory of grunge with which her participants engage. This relates in some ways to van Dijck’s approach in which she attempts to place the individual within sphere of collective popular culture. With this delineation in mind, Strong acknowledges that the malleability of memory is a limiting factor to the research. As indicated in Chapter 2, the capricious nature of memory means that participants’ recollections will have almost certainly changed over the ten or more years between their reception of grunge in the 1990s and the interviews Strong conducted.
with them in the 2000s. Strong notes her use of “active interviewing” to overcome this issue, and in some ways the resulting interview data portrays exactly the ability for memory to be shaped by media that she aims to encounter. Interestingly, Strong uses music to cue memories from research participants; whilst it was found in previous literature that the use of music can be a limiting factor, in this case it is likely that the effect of bias is somewhat reduced. Given the niche area of inquiry, and the fact that participants self-identified as grunge fans, the use of music appears to be effective in this circumstance. Overall, Strong’s research contributes to an understanding of how memory and music may interact in terms of popular culture and collective opinion. Whilst the factor of autobiographical memory is underplayed, the research suggests ways in which overarching social factors can influence memory.

A study by Keightley and Pickering (2006) offers theoretical proposals on the connections between both photography and phonography and personal as well as social memory. As part of their study, Keightley and Pickering also offer some interesting perspectives on music and memory interaction that resonate strongly with the current research. Recognising the ability for one factor to trigger the other, Keightley and Pickering emphasise the tenuous nature of musical representation within memory, noting the ways in which the passage of time acts on both agents to obscure the actuality of experience. The authors also note that photography and phonography seem less fallible than human memory (pp. 160-1) in theorising the role of these agents as tools for reflection. This idea has also been suggested by DeNora (2000) in regards to music, where she notes the ability for music to be replicated verbatim. This concept is incorporated into my own arguments for the integration of memory and music in Chapter 7. The theoretical nature of Keightley and Pickering’s research allows for the inclusion of some more abstract content, however greater reference to the “real-time” interplay of music/photography and memory that they describe would substantiate some of the authors’ claims.
Outside Memory Studies

Another two studies that correlated broadly with the objectives of the current research are also pertinent to discuss here. Although they do not explicitly incorporate the study of autobiographical memory, the role of memory is implicit in their methodological approach and subsequent findings.

One is a long-term study carried out by Alf Gabrielsson (2002, 2010, 2011; Gabrielsson & Wik, 2003), which investigates individual’s “strong experiences with music” – the SEM Project. The other study made a significant contribution to the foundations for the current research: conducted in Australia, Terrence Hays and Victor Minichiello (2005) enquired into the meaning of music in the lives of older people. Both Gabrielsson’s and Hays and Minichiello’s research looks at individual’s responses to questions regarding music and the life course. Although these studies were based on objectives that differ from those within my research, their method of enquiry still required the use of memory narratives; it is therefore useful to examine these studies for their treatment and interpretation of their participants’ responses. At the same time, neither examination specifically acknowledges the role of autobiographical memory, nor do they mention the cognitive interplay between memory and music directly. Despite this, both studies are significant in exposing the ways in which music interacts with memory in everyday life, and how it may act as a tool for meaning-making, especially in the lives of the elderly. This aspect of the studies also aligns with the concept of the “lifetime soundtrack” used in the current research in showing how the development of musical memories occurs in parallel with memories of one’s own life experiences.

Gabrielsson’s research into strong experiences with music was one of the first studies to qualitatively examine recollections of vivid, visceral and enduring perceptions of music in order to understand their significance and meaning. The SEM Project began in the late 1980s and ceased just before the cumulative findings were published in 2011. Partial findings and accounts of the project’s progress were released as articles throughout the lifetime of the study, both as solo works and as collaborations; those from 2002, 2003, and 2010 along with the 2011 summary book, have been
reviewed for the current research. In a method similar to that used by Baumgartner (1992), Gabrielsson posed a simple question, with an overwhelming number of responses. He asked participants to “describe in your own words the strongest (most intense, most profound) experiences with music you have ever had. Try to revive it in your mind and describe your experience and reactions in as much detail as you can” (2011, p. 7). Gabrielsson and his co-researchers received over 1300 qualitative accounts from nearly 1000 participants, comprising Swedish people aged from their teens to up to 90 years of age over the span of the project. These were mostly in written form (90%), with 10% of the recollections obtained via personal interview. As a way of providing some quantitative data to accompany qualitative accounts, approximately 60% of the participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire, in which they were required to give ratings of comparability between written accounts from previous participants and their own experience.

Due to the extreme amount of data generated by the project, the findings are numerous and varied. Through analysis processes, the accounts were condensed to reveal at least 150 different reactions to strong experiences with music. Gabrielsson’s 2011 monograph is divided into no less than 29 chapters, each devoted to a certain aspect or theme of strong experiences with music. The topics range through major events (e.g. weddings and funerals), temporal periods (e.g. childhood, teenage years), physical reactions, perception (e.g. auditory, visual, tactile, etc.), cognition (e.g. changed attitude, loss of control), emotions, and transcendental states. These categorisations guided the aims of the current research in compiling an interview schedule. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, questions used in data collection included probes relating to major events, lifetime periods, perception and emotion, in part due to the high rate of responses in these areas in the SEM Project. Of note is that each participant only provided one, or in some cases two, examples of strong experiences with music. This aligns with the author’s aim to examine only “profound” or intense experiences, which therefore rules out everyday instances of memories being triggered by music. And so while Gabrielsson’s study did provide a wide representation of strong experiences, it
did not attempt to find any further meaning from the data save for the cataloguing of reactions and a brief overview of possible causes of these sorts of experiences.

The idea of music as a tool for meaning-making is hinted at in the studies by Gabrielsson, Anderson and van Dijck. However, something that these authors do not touch on is the way music and autobiographical memories interact over the course of a lifetime. For each study the dataset is comprised of ostensibly singular experiences with minimal contextual information; in the only case where personal interviews were used to collect the data (i.e. Anderson), the methodological procedure is inadequately described. We are then left wondering why these particular instances were reported by participants – without appropriate contextualisation of a singular episode within the boundaries of their lifetime, we are unable to truly understand the significance that the interplay between music and memory may hold for an individual. Does the level of engagement between these two factors change between individuals? Do the participants associate music with certain memory content? While questions like these remain largely unanswered in the literature reviewed so far, it is useful to consider what research from sociological perspectives has to offer in terms of music as a tool for creating meaning within the context of a lifetime.

One such example comes from Hays and Minichiello (2005) who investigated the emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual role that music plays in the lives of older Australians. The demographic choice of the authors was to focus on healthy older people living outside of residential care facilities, rather than those affected by dementia or other memory-related disorders. In-depth interviews were carried out with 52 participants of the age of 60 years or greater. Much like the interviews carried out for the current research, the life experience of participants was emphasised, and the role of music within that experience was questioned. While my research asks specifically for memories of the past, Hays and Minichiello ask participants about the importance of music as a feature of their everyday life. They found that their cohort used music to aid well-being in spiritual, emotional and social ways. Significantly, the authors acknowledged that “when people listened to particular choices of music, they recalled events and experiences in their life along with the
emotions associated with those experiences” (p. 441). This process is reflected in what Hays and Minichiello note as their most important finding, which was that “the participants’ narratives of the meaning of music provides [sic] the ability to construct meaning in their lives. The meaning was directly related to his or her life experiences and emotional needs” (p. 449). This therefore shows that a reflection upon a lifetime soundtrack will conjure memories that often lead the individual to a feeling of validation, that is, that their life has been significant and is imbued with meaning.

The study by Hays and Minichiello is fairly small and cannot make claims of being representative of an older generation, however the authors note that it was not their intention to do so with this inquiry. Additionally Hays and Minichiello acknowledged that their sample was not representative of the diversity of Australian culture, and that this too would be a consideration for further study. Their investigation is particularly relevant to the current research, as it uses a similar method of enquiry, and in doing so, establishes typical responses given by older individuals in regards to music and memory. The research undertaken for this thesis will expand upon the ideas explored by Hays and Minichiello by investigating more thoroughly the ways in which music can give additional meaning to human experience as relived via memories.

The lifetime soundtrack in the literature

A significant portion of the literature featured up to this point has been discussed in relation to its lack of focussed consideration of the ways music and memories interact on a daily basis. Additionally, some of the research reviewed so far is not wholly focussed on music and or memory (e.g. Keightely and Pickering, 2006; Gabrielsson, 2002, 2010, 2011), making the aggregate of the topic quite broad, and varied in scope and objective. To facilitate organised discussions on memory and music interaction in this research, and in future investigations, the idea of a lifetime soundtrack has been devised as a framework to demonstrate how music is integrated with experience and therefore memory over a lifetime. To verify the originality of this term, I present here a short overview of similar terms evident in previous research. Variations of the term ‘lifetime soundtrack’
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack

can be found amongst some of the literature used throughout this study. One mention of the idea of a “soundtrack” is found in a study that discusses the use of music at funerals by Adamson and Holloway (2012), entitled “‘A Sound Track of Your Life’: Music in Contemporary UK Funerals”. The article makes valid points about the use of music throughout a life culminating in the increasingly common practice of selecting personally significant music of the deceased for use at their funeral service. The phrase “a sound track of your life” is in fact a quote from a participant in their study; the phrase is reserved for the title of their article, and the authors do not develop this phrase into a driving concept for their research. In contrast, I have used the term lifetime soundtrack to describe a new concept of a metaphorical canon of personally salient music, the ultimate meaning of which is developed throughout this thesis.

Michael Bull (2007, 2009) utilises the idea of “sound tracks” to life in his investigation into the creation of personal soundscapes via the iPod. Through analysing thousands of responses to an online questionnaire posted in eleven countries, Bull found that as an everyday activity, listeners practice “auditory nostalgia” through purposefully listening to music or compiling playlists that correspond to emotionally positive autobiographical memories. In his reflection on these behaviours, Bull focused on the individual and the way their music choices reflect their life experiences, which logically follows the intra-personal use of iPods and similar technologies, but does not further develop the concept of a “soundtrack”. The author points out how his approach to memory differs to that of van Dijck’s Dutch radio studies due to the types of music-memory engagement used by their participants. Van Dijck’s arguments on the occurrence of musical memories at the intersection of the collective and the personal were reflected in the fact that her cohort are participating in a radio poll, with radio being considered a collective listening activity; meanwhile Bull’s focus on the individual was fuelled by the typically solo activity of listening to music using an iPod.
**Nostalgia and memory**

Bull couched his participants’ experiences in terms of “nostalgia” – a term which, despite fitting within a casual lexicon of memory-related words, is an ambiguous concept. Admitting this, the author noted that “nostalgia is a contested and culturally loaded concept often equated with simulated forms of sentimentality. . . . Many consider nostalgia the product of individual fancy and collective ideology, representing a trivialisation of experience invariably associated with popular culture” (2009, p. 91). Going on to state the exploitation of nostalgia in commodification and advertising, Bull argued that the experience of the individual goes beyond “fabricated constructions of the culture industry” (ibid.) permitting unique interactions with nostalgia on an everyday level. Although I recognise the validity of emphasising the context of individual experience – a concept that underpins the current research – the decision was made to exclude the term nostalgia from the thesis primarily for reasons of subjectivity amongst interview respondents. Definitions of nostalgia can vary from modern Western appropriations such as the Oxford Dictionary’s (2014) summary of nostalgia as “a sentimental longing or wistful affection for a period in the past” 16 to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary’s (2014) definition as “the state of being homesick”. 17 Despite its ambiguity, ‘nostalgia’ has been used in other research pertaining to music and memory, such as the quantitative study by Barrett et al. (2010). Investigators probed the link between “feeling nostalgic” and the autobiographical nature of memories incited by music. Although the authors noted the varied interpretation of nostalgia to include not only happiness-related emotion such as love or joy, but also its proclivity to contain negative emotion (p. 391), they continued to use the term in the questionnaire for participants. Use of such an ambiguous term leaves the definition up to participants’ subjective interpretation, which could clearly result in a biased outcome. Barrett et al. concluded that nostalgic songs did indeed evoke both positive and negative emotions, and

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16 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nostalgia
17 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nostalgia
additionally that not all songs rated as highly autobiographical were given the same “nostalgic” rating (p. 401). These findings suggest that the concept of nostalgia is ineffective as a means for understanding autobiographically salient music. As will be shown, emotion indeed plays a role in the relationship between memory and music; however, it should not be referred to as a catalytic factor in the occurrence of such experiences.

**Music and everyday experiences**

The concept of music being used in everyday life is an idea that has been central to the inclusion of music in sociological studies. One of the first sociologists to carry out a focussed study on the topic was Tia DeNora. Her resulting publication *Music in Everyday Life* (2000) is frequently referred to as a fundamental contribution to music sociology. While other authors such as Simon Frith had helped pave the way for the establishment of this area, DeNora’s was the first ethnographic, in-depth exposition on the role played by music in facilitating and accompanying everyday social activities. Conducting interviews with 52 women in the United States and the United Kingdom, DeNora presents a series of case studies examining the everyday “ordinary” use of music, its contribution to identity construction and to our personal and social routines. Although it is evidenced in the text that DeNora uses a qualitative approach based in sociological theory, her methodology was not detailed in the publication, leaving parts of the work open to question. For example, the reader cannot be sure of the motivation for the participants to speak with DeNora, under what circumstances interviews were carried out or how the data was analysed. Of special note is the employment of a single-sex demographic, who gave comment on specified but un-rationalised aspects of everyday life; the reasons for these choices remain unknown to the reader.

While DeNora’s book stimulates discussion on the role of music in daily routines, it refers to memory only fleetingly, briefly describing the tendency for music to become associated with autobiographical memories of people, places or senses of temporality. Despite this, she is often cited by authors of memory-related studies, typically in opening paragraphs that establish the legitimacy
of the study of music interacting with features of the human condition, such as identity and autobiographical memory (e.g. Bull, 2004, 2007, 2009; van Dijck, 2006, 2009; Anderson, 2004; Janata, 2007; Gabrielsson, 2011). The significance of DeNora’s work, in both previous studies and my own, does not lie in a contribution to the study of memory, but rather in her treatment of music as a routinely encountered, yet socially and individually meaningful, aspect of experience. DeNora effectively introduces the duality of music and the concept of the “everyday”, which can be seen as the most appropriate temporal context for the creation of and reflection upon musical memories on an individual level; this prefaces the frequent reflection upon her work in studies concerning music and memory.

Besides its use by DeNora, the boundary of the “everyday” is used in some studies previously discussed, e.g. Anderson (2004), Bull (2007, 2009), and Hays and Minichiello (2005). It is used with most effect by Michelle Arrow (2005) in an Australian study that engages memory narratives of two once-popular radio serials – The Lawsons and Blue Hills — to shine a spotlight on domestic lives of Australian women. Arrow received more than 120 written responses to her call for recollections of the shows, which were broadcast with a remarkable following, five days a week on ABC18 radio from 1944 to 1976. These letters showed how the serial became a feature of everyday life, not only as an escape into a dramatic narrative separate from reality, but also an agent for the reconstruction of everyday routines for housewives and their children alike. Like van Dijck’s study of radio listeners, Arrow acknowledged the meeting of personal and collective worlds that is found in recollections of Blue Hills. In analysing memory narratives, Arrow suggests that this form of popular culture was used not only to structure immediate day-to-day activities but also to guide listener’s “memories of self, family, and cultural change” (p. 306). This finding emphasises the ability for aspects of popular culture to become agents of temporal organisation, not only in the immediacy of everyday circumstances but as a tool for anchoring memories of the self within the contexts of

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18 ABC stands for Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the national public broadcaster in Australia.
personal experience. In doing this, Arrow has managed to forge the connections between memory, text and everyday life that are lacking in the work of DeNora.

The importance of everyday life experiences is central to the current research, because it is our action and reaction in daily situations that form autobiographical memory. Memory is vulnerable to experiences both from within and external to our control; one such influence is that of culture, and the music that is contained therein. Our seemingly routine experiences with music can easily become intense and deeply moving, dependent on the listening circumstances. Whether mundane or profound, our musical experiences become intertwined with our lifetime experiences, eventually becoming canonised into a lifetime soundtrack that accompanies autobiographical memories.

**Emotion in Memory and Music Studies**

The following section will consider the influence of emotion as it is described in several studies of music and memory. The factor of emotional reaction is common to many of the previously discussed studies, however in order to conduct a thorough examination of its involvement, analysis of this feature in both qualitative and quantitative studies has been suspended until now. Exploration of the role of emotion showed that it is a concept that is used widely in many fields, and obviously warrants substantial consideration; as a result it is the focus of one analysis chapter, and many things that are stated here will be further explored in Chapter 6. Worth noting is an issue of vocabulary that arose due to the interdisciplinary nature of this research. Use of the term ‘emotion’ was common in the scientific domains and yielded few problems; in cultural and sociological studies, the idea of emotion is conceptualised via the use of the term “affect”, which in itself is a problematic term in that its definition is guided by the subtleties of the author’s aims\(^1\) (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Kassabian, 2013). For reasons of clarity, this section will focus only on the use of the concept of

\(^{19}\) This is discussed at length by Wetherell (2012).
“emotion” in relevant research, while a greater discussion on these two terms is conducted in Chapter 6.

Two aspects of the literature pertaining to emotion enabled a more discrete use of the term in the current research. There exists a vast amount of philosophical argument on the relationship between music and emotion, the most prominent of which is concerned with the debate on the capacity of pure (instrumental) music to convey discernible emotion. To extricate this topic from the one at hand, and indeed, from other potentially related topics, the guiding principle of memory was adhered to. The elicitation of autobiographical memory generally does not feature in philosophical arguments concerning the emotionality of music (e.g. Bicknell, 2009; Davies, 2010; Meyer, 1956). It is, however, implicated in the use of music to influence emotion from a psychological perspective, as explored in Juslin and Västfjäll (2008), Juslin, Leljestrom, Västfjäll and Lundqvist (2010), and Sloboda (2010), among others. For example, the study by Juslin et al. (2010) built on previous research to show that episodic memory was the most commonly cited mechanism claimed to cause emotion whilst listening to music by their cohort. This therefore implies that a factor outside of the relationship between music and emotion is generally involved; this additionally gives rise to questions regarding the role of emotion in the connection between memory and music, which is investigated in Chapter 6. The triangulation between music, emotion and memory consequently eschews arguments relating to a pure relationship between music and emotion.

The notion that emotion is deeply connected with memory is supported by many studies on cued recall of autobiographical memory. Non-musical investigations by Brown and Kulik (1977), Cohen, Conway and Maylor (1994), Conway and Holmes (2004), Morrison and Conway (2010), Pillememr, Goldsmith, Panter and White (1988), Rubin and Bertnlsen (2009), Rubin and Kozin (1984), and Wang and Conway (2004) among others, all requested an indication of emotionality from their test subjects, despite emotion not necessarily being the focus of their research. A general finding from these studies suggests that a high level of emotionality may produce memories that are more vivid. In studies that relate to musically cued or motivated memories, this theory is most strongly
reflected by quantitative inquiries. The studies by Baumgartner (1992), Cady et al. (2008), Janata et al. (2007) and Schulkind et al. (1999) all asked their subjects to provide emotionality ratings via self-report for memories elicited by music. Though these studies had different aims and methodological approaches, they all found a common trend in the relationship between high emotionality and musical memories. Baumgartner’s study resulted in the strongest conclusions on the role of emotion, and while it is the earliest investigation of its kind, it is not cited by the aforementioned studies. The finding here was that recollections that were triggered by music tended to have strong, positive emotional associations, were typically vivid, and additionally, they were often accompanied by visual imagery reminiscent of the original experience. This idea is explored in the analysis chapters of this thesis, predominantly within Chapter 6.

Although no other studies on music and memory refer to imagery (although it is typical of memories in general, as noted in Pillemer, 2000), the relationship between strong emotion and strong memories is maintained in the results from Schulkind et al. (1999). With the added benefit of using older and younger cohorts for their study, the authors found that the memories for semantic information (e.g. song titles, performers) from older adults were stimulated by their personal emotional associations with the music to a greater extent than in memories from younger adults. Further to this, older adults’ tendency to recall a greater number of memories from their youth was accompanied by their strongest emotionality ratings. Indeed, when Frith (1987) notes the heavy use of popular music during adolescence and young adulthood, he suggests that intense emotions that are also present during this period of social and self-development are more susceptible to becoming intertwined and associated with music.

In addition to these studies, those by Cady et al. (2008) and Janata et al. (2007) found that participants experienced emotions similar to those felt in the original situation when recalling memories triggered by salient music. As noted earlier, both of these studies utilised undergraduate populations as their demographic, which invites some speculation as to the reliability of their findings. The problems associated with younger people’s recollections stem from the relative brevity
of their life experience; they are additionally affected by the temporal proximity of events more so than other age groups, i.e. they are more likely to remember more recent events as they lack temporal distance from the experiences at hand – issues of participant age and memory are explored further in Chapter 4. Providing neuro-scientific support to the self-report claims of the emotional valence of autobiographical memories was Janata’s fMRI study (2009), which established not only the connection between autobiographical memory and music processing centres in the brain, as previously mentioned, but also showed that these areas are also responsible for processing emotion. The publication date of this research means, of course, that up until this point there was no scientific basis for the associations between music, memory and emotion; nonetheless it can be used to retrospectively support the findings of previous investigations, and for the current research.

Qualitative studies did not generally view emotionality as a side-effect of musically triggered memories, as was the tendency of quantitative studies that use measures of emotion in combination with other goals. Rather, studies that look at the actual memory experience accept emotion as an assumed part of the memory and music equation; this is most likely due to its role in the human condition more generally. As it is not documented in their written work, it does not seem that Anderson (2004) or Gabrielsson (2003, 2011) inquired specifically about emotion with their subjects. Indeed, it was noted earlier that Gabrielsson’s project asked only for accounts of strong experiences with music; the resulting data shows that emotion was present in many recollections. Gabrielsson (2011) acknowledged the existence of positive, negative, and mixed/contradictory feelings caused by music, which contrasts with the findings of quantitative studies which emphasised the prevalence of positive valence. While the accounts gathered by Gabrielsson are compelling in their detail, the author did not provide analysis of how or why emotion is so intricately involved in a substantial amount of “strong experiences”. Anderson’s more philosophical approach to music and memory leads him to speak more of affect than of emotion; nevertheless he notes his stance that music is responsible for creating mood, and that in either intentionally or unintentionally remembering
music, we are affected by this emotional atmosphere. The subtleties of this relationship influenced, in part, ideas about emotion, music and memory that are explored further in Chapter 6.

Although van Dijck (2006, 2009) did not interview her subjects, she did review how aspects of emotion were commonly found in the written recollections triggered by music in the Dutch radio countdown. Much like the current research, van Dijck looked to both neurological findings and cultural theory to explain the associations between emotion and musical memory that are present in her data. Of the ideas explored, van Dijck seemed to find the most promise in notions of nostalgia-driven listening as responsible for creating the intense relationship between memories, music and emotion. Issues with the use of “nostalgia” in memory studies have already been discussed; in van Dijck’s work, the inclusion of nostalgia is given slightly more credence through reference to the natural cognitive processes of memory in listeners wanting to “relive the past as it was” (p. 362). At the same time, the concept and definition of nostalgia in relation to musical engagement is not discussed in detail in van Dijck’s work, and as such, there are no strong claims that dictate its inclusion in the current research.

Of most significance were the findings from Hays and Minichiello, who looked at the importance of music in the lives of older people. In establishing that, for their participants, music enabled emotional well-being in the present, the authors also showed that emotion is a critical factor for musical memories in older people. Their interview material revealed that in listening to personally salient music, participants would often recall associated parts of their life experience. The authors note that “it was the emotional context of life experiences that provided meaning for the participants” (p. 441). This finding mirrors some parts of the study conducted by Schulkind et al. (1999), who also noted the importance of emotion in recalling musical memories for older people. Hays and Minichiello take this idea further to surmise that using music as a reminiscence tool becomes important for an understanding of self-identity, especially in the later years of life.
Conclusion

The review of the literature on music and autobiographical memory conducted in this chapter has revealed, primarily, that there is a significant absence of in-depth, empirically focused research on this topic. An exception was found in the work of Strong; despite the focus on collective memory, her research was the only example of a music and memory study that engages with and analyses individuals’ narratives in a thorough and comprehensive way. The division of the review by methodological approach demonstrated a clear need for increased interdisciplinary research. The disparity between findings of psychological and sociological research denotes a lack of communication between these fields. In order to best understand not only the workings of memory, but our everyday use and reflection on personal memory, we need to draw together the outcomes of memory research in various fields. The reasons for the interdisciplinary nature of the current study lie not in the necessity of reaching out to knowledge contained in these fields, but in the new ideas that the fusing of the sociological, psychological and musical fields generates.

Specifically, this overview presented in this chapter brings to light the inconsistencies of both qualitative and quantitative studies that engage with musically motivated memories. Among most studies reviewed, it can be seen that there is a distinct lack of methodological reasoning concerning participant demographics. Typically, investigators used populations that could be easily accessed in large numbers, and in one location (e.g. undergraduate students, forum participants), without rationalisation of the findings in regard to factors such as background, ethnicity, and of special concern, age. This was the case in many studies (e.g. Cady et al., 2008; Janata et al., 2007) save for Schulkind et al. (1999) and Hays and Minichiello (2005) who chose age groups based on specific project aims. The current research has recruited from a wide age-span in an attempt to collect findings that reflect a more varied amount of life experience. The implications of methodological divergences among these studies is realised in Chapter 4.
Lacking from all science-based and some qualitative studies is the recognition of the influence that life experience can have on memory. Few studies addresses the idea that personal backgrounds, beliefs, and attitudes can affect not only how experiences are encoded into memory, but the reasons for which they may be remembered or repressed, and how they are communicated in written or verbal form within studies. Exceptions here include studies by Anderson (2004), Bull (2007, 2009), DeNora (2000), Hays and Minichiello (2005), more so because they focused on individuals, as in the current research. However, due to the lack of a clear explanation of methodology in their work, the extent to which they consider these aspects is relatively unknown. Strong’s research also incorporates an understanding of participants’ contextual information; while her work focuses on collective memory, her method for data collection remains a pertinent example in the context of the current research.

While the above studies all endorse the notion that music and autobiographical memory are intensely connected, they fail to show how music connects with an individual’s memories over time, i.e. how music is connected longitudinally to the life story. As my analysis chapters will show, the pairing of autobiographical memory with music begins at a very young age and continues well into old age, something which is not fully considered in any of the literature. As noted previously, this research uses the idea of a “lifetime soundtrack” as a framework for analysis findings. Participants’ experiences are based in everyday activities involving music, an idea used by both DeNora (2000) and Bull (2007, 2009), which underpins aspects of the current research.

The gaps that are apparent in other literature inform the guiding principles for this thesis, although that is not to say that previous research has not provided the foundations for new research questions such as those addressed here. The literature examined in this chapter has established the existence of a correlation between autobiographical memories and music that features throughout life, giving support to the idea of a “lifetime soundtrack”. It also provides insights into the possible relationship between music, emotion and memory. The lack of emphasis on the individual and a neglect of longitudinal perspectives in the literature afford this research the opportunity to take the
first step into detailed qualitative inquiry necessary to truly explore the depth of the relationship that has been shown to exist between music and autobiographical memories. The following chapter will reinforce this methodological principle through the description of the research processes used in this study and will also explore in more detail the rationale for the chosen set of qualitative methods applied in the research.
METHODOLOGY

The literature review conducted in the preceding chapter demonstrated the under-researched nature of music and memory across disciplines. It is clear that there is a distinct lack of context-based research on the interplay between music and memory, especially in terms of individual experience. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, much of the literature has neglected to acknowledge the personal contexts of the data presented, and consideration of the implications of personal bias in memory-based studies is not treated as significant by most researchers. In forgoing the collection of nuanced accounts of memory, generalisations of memory functions are emphasised and an understanding of individual differences is disregarded, rather than embraced. A more widespread use of qualitative methods in the area of music and memory could investigate personal connections in greater detail, producing a more thorough understanding and, therefore, an application of theory regarding musically-motivated memory. In light of the shortfalls currently present in memory studies, the methodology for my own research applies a qualitative approach that investigates the content and contextual circumstances surrounding musically-motivated memories, with emphasis placed on the experience of the individual.

An examination of methodologies in previous music and memory studies revealed the prevalence of two main approaches to gathering data from participants. Studies by Arrow (2005), Gabrielsson (2002, 2003, 2011), and van Dijck (2006, 2009) used questionnaires or surveys to generate succinct written responses to both open and closed questions. Those by Anderson (2004), Bull (2007, 2009), and Hays and Minichiello (2005) used one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Questionnaire based studies were successful in gathering a wider range of responses, but were, however, limited in the amount of demographic and contextual information collected for each participant. On the other hand, the interview approach yielded more detailed data and contextual
information from participants from smaller cohorts; it should be noted that although these studies achieved richer interview narratives, they relate indirectly to musically motivated memories. It was concluded that in order to produce detailed information, one-on-one interviews with a semi-structured schedule of questioning would be ideal for the current research. Given the relatively untested nature of in-depth inquiry into music and memory, a pilot survey was initially carried out to ensure that a general sample of the public would be responsive to the subject. With the success of the survey, more detailed research via personal interviews was subsequently planned. The aim of the interviews was to allow participants to reflect on the relevance of music throughout their life by engaging in a meaningful conversation surrounding the individual’s life story. This approach allowed the collection not only of details relating to participants’ personal circumstances, but contextualised and rationalised collections of musical memories that were significant to the individual.

This chapter will outline the steps undertaken to carry out interviews for this research, including details of the preliminary pilot study, a detailed description of participant recruitment and the resulting demographic, and a summary of interview procedures. Following this, analysis techniques and limitations of the study are discussed. The nature of autobiographical memory is such that it is implicit in many studies that use survey or interview techniques and as a result, some texts on this methodology inform, in part, an understanding of how memory works in terms of recall ability and bias. Some of these texts, along with reference to studies mentioned in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 will feature throughout this chapter of the thesis.

**Pilot Study**

In order to confirm music and memory as a valid line of inquiry with the general public, a pilot study was conducted from April-June 2011 in the form of an online survey. The purpose of the survey was to assess and explore the possible range of instances in which people may have experienced motivated recall in order to inform the kinds of questions to be included in the interview schedule. Consisting of 16 questions relating to the individual’s connection with music, the survey required a
narrative response detailing a musically-motivated memory, including the song title, artist or album to which the memory corresponds, as well as demographic details such as age, occupation, and place of birth. Survey design was informed by guides to survey research by such authors as Fink (2003), Gray and Guppy (2003), Groves et al. (2004), and Neuman (1997) whose suggestions for question design, use of language and communication with participants were incorporated into the survey.

The online survey was designed for adults (individuals over 18 years of age) using LimeSurvey\textsuperscript{20} and was distributed in South East Queensland via gatekeepers, relying on snowballing to reach greater numbers of participants. There were 158 responses to the survey arising from a relatively broad demographic, despite the online nature of the survey limiting participation by older individuals who typically have less access to online technology. It should be noted that the survey was not designed to collect results representative of a particular population. Around 60% of people claimed that music was “very important” to them in the present, with 24% stating that it was “somewhat important”. Further questions regarding the perceived importance of music throughout the lifetime resulted in almost duplicated figures, showing that approximately 59% of people felt that overall in their lifetime music had been “very important” while 29% of people felt that it had been “somewhat important”. When asked which period of their life participants strongly associated with this degree of overall lifetime importance of music, 58% responded with early adulthood (ages 18-24). The next most selected category for this question was adolescence (ages 13-17). Of the 158 responses, 115 (73%) gave qualitative responses to the survey’s main open-ended question, which asks participants to describe, in as much detail as possible, an instance where a song has reminded them of a past experience, naming the people location/s and time period of their life, as well as the song and/or artist if they were able. Additionally, participants were asked to describe any emotions or feelings that were evoked as a consequence of thinking about this memory.

\textsuperscript{20} A software program for constructing and analysing surveys
While full analysis of this data does not appear in this thesis due to the primary data source being in-depth interviews, it is nonetheless pertinent to provide a few examples. The excerpts below were chosen for their contrast in circumstances, and for their references to single songs as well as whole albums or artists:

Kate Bush singing “Heathcliffe” reminded me of a house we lived in and a particular party we had where we all sang this song and did creative dancing to accompany the song. We had all had a few beers etc. It was a house on top of a hill overlooking the ocean ... very windy. I would have been 24 years of age ... It evokes strong memories of being young and free. When I get together with some of these people we often sing it together. It brings back memories of our strong friendship and how we thought we would always be together...which of course wasn’t the case as we all moved on ... lived overseas or married and had kids and life changed forever. It reminds me always of something special we shared although the memory grows a little dim.

— Female, aged 53-59

I can’t think of any music that relates to a particular event. Rather, particular music can remind me of a particular period in my life. For example the Captain Beefheart album *Unconditionally Guaranteed* takes me back to a summer in the 1974 when I lived in a village in Scotland called Kilmacolm. I would have been 16 at the time ... wistfulness, fondness - a kind of nostalgia I guess.

— Male, aged 53-59

When I was 24, I was falling in love with my now husband. During this time we listened to so much music, went to live gigs all the time and would come home from nights out and just sit on the couch in our little apartment in Sydney listening to albums that we loved, from beginning to end. The artists we were listening to were Talking Heads, Bob Dylan, Kings of
Leon (their first two albums). In the end, we had both Bob Dylan and Talking Heads songs in our wedding!

— Female, 25-31

[My Happiness - Powder Finger] Always makes me feel melancholic, when it was released I was going through a divorce. Age at the time was 39. To this day I still change the channel on the radio when possible to avoid listening to this song.

— Male, aged 46-52

These responses represent only a few of the richly detailed and expressive answers to the survey. Themes such as friendship, romantic partners, geographic locations and significant life events that feature in the above excerpts guided the inclusion of such themes in the interview schedule used in the main study and in the thematic coding thereof. Notable also in the responses is the variation between very specific events and emotions to the evocation of “cloud” memories (see Chapter 2) that span greater lengths of time, engendering more nebulous ideas of feeling and atmosphere. The variation in emotion that is evidenced in these triggered memories also highlighted the potential significance of this factor, precluding its inclusion as a focus in this thesis.

The results from the pilot study validated musically triggered memories as a viable topic in the target population given not only the amount of people willing to recount personal occurrences but also the fact that this population indicated that music was a significant presence throughout their lifetime. The latter finding points to the probability that music accompanies the life story, supporting the idea of a “lifetime soundtrack”. A limitation of the pilot survey lay in its use of qualitative questions. In order to make the survey as time-efficient as possible, respondents were only asked to describe one instance in which music had triggered an autobiographical memory, which generally limited the amount of data yielded overall. Despite this, there were several commonalities present between responses to the qualitative question. These revealed key intersections of music and memory that influenced the line of questioning in the interview schedule.
Concepts such as positive and negative emotion, vivid memories, major events (especially funerals), and turning points\textsuperscript{21} were evidenced in survey responses; questions regarding these ideas were subsequently included in the interviews conducted during the main study.

**Participants and Recruitment**

Recruitment of interview participants was conducted from March to May 2012, primarily through the use of gatekeepers.\textsuperscript{22} Eligibility criteria were restricted to adults over 18 years of age.

Restrictions were also placed on those with memory related mental health issues - individuals suffering from major conditions that effect memory such as dementia, schizophrenia, amnesia, drug-induced psychoses or any other brain-related illness were asked not to participate. Such memory related health issues would, in these conditions, have made the analysis of participants' stories too speculative for the needs of the project; in line with the university's ethical guidelines for research, it was important that all participants were in control of their disclosures. There was also potential for investigations into memory and past experiences to trigger unnecessary personal trauma for the participant, which further rationalised their exclusion from this research.

The rationale for excluding people under 18 years of age was evidenced in psychological theories of autobiographical memory relating to maturity. As noted in Chapter 2, research from Bluck and Habermas (2001) stated that the telling of a life story requires more than just the possession of memories: it also requires a cognitive process they termed “autobiographical reasoning”. The authors suggest that although the basic cognitive functions that support autobiographical memory are developed by the time of adolescence, the ability to use temporal and causal coherence is rare in early adolescence but increases towards adulthood. Furthermore, the development of identity, which features heavily in adolescence, impinges on the development of the life story (McAdams, 2001), and is also closely connected to the ability to use autobiographical

\textsuperscript{21} This concept is explained in Chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{22} Gatekeepers for this study included my supervisors, family, and friends.
reasoning to connect experiences and the self across time. Therefore, in order to discuss musically-motivated memories in the context of the life story, with a mature viewpoint, it was necessary to use only adults as participants for in-depth interviews.

As a result of recruitment, 28 participants in the area of South East Queensland, Australia, were identified and subsequently participated in one-on-one interviews. The cohort consisted of 12 males and 16 females between 18 and 82 years of age. The breakdown of this demographic by age is shown in Figure 4.1.

![Age of Participants](image)

**Figure 4.1 - Age of Participants**

Although an attempt was made to gain an equal number of participants across the potential age range of the study, this was not achieved primarily due to time constraints. As evident in Figure 4.2 (colour-coded to correlate to Figure 4.1), by using generalised scales of typical Western age generations it is clear that “Generation Y” and the “Baby Boomers” occupy a majority of the cohort. It is acknowledged that the notion of “generation” is problematic; since Karl Mannheim’s (1936/1997) essay on the sociological issues of the concept, an understanding of “generation” has been developed over time, such that its definition is affected by cultural, social, political, economic and temporal factors. A useful definition of “generation” which can be applied to the current research is provided by Eyerman and Turner (1998), who, integrating theories from Bourdieu describe it as:
friends of the research team, who are similarly aged in both “Generation Y” and “Baby Boomers”
categories. It should be noted that given the qualitative nature of the research, parity of age
demographics is not seen as significant for several reasons. As stated, the research does not make
claims of being representational of a population; rather the variety of ages is embraced in a
qualitative study that seeks to explore a wide range of perspectives. Additionally, analysis conducted
in this research does not intend to produce correlational aspects in regards to age, except where
contextualised and evidenced in-text.

![Bar chart showing the approximate number of participants per generation](chart.png)

**Figure 4.2 – Age of Participants by Generation**

The majority of participants were of an Anglo-European background, with three participants
noting their family origin as South-East Asia. Of the 28 participants, 20 were born in Australia, three
in New Zealand, three in the United Kingdom, one in Indonesia, and one in Canada. Also of
importance in the analysis of the interview narratives was the location of each participant’s

> “a cohort of persons passing through time who come to share a common habitus, hexis and a
culture, a function of which is to provide them with a collective memory that serves to integrate the
cohort over a finite period of time” (p. 93).

While age groups were used to categorise my research participants in the first instance, the application of
Eyerman and Turner’s definition here serves to underscore a shared culture within each cohort, and moreover,
a sense of shared or collective memory.
childhood; 14 grew up in suburban Brisbane, Queensland, while seven others were located in rural parts of Australia. Three participants spent part or all of their childhood in New Zealand, two participants heralded from England, one from Canada, while another spent their childhood in Jakarta, Indonesia. While the variance in this data could be said to be characteristic of typically multicultural Australian communities, the methodology did not include stringent attempts to capture a representative population from South East Queensland, and does not purport to present findings that could be extrapolated over a larger population. Also of note is the ratio of musicians to non-musicians in the cohort: 16 people described themselves as non-musicians, while 12 participants noted their involvement with music on an amateur or professional level. Clearly, this figure too could not be said to be representative of the Australian population, and is again a product of gatekeepers’ bias. Finally, it should be noted that to protect the identity of participants, the use of pseudonyms has been employed throughout this dissertation and will be maintained in any further publications arising from the data, in accordance with ethical requirements of privacy protection.

Interviews

The decision to conduct semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with participants was scaffolded by the focus of the research on the experience of the individual. In the context of the current research, this type of interviewing technique presents the opportunity to not only gather instances of musically motivated memories but to further explore the context of their origin, and mental recreation in the present. Personal interviews allow participants to describe their experience in their own words, rather than having to choose from pre-determined answers in a survey format. Additionally, interviews circumvent the possibility of misunderstandings that might occur from wording in written questions, allowing the interviewer to further explore participants’ responses (Minichiello, Aroni & Hays, 2008). The interview schedule (see Appendix 2) comprised a list of

24 Demographic information is summarised in Appendix 1.
compulsory questions to be included in each interview, yet within each topic of inquiry, follow-up questions particular to each participant were used to gather as much information as possible.

The concept of focus groups was also initially identified as a possible method for gathering data from a larger number of participants. Upon further investigation of the nature of human memory, however, this method was deemed unsuitable. As mentioned in Chapter 2, social traits of human nature can affect how we remember. Humans recount their experiences differently when they are together in a group than when they are questioned individually. This is a function of collective memory, whereby people will enhance each other’s stories with elements of their own personal experience. Occasionally, individuals will subconsciously inherit samples of other’s stories and incorporate them into their own narratives (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2009; Schacter, 2001; Welzer, 2010). As a possible outcome of this, narratives collected from focus groups could potentially be “coloured” by other stories told within the room. Additionally, the presence of others, including those older and younger than the speaker can result in stories that are designed to “teach” or impress (Baumeister & Newman, 1994); such behaviour invalidates the use of focus groups to collect data from individuals for this research.

In general studies of autobiographical memory not pertaining to music, especially psychological studies, it is common to include cues to prompt recall. Cue methods have included various means such as particular words (Berntsen & Hall, 2004; Conway & Bekerian, 1987; Morrison & Conway, 2010; Rubin and Schulkind, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c), events (Brown & Kulik, 1977; Morrison & Conway, 2010), temporal lifetime periods (Conway & Bekerian, 1987) and even sense of smell (Rubin, Groth & Goldsmith, 1984). In studies that focuses on the intersection of music and memory, researchers such as Barrett et al. (2010), Bartlett and Snelus (1980), Baumgartner (1992), Cady et al. (2008), Janata et al. (2007), Janata (2009), and Schulkind et al. (1999) provided either random or age-specific samples of music for their participants in order to gauge their reactions, recognition and or familiarity. While this appears to be a preferred method for psychological studies, such as those
mentioned above, it requires generalisations about the listening habits of the selected cohort, which in turn may produce low-levels of mnemonic reactions, as described in Chapter 3.

Counter to these methods, research from Cohen (1996) advises that older and younger adults retrieve autobiographical memories at a comparable rate when the events are self-selected, but not when the events are designated or cued. This suggests that the use of music that was selected by the participant would be a more effective cue for memory narratives than for the researcher to provide such cues. This in itself could prove problematic, with potential to incite significant bias, such as the purposeful inclusion or exclusion of certain music by the participant in order to portray a certain identity. Given the span of the population, it would be also be negligent to assume that all participants had access to physical or digital copies of music that had featured throughout their life, and, moreover, it would be unlikely that all participants would have access to current technology that would enable music to be played without significant interruption throughout interviews. As a result, no instructions were given to participants regarding the preparation of music to be referred to during interviews; likewise, the pre-selection of music to provoke memories in participants was deemed an ineffective method.

One exception to the interview design was encountered during fieldwork. Although not instructed to do so, one participant (Ian, age 60) referred to a playlist he had recently put together for a milestone birthday party; the playlist was purposefully assembled to capture music that had been significant to the participant throughout his life. It was clear that the participant intended to use this music as an aid for the interview and that he felt most comfortable with this scenario. Refusing the presence of the music would most likely have rendered our interaction less successful, and so the decision was made at the time to proceed with the interview. In this particular instance, use of the playlist proved fruitful, producing the longest interview conducted during the research. While this may provide evidence for future research to include this method, it should be noted that the age and genre of the music spoken about and included on the playlist (mostly rock music from the 1950s to 1970s) was ostensibly all relatively accessible and able to be compiled. It remains the
case that this would not necessarily be possible for all participants and would leave some individuals (and the researcher) at a disadvantage, such that some participants may recall more or less memories due to the presence of salient music.

**Interview procedure**

Occurring concurrently with the process of recruitment, interviews were conducted from March to May 2012. Upon establishing contact with potential participants, information sheets were provided via email or letter to ensure the participant had a full understanding of the research and their involvement. An online blog was created as another outlet for the provision of further information on the project, including a notice on ethical clearance. It was also designed to serve as a method for further recruitment, however, this aspect proved extraneous to the methods already in place. Prior to their interview, participants were also asked to sign and return a consent form, acknowledging the use of their data under the provision that their identity would be protected, in accordance with ethical procedures at Griffith University. They were also provided with a guide to the interview, which contained a list of the majority of questions that formed part of the interview schedule.\(^{25}\) A suitable date and time was arranged to meet with the participant in a place of their choosing; interviews were typically conducted in participant’s homes or at public venues such as cafes or parks. On average, interviews ran for approximately 50 minutes, with several running for less than 30 minutes, and the longest taking two hours to complete.

Interviews were designed to draw upon the individual’s life story to further investigate the importance of music in their lives, and the relationship between their memories and associated music. Questions were open-ended and organised in a semi-structured way that was adapted for each interview. Aside from enquiring about life history, the interview posed questions related to areas that prompted significant reaction rates from the pilot survey, including specific major events

\(^{25}\) A sample interview schedule is provided in Appendix 2
(e.g. weddings and funerals), emotion and music (strong emotional reactions), and outstanding overall experiences between memory and music. Interviews were recorded, with participant’s consent, with a digital recorder set up in full-view of respondents. Additionally, I filled out a diary entry after each interview to capture interpersonal communication such as body language, positive or negative responses to interview questions, as well as a subjective overview of the personality or demeanour of each participant.

Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using Express Scribe transcription software between the months of June and August 2012. The transcripts were then coded thematically using QSR NVivo 9, a software program specifically designed for qualitative research, for a period of three months from August 2012. Thematic coding was chosen for the analysis as the aim of the process was to search for the concepts underlying apparent themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although some coding themes were predicted given the design of the interview schedule, an inductive approach to analysis was taken in order to allow patterns and trends to emerge from the data, rather than attempting to align the data with preconceived concepts. Typically, thematic analysis can give broad results, and is free of epistemological or theoretical groundings, meaning it is flexible in its application to various fields and approaches (ibid.). The adaptability of this approach allows for the free analysis of the data without being constrained by specific disciplinary conventions.

The resulting analysis chapters are a product of qualitative coding that focussed on the content of collected memory narratives, and a basic summary of statistical information generated by NVivo software. Analyses were scaffolded by the one-to-one experience that was documented in interview notes, as well as the personal information that was gathered but not coded e.g. place of birth, upbringing, and so on. The fact that all transcription and coding was carried out solely by myself, rather than being outsourced, means I developed a deeper understanding of the data through immersion over a longer period of time. In describing best practice in qualitative research
methods, Green et al. (2007) note that it is advantageous to include the interviewer/s in an analysis team, as they will have the most in-depth knowledge of the participants and resulting interview data, and can hence add extra detail to an analysis. The occurrence of this in the current research allowed for a more fluent interaction with the data and facilitated the comparison of narratives across the range of participants.

**Limitations and Difficulties**

There are several factors present in the research that could be seen as limitations to the study. At the forefront of these is the issue of demographics. As noted, my sample is predominantly composed of Anglo-Europeans who have grown up in Australia, with a small number of individuals growing up in different cultures. Interviews revealed that most participants had encountered a very similar experience with music throughout their life and as such it should be noted that this thesis engages with Western-centric ideals and values pertaining to music and memory. Future research could consider focusing on non-Western societies to compare findings to the current research. Another intra-cohort issue was the differing attitudes that participants possessed in relation to music. Some individuals felt very strongly about the role that music played throughout their lives, and in the present: these individuals tended to be quite verbose and forthcoming with examples. Other individuals did not seem as enthusiastic towards music, and this affected their ability to relate it to their life and to speak without the need for prompting. This could be said to be normal of any population, and should therefore be viewed as a natural variance within the cohort.

It is acknowledged that the size of the cohort is relatively small, although given the lack of research in this specific field, this point does not significantly diminish the findings, especially given the fact that this research does not aim to present findings that are representative of a population, culture or sector of society. Constraints such as time and funding available to carry out a larger project also played a part in the resulting quantity and diversity of participants. A broader study that includes a greater percentage of the Australian population could potentially expand on the findings.
of this research by considering in more detail the lives of older and younger Australians living in a wider variety of circumstances, including those from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

In undertaking a study encompassing a broad age demographic it is recognised that the variance in age plays a part in both an individual’s experience with music throughout a lifetime, and also their ability to call upon those experiences in the present. In interviewing older participants, it was understood that these individuals generally had limited access to music in their youth as compared to younger participants. Technological advances (e.g. portable radios and music players) and changes in social and family activities (e.g. emphasis on youth culture from the 1950s onward, decline in patriarchal households) heavily influenced the musical experiences of all participants during their lifetime. Where this contrast in interview narratives is evident in analysis chapters, an effort has been made to contextualise these occurrences with the view to embracing differences rather than neglecting them.

One other minor stumbling block in the research procedure can be attributed to attitudinal differences amongst participants. Due to the voluntary nature of participation, it was assumed that individuals engaging in the research would be happy to speak about the topic at length; however this was not always the case. Despite interview guides being sent out beforehand, several participants had not read this guide and were unprepared for the nature of the interview questions. Others made only a short response for each question and were unresponsive to further probing. These interviews lasted significantly less than the desired time and in retrospect, yielded minimal data. This contrasts with other interviews, which lasted for an hour or more, and in which the participants were able to provide lengthy, detailed responses. This is a largely uncontrollable variable; despite the disparity in interview times and quality of narratives per participant, the fieldwork still yielded a considerable amount of rich, workable data.
Conclusion

The methodological framework of this research reflects the need for a more context-driven approach to the qualitative study of musically triggered memories. At the time of writing, there was little evidence of published research that has made a detailed appraisal of this phenomenon through the use of thematic analysis of in-depth interviews. Although enhancements such as a broader demographic and a lengthier interview schedule could be applied to future research, the methodology presented in this chapter represents the first step towards more thorough qualitative methods in the field of memory studies. The use of memory narratives that are temporally and interpersonally contextualised highlights the depth of analysis that can be achieved with the collection of such data. The chapters that follow present a comprehensive analysis of interview narratives in thematic categories relating to aspects both within and outside of the self, thus providing new vistas on the subject of musically-motivated memory.
FOUNDATIONS OF THE LIFETIME SOUNDTRACK

Autobiographical memory has been established in this thesis as a highly individualised mechanism, and so it follows that the lifetime soundtrack would reflect this. It is also important to note that a lifetime soundtrack is based in the contextualised experiences of each individual, and as such is unique to them alone; the creation of that soundtrack, however, typically involves interaction with others, whether the activity is participatory, such as singing, or comprises only listening. This process occurs concurrently with the development of autobiographical memory in young children, both of which are typically guided by adults in spaces of familiarity, such as the home. This chapter will establish that the foundation of the lifetime soundtrack in autobiographical memory is created in the bounded space of the home, and is strongly mediated by family members, in the early years of interview participants’ lives.

The initial and often serendipitous experiences an individual has with music can create strong mnemonic associations, not only with family members but also with the place of these interactions. Domains of particular focus in this chapter are those of the family home and the family car, which will be examined as sites of memory construction. Almost inextricable from these physical sites of memory are memories of family members or carers within these places. In the following analysis I examine how parental tastes and social music sharing influence both the creation and growth of a child’s lifetime soundtrack. The positioning of music in the home is queried – to what extent do domestic attitudes towards music impact on an adult individual’s perceived importance of music? This is evidenced not only in spoken responses from participants but also in their disposition towards memory and music during interviews. Finally, this chapter will discuss the idea of individual soundtrack creation within environments of highly influential collective activity and shared experience.
Before delving into interview narratives, it is essential to define the meaning of “home” as it is used in this study. Within participants’ interview data, concepts of “home” were mentioned alongside other geographically situated locations of social interaction such as “school” and “church”. All these sites share, in a philosophical sense, attributes that allow them to be grouped collectively within the concept of “place”. An appropriate definition comes from Hudson (2006), who states that “‘places’ can be thought of as complex entities, ensembles of material objects, people and systems of social relationships embodying distinct cultures and multiple meanings, identities and practices” (p. 627). Commonly, participants’ references to domestic places, such as the family home, partially corresponded with this definition. Indeed, a typical family home embodies systems of social relationships within physical bounds; however, the kinds of interactions that take place within the “home” differ significantly to those actioned in other places.

The meaning of “home” as given by Sixsmith (1986, pp. 281-282), describes the home as a centre of emotional significance and belonging, as well as being a social unit, a medium of self-expression and identity and also a base for activity and territoriality. In this way, the home can provide a broader base for meaning-making activities, especially in its implication in daily routine. Through analysis of interview narratives, it was found that these values are replicated within the family car, similar to the ways in which they are evoked in the home. Using part of Sixsmith’s definition, the family car can be identified as an extension of the bounded area of home: it is a place where certain activities and interpersonal relationships are qualified, whilst remaining in the zone of the family. As will be shown in this chapter, aspects of household hierarchies and the dynamics of the family unit are replicated in the space of the family car. A framework has been created for this chapter that sees the concepts of “home” - and the car as an extension of “home” - identified as pivotal areas of memory creation.

Both the home and the car appear in interview narratives as dual physical and spiritual spaces, unique to each individual. Acting as dynamic venues that enhance the visual aspect of memory recall, these areas are also ideal spaces for musical memories to be enacted. In his writing
on significant events and the visual nature of memories, Pillemer (2001, p. 96) refers to the visualisation of significant physical places in memory as “memory landmarks”. This component of memory is crucial to the reconstruction of memory; Pillemer explains that “constructing a coherent, temporally ordered life history depends on having access not only to the meaning of momentous past events, but also to the imagistic components of personal event memories” (ibid.) The belief in the significance of place identity in autobiographical memory is shared by areas of cultural and collective memory studies, and also by researchers in neuroscience. The following explanation from Lengen and Kistemann aligns with Pillemer’s emphasis on place in memory:

... place forms an essential basis for experiences to be unfolded in memory and imagination. It is beyond doubt that autobiographical memory is critical in maintaining the emotional bonds with place by reliving experiences that occurred in this context. It provides [one] with a sense of familiarity of places (2012, p. 1169).

From this perspective, the recognition of place, such as “the home” or “the car”, works as a schematised kind of memory for the self – familiarity with place can draw together memories with a geographical commonality into a collective. The stored memory for the car and the home allows recognition of previously visited spaces in a cognitive sense, while these spaces also act as templates on which memories can be temporally and physically located. As a common and often revisited concept for participants, ‘home’ as a locus for memories proves to be both enduring and transient. Likewise, the memories for people within these places are malleable: even people of significance or of traditionally influential positions (e.g. mother or father), along with those whose permanence is felt only briefly, fluctuate in dominance throughout a lifetime.

Although it is a commonly used term, the definition of “family” is somewhat problematic and warrants brief discussion here. The structure of the family is acknowledged as one that varies widely throughout history, and is culturally constructed. In a legal sense, marriage and biology have been key factors in the concept of the family (Bala & Bromwich, 2002); however, this has been
challenged by modern constructs of what comprises a family. The “nuclear family”, in which the parents are romantically involved and any children are biologically related, has been the most readily recognised structures in the western world, however, as Daniela Cutas and Sarah Chan (2012) point out, alternatives to this structure, such as de-facto co-habitation, same-sex relationships, and childless families are becoming increasingly common (pp. 1-2). Recent changes in Western legislation have come to reflect that traditional relationships between family members are no longer restricted to those which are biological (e.g. parent to child), thereby redefining the “family” at large (Almond, 2006; Bala & Bromwich, 2002). With these issues in mind, the concept of family as it used within this chapter, and the greater thesis, reflects the composition of a household as perceived by each individual. The term “family” is therefore used to denote caregivers, encompassing any number of non-traditional or non-biological relationships that were significant within an individual’s development and experience.26

The Family and Music in Domestic Spaces

Typically, the early years of a person’s life are spent in the company of their family, usually within the physical domain of the home. Within this social hierarchy, individuals are likely to experience music that is mediated by these caregivers, until they develop socially and culturally enough to select their own music (Krumhansl & Zupnick, 2013). This early mediatory practice provides the beginning of an individual’s personal memory for music. Indeed, the time spent absorbing pre-selected music can resonate with an individual throughout their lifetime. The physical boundaries of domestic spaces allow repeated and varied interactions between family members to form a layered sense of experience that develops over time.

The first memories that begin to form are arguably dominated by interactions with family members; the significance of people in this role is evident in the prevalence of memories of this type

26 Within the cohort for this research, most participants referred to parents as the main caregivers; as such, this term will still be utilised throughout the chapter.
within interview narratives from research participants recounting their experiences with music as young children. Responses typically revolved around family members in the home, such as this one from Ryan:

... a pretty early memory was like the road trips and stuff... before that maybe it was Mum doing the housework and I wouldn’t have been old enough to be at school but she’d be, I’m trying to remember what she’d listen to but, like thinking back now really cheesy sort of stuff but um, that’s a memory I guess, just at home with Mum.

— Ryan, age 20

Ryan’s memory for his mother is informed from an early age, and is an example of a “cloud” memory.27 His recall is scaffolded by common activities within the physical domain of the home. Although this memory is not detailed, it continues to resonate with Ryan over time.

Early memories of music can involve participation in music as well as listening. The narrative presented below from Tony occurs not in a situation of listening, as demonstrated by Ryan, but of reproducing vocally that music which was commonly played in the family home:

... the first thing I can absolutely remember was me and my sister, wandering round the house singing “Yes Sir, She’s My Baby”28 [sings] and we just somehow or other, without really meaning to, ended up being able to sing that in harmony with each other, and that was just something we obviously absorbed from what we’d heard you know ... I was probably three and she was probably five ... and once we’d demonstrated we could do it you know, when our parents’ friends came round or rellies came round “sing, sing!” so we’d sing at people, do a little performance you know. So I remember that, um, as being incredibly important.

— Tony, age 62

27 See Chapter 2.
28 Composers: Walter Donaldson/Gus Kahn, 1925.
Aside from the impressive musicality evident in this narrative, it is also interesting to note the way Tony describes this occurrence coming about: in acknowledging that he and his sister had “absorbed” their surroundings, this narrative suggests the significance of cultural mediation between parental figures and children. In our interview, Tony describes his parents as musical, with both playing in ensembles outside of the home. This narrative then further exemplifies not only the reception of mediated music but also the perception and reproduction of musical skill within the domains of the family home.

Evidently, music begins accompanying autobiographical memories from a very young age. Given that the earliest autobiographical memories able to be recalled are commonly from the age of about three years (Nelson, 1993; Rubin, 2000), it is likely that the appearance of the lifetime soundtrack mirrors the development of the life story from this age. Additionally, the sharing of music between caregivers and children is similar in direct and indirect ways to the interaction that develops autobiographical memory in young children. Robyn Fivush, a psychologist specialising in children’s memory studies (see Chapter 2), notes that young children learn how to recall and retell memories via parentally guided reminiscing (2008, p. 53). The nucleus of an individual’s memory bank, as well as their soundtrack is typically set in the home, where it is fostered by the family unit. Indeed, Reese and Fivush (2008, p. 204) note that in discussing past events with parents, children learn which aspects of memories are important to exchange, and how much detail to provide to others about certain events. Such conversations constitute a sharing of memory that allows children to reflect on their own account of an event, their own feelings and beliefs, which eventually leads to a development of self-identity and memories for the self (p. 206). The same rings true for lifetime soundtracks: a child’s first memories of music are inevitably mediated by the sharing of the parental soundtrack.

The family, and most importantly, the parental unit, has been well-established in the literature as holding significant influence over the future cultural preferences of their children. Whether through the purposeful instillation of preferences into their children, or simply through its
presence within a household, parents are highly influential in shaping young people’s perceptions and tastes (Nagel & Ganzeboom, 2002; ter Bogt, Delsing, van Zalk, Christenson & Meeus, 2011). In terms of music, ter Bogt et al. described this process as one of “music socialisation” (ibid.), which they showed can subsequently influence the taste of offspring who tend to mirror the genre preferences of parents. Recognition of this process was found in interview narratives:

I can remember, [my ex-husband] just left and I said to the girls, “we’re going to paint upstairs, we’re going to paint the upstairs room” and [my daughter’s] going “I really want a blue room”, so great, cracked on Shirley Bassey and here we are - we’ve got the blue paint and we’re singing away. And it’s funny because my girls idolise Shirley Bassey because they, you know, they must remember me singing it incessantly at times.

— Angela, age 43

What Angela describes here is akin to a template for the music socialisation process. She described Shirley Bassey as occupying a significant part of her lifetime soundtrack; by referring to the frequency of her use of Shirley Bassey, especially in association with her divorce, she recognises the heightened exposure of her daughters to that particular music and their ostensibly positive relationship to it as a consequence.

This idea of sharing of music preferences suggests that parents or caregivers play a significant role in shaping their children’s lifetime soundtrack, and are especially responsible for the formative years of their music experience. Typically, young children are subjected to a sound environment supplied by others, with little option but to absorb any music that might be played or performed as a choice of carers or parents. Hence the foundation for the lifetime soundtrack is built up through mediated listening, with the choice of engagement largely limited for the individual. This influence is felt throughout childhood, and is notable in the listening habits of study participants, especially before adolescence and the potential to acquire disposable income eventuate:
... you know certainly at my age [as a child] that was a bit of a focus, you know lifting stuff out of the parents’ record collection like Simon and Garfunkel’s *Bridge Over Troubled Water* or, other things like that, [it’s] the music that you’re presented with rather than music you’ve actually sought out.

— Paul, age 42

Paul’s habits exemplify the ways in which musical preference is passed on inter-generationally. Rather than seek music outside of the home, Paul was content to enjoy that which was familiar and to his perception, enjoyable. His love for Simon and Garfunkel had obviously persisted over his life, with certain albums from the duo cropping up several times over the interview. A similar story of being “presented” with music is told by Will:

... it was probably when I was around 11 or 12 I started listening to it, buying a lot more albums and that’s when I became really interested in music, and varied types. I remember, you just get into popular music when you’re around 11 or 12 and then around the age of 15 I was listening to all my Dad’s CDs, so going back and listening to classic rock, classical music, jazz, ska, punk, all those kind of things. I remember when Napster came out I wouldn’t download the newest songs, I’d be downloading things like Don McLean and Meatloaf and that kind of varied stuff.

— Will, age 26

Mirroring Paul’s recollection, Will recalls going through CDs, rather than records, from his father’s collection. Significantly, Will speaks about his age in this memory with a sense of importance, acknowledging an awareness of his development in taste. Both Will and Paul engaged in purposeful listening activities where they actively chose to listen to music with the awareness that such music was part of their caregiver’s musical preferences. As such it is likely that Will and Paul had already

29 “Napster” is an online service for peer-to-peer file sharing, established in 1999. Originally, the service of file sharing provided by Napster comprised copyright infringement, and after legal struggles the company closed down and re-opened as a legal online music store (see Adegoke, 2008).
experienced that music through passive or mediated listening, and so, in making the choice to actively listen to this music, these individuals are further integrating music that is potentially in their parents’ soundtrack into their own.

These “complimentary starter packs” of musical memory can become basic referents to which subsequent material of the lifetime soundtrack is compared. Analysis of interview data revealed that participants directly and indirectly referred to their parents’ music in contrast or likeness to their current tastes:

... [my mother] liked a lot of pop music, like early 90s pop was her thing so I guess I listened to a lot of Whitney Houston and she got me into Michael Jackson. That’s always I guess a really massive influence on all the music I play and a lot of the music I listen to ...

— Matthew, age 25

Musical taste? ... highly influenced by my father, so favourite band, The Beatles, anything from the 60s and 70s. I am not a fan of modern music ... my musical tastes are highly influenced by people...so growing up with Dad and the Beatles and the music of the 60s and 70s highly influences what I like now I suppose.

— Anna, age 18

Yeah, yeah my Dad um, played a lot of music, he was into sort of hard rock stuff like 60s [and], 70s hard rock which is sort of what I grew up with, that’s formed my interest in the kind of music I like today, and liked as I was growing up as well.

— Jeremy, age 36

In these excerpts, Matthew, Anna and Jeremy acknowledged the influence that their parent’s soundtracks have had on the development of their own taste prior to their interview. In comparing these examples, two aspects are prevalent. The common style of parental influence that can be seen in all three quotes supports the idea of the transmission of cultural preferences and values between
generations in such a way that the material is incorporated into the younger person’s memories and subsequently affects their cultural preferences. What is then highlighted by this acknowledgement is the ways in which children are both indiscriminate and biased in their developing tastes. It is biased in that Matthew, Anna and Jeremy have (seemingly) purposefully taken parental music into their own soundtrack, recognising their prior exposure to certain music. At the same time, it seems that such music can be enforced as an exclusive genre that is played within a listening environment such as the home or the car. In this way, children are unable to truly discriminate music they “like” from music they dislike, due to the influence of parental perspectives on what is “good music”: clearly their cultural preferences constitute that music which they believe holds high value, and therefore encourage their children to also enjoy and value such music. This is demonstrated by the ways in which Matthew, Anna and Jeremy have shown acceptance for three distinct genres of music without appraising the music in comparison to any modern tastes they hold.

Participant Jeremy (from above) went on to recount a significant demonstration of parental sharing and mediation that spans three generations in his family. Akin to narratives from Ryan and Tony (p. 91), this is another example of a “first” memory that is connected to music:

I think one of the earliest memories I have, it’s connected to music ... ‘cause I remember the house we were in - I would have had to have been probably five or six and we used to play a game with Mum and Dad and my brother called ‘monsters in the dark’ - it was basically hide and seek at night with all the lights turned off. And Dad would play, put on the record player and he’d put on Black Sabbath’s “Iron Man”, which had a scary beginning to it, it starts out and it goes “I am IRON MAN” and that would be the song, we’d have to go - I was always scared so Dad would crawl around on all fours and I’d be on his back, clutching onto his back and we’d go find my Mum and my brother ... So I’ve actually introduced [my young son] to “Iron Man” now and he asks for it all the time.

— Jeremy, age 36
Not only does this account show an intersection of early musical and autobiographical memory, it also shows how music can be shared across more than one generation, highlighting the cyclical nature of the lifetime soundtrack. From grandfather to father to son, Black Sabbath’s “Iron Man” has been mediated through two parental soundtracks, and will most likely be present in all three individual’s lifetime soundtracks.

What is particularly interesting about most childhood stories from participants provided so far in this chapter is that within these narratives the “ownership” of the music is almost always designated. When music was not being enjoyed as a family, e.g. at sing-a-longs (as described on p. 100), it was regularly referred to as “Mum’s music” or “Dad’s music”. This seemingly natural association is further enforced by the role of the child more or less as a bystander, in which they have little influence over music that is played for leisure or background noise. From this perspective, associations between family member and music become routinely observed through physical ownership and the action of “pressing play”, as well as the overt enjoyment of the music by that particular person. The following interview quotes from Matthew, Jeremy, Will, and Stella all designate a family member in their musical recollections:

My mother was heavier rock from the 80s onwards, so she was into Deep Purple, was one of the bands I associate with her, um ahh we had this best of album which included all sorts of songs... much heavier sort of stuff but at the same time she liked Kenny Rogers which is a pet hate of mine.

— Matthew, age 25

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Deep Purple was most influential in the early to mid-1970s, however the band reformed in 1984 with some subsequent success, which could explain the reference to the band here as part of 1980s culture.
And I always ... strongly associate music with my Dad because he was the one that has the big interest in music but I sort of try to think about what music [I associate with] my Mom, “Music Box Dancer”\textsuperscript{31} is the song that comes to mind.

— Jeremy, age 36

My Dad’s got ... a real varied taste, there was always music playing er, usually stuff my godfather took the piss out of him for. There was always music on, albums on, all round ... my Dad listens to a lot of music, my Mum likes music but wouldn’t sit down and put it on ... so she’s definitely not got much of a musical influence.

— Will, age 26

I’ve like ten thousand songs I associate with my Dad because he used to drive me to school every morning and we’d listen to like CDs, he’d like try and – he actually, actively tried to change me from listening to B105,\textsuperscript{32} so ... every week we’d have like a new CD that he’d be like “this is real music”, and so all Jimmy Hendrix I pretty much associate with my Dad, Randy Newman, Joe Jackson, yeah.

— Stella, age 22

These strong associations again highlight the kind of influence that the parental soundtrack can have on young individuals. In overviewing interview data for memories from this period it was interesting to note that although there were more references to musical associations with the maternal figure quantitatively speaking, it was often the father’s music that was perceived to have a more significant influence. For example, Will implies that his mother did not hold music as something of high value, and so her opinion of it does not hold much influence over Will. In a similar way, Jeremy can only think of a single song that he associates with his mother, whereas he admits that his father had the strongest interest in music, and therefore has influenced his taste from a child through to his

\textsuperscript{31} An instrumental piece by Frank Mills, released in 1978.
\textsuperscript{32} B105 is a Top 40 radio station in Queensland.
preferences as an adult. Matthew, on the other hand, has strong associated memories for both his mother and his father, however, in the quote above he notes that his reaction to his mother’s musical taste varied, such that he accepted her preference for Deep Purple (hard rock), but not Kenny Rogers (country). The contrasting gender-oriented discourses between the genres of rock and pop-oriented country ballads may be at the heart of this opinion: whereas rock music presents problematic ideals of masculinity (Bayton, 1997; Cohen, 1997), the undertones of country crooners such Kenny Rogers offer somewhat more feminine discourses that may be at odds with Matthew’s perceived cultural taste.

Although the topic of gender and music (especially popular music) is widely covered in academia (e.g. Cohen, 2001; Whiteley, 1997, 2000) there is little research on the effects of gender-based music associations on the cultural preferences of young people. The influence of parental taste on that of their offspring has been established in previous literature (e.g. Mohr & DiMaggio, 1995; ter Bogt et al., 2011), however these studies found only broad correlations between gender and taste of the parent and offspring. Analysis of data in the current research suggests that in the typical family unit, dominance over music played within domestic spaces is chiefly wielded by a father figure, who subsequently appears to have the most influence over the musical preferences of children with whom the parental lifetime soundtrack was shared.

The Home as a Centre of Musical Interaction

Performance and music-making

For both older and younger interview participants, the household was a location of musical participation and interaction. Older participants described a time when the family frequently made their own entertainment with music they performed themselves. The narratives below illustrate certain aspects of life in rural Queensland and the developing capital city of Brisbane in the 1940s and 50s:
Well again you did have people in the small town that could play the piano, but that meant that one person stayed at the piano the whole night, whereas we had the Pianola and everyone came to our place. Mum and Dad, we had an old Queenslander with big verandas, and we danced there on a Sunday night with the Pianola, and everyone could use the Pianola, all you had to do was pump your feet.

— Bea, age 81

Well we used to have sing-a-longs as a family, we didn’t go out to party, people came, you didn’t go out to eat at that time, well I s’pose some people did but we didn’t go out to eat. People came in for dinner and you’d sit around afterwards and have small talk for a while, but then the lid would come open on the piano and you’d have sing-a-longs.

— Hazel, age 72

The emphasis in these memories from Bea and Hazel is on the collective experience of making music with family and friends. As Bea notes, it could be an inclusive activity that everyone could join in on, pulling closer together the ties between memories of loved ones and musical experiences. Although the development of listening technology was a phenomenon in much of the developed world, these narratives give insight into typical additions to lifetime soundtracks of individuals prior to the wide availability of recorded music as a form of entertainment. Below, Ron described a unique scenario in which he experienced live music performed by professional musicians in his childhood home:

What would happen is my brother then became a professional musician and travelled with what they called the JC Williamson Orchestra that did all the musicals that came up the east coast of Australia from Victoria to Cairns, and they stopped in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and sometimes Toowoomba ... but mostly stop[ped] in Brisbane ... So in my early years at Moggill33 he’d have ballet people come out, and the orchestra and he’d put on a barbeque at

33 An agrarian suburb of Brisbane, Queensland.
home. So I would have opera singers on a Friday night, the best opera singers that would travel in Australia would sing in our lounge room. And then the best jazz players of the time, there’s this bloke called Ronnie Milner, he was playing trumpet in the Brisbane Symphony Orchestra but he was also a jazz player so this is late 60s, very, oh mid to late 60s so it put me anywhere between 12 and 16 years of age. And that was a huge influence, was having these people. And that diversified my interest in music from semi-classical to jazz, and you could have it all in the one evening.

— Ron, age 59

To experience great musicians performing within one’s home is something of a rarity; a privilege that as this participant notes, had a significant influence on his musical taste. What makes this experience such a vivid memory for Ron over any other kind of live music performance is the venue: the family home provides familiar scenery that is heavily present in memories of typical domestic activities, however, performers from travelling Symphony Orchestras within one’s living room is most certainly not a typical experience. The uniqueness of this reinforces the importance of the experience for Ron, remaining as a crucial encounter in his autobiographical memory.

**Radio**

Aside from in-family entertainment, older generations also had some access to music through the radio. The influence of the radio was felt in Australian homes after the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in 1932. As described in detail by study participants, use of the radio became a staple of everyday domestic life, and was an integral addition to the teenage years of the Baby Boomer generation. As Frith observes: “It was radio which transformed the use of domestic space, blurring the boundary between the public and the private, idealising the family hearth as the site of ease and entertainment, establishing the rhythm of everydayness” (2002, p. 41). Indeed, collected interview narratives for this study depict the radio as a regular accompaniment to life, comprising part of both personal and family listening time. In a study of recalled memories for radio,
Arrow (2005) traced the influence of the widely popular Australian radio serial *Blue Hills* on domestic life. She asked the general public to write to her with their memories of this serial, noting that “the letters are not just about people’s memories of the pleasures of listening to “Blue Hills” . . . memories of *Blue Hills* frame listeners’ memories of childhood, marriage, family, domesticity and daily life” (p. 306; see also Chapter 3). This is reflected in one of my own interviews, with George describing how the theme song of *Blue Hills*, features in his own memory of domestic life, albeit in an overseas location:

> ... when we lived on a research station\(^{34}\) in New Guinea about ten miles out of Lai, and I was working at the office and I would go home for lunch, and at lunchtime on the ABC Radio National they’d play *Blue Hills*. They’d have *Blue Hills*, and the signature tune [sings] I can still remember that and that reminds me of having lunch at home with [my wife] in Papua New Guinea, the signature tune of *Blue Hills* ... You’d have the one o’clock news and they have the pips to signify that it was one o’clock and then they’d have the tune for “Blue Hills”.

— George, age 66

The sounds of this era are important to George, with the tune of “Blue Hills” triggering a multitude of memories from this time in his life. This musical memory includes sounds outside of the music itself, with the participant referring to the “pips” that would immediately precede it. Just as described in Arrow’s collected narratives (2005), the theme tune signified a time of respite for working individuals to enjoy a break from work accompanied by the serial.

With the development of the transportable transistor radio in the 1950s, radio could become a personal, individual experience. Music experiences were suddenly transferable into private listening spaces such as the bedroom (cf. Baker, 2004) distinct from family listening activities. While the following accounts describe personal, rather than family, experiences they continue to describe the home as a central place of music experience and memory. In recounting musical

\(^{34}\) George was a scientific researcher for a significant portion of his working life.
influence in childhood, the above participant, George, describes the frequency with which, as a young person, he would listen to the radio for the popular music of the time:

I did have the bad habit of listening to the radio while I studied, much to the annoyance of my brother Johnny ... and I remember um, my favourite radio station at night was 2UW in Sydney, and the guy had an American accent, he was “Grant Walker, Grant Walker” and he used to be, his signature was 2UWW it had the echo on it, the reverb, and he used to play the latest, all the stuff from the States and everything so, I would just have that on, always had music on while I studied

— George, age 66

George’s habit of listening to the radio in childhood carried on into adult life, ingrained as a daily accompaniment to other activities. The radio was an important piece of technology for people of all ages, although for young people this became especially apparent in the 1950s and 1960s. This was reflected in the following narrative about Radio Luxembourg from participant Dennis, who spent his formative years in the United Kingdom:

... up to [age] 13, I was in England and that’s when I remember the early stages of music, ‘cause that’s when Radio Luxembourg started, I don’t know if you remember that, the first radio stations. I was only young and living in that, near the coast of England ... used to pick up the radio signal from Radio Luxembourg which started off with early popular music like The Beatles ... Dave Clark Five, all that really early English music and I remember actually listening to it on your little transistor when I was only 13 or less than that probably 11 or 12

Radio Luxembourg was one of the first commercial radio stations to broadcast offshore to the United Kingdom. Established in 1933, it offered an alternative to strict BBC programming that pervaded the UK, and was considered an illegal broadcast station under wireless licensing laws (sometimes referred to as “Pirate Radio”). Significantly, in the 1950s and 60s Radio Luxembourg targeted a teenage audience, principally playing the popular music of the era. This allowed millions of young Britons access to popular music that was denied them by the BBC up until the launch of its own youth-oriented station, Radio 1, in 1967. Ironically, a number of popular DJs who worked for Radio Luxembourg and other Pirate Radio stations, such as Radio Caroline, subsequently went on to work for Radio 1. See Chapman (1992), Emery (1966), and Rudin (2007).
years old. That was my first experience with music, so that was quite interesting because I was quite young, I was awake to when it first really started, popular music.

— Dennis, age 61

The music played on Radio Luxembourg was influential for a lot of young people, Dennis included, although it is only in retrospect that the participant can recognise the significance of the experience. The technology of transistor radios plays a large part in this narrative too, where the mobility of the music allowed Dennis to listen to music away from the collective family-oriented listening that was more likely to be playing in other areas of the family home.

Part of the strong attachment to radio exhibited by participants could be attributed to a novelty factor that listening to music on the radio presented for some individuals. This is depicted by another participant, Vincent, who spent his schooling years in a strict boarding facility; his memories exemplify not only an alternative memory locus to the “home” but also an example of structuring life around the novelty of music from the radio:

Because we were seniors we were given the privilege of listening every Sunday night to the “Hit Parade”. And some of the songs, when I hear, songs like, [sings] “C’mon Kid C’mon Kid hit him with the left and right, C’mon Kid C’mon how were they to know it was the kid’s last fight” takes me back. I just made a note of some of them I could remember “Via Con Dios” [sings] these are hit songs of the period ... “Down by the Riverside”, “Jealousy” [sings], those are the sorts of songs that were on the Hit Parade in those days. And whenever afterwards I heard one of those anywhere, I’d be under the mosquito net at Nudgee [College], and then you’d doze off and away.

— Vincent, age 77

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36 Refers to “The Kid’s Last Fight” by Frankie Laine, 1954.
Vincent’s narrative also implies an alternate domestic group to the typical family unit found in most narratives. While he would have returned to his kin in semester breaks, Vincent’s term-time family would have most likely been his peer group. Hence this memory still informs the lifetime soundtrack, resounding with the foundations thereof: despite its occurrence in later adolescence, the substitution of the boarding college for “home” and his fellow pupils for “family” still comprise a hub for memory creation.

**Recorded music**

Rising concurrently with the popularity of radio was recorded, re-playable music – playback technologies such as the phonograph, the cassette, the CD and the mp3 file maintained music’s place in the home over time. In contrast to the older cohort’s recollections of families performing music together in the home, or listening to music on the radio, narratives from younger generations primarily converge around recorded music.

I remember listening to ABBA on the tape player, and we’d basically, our family would sort of, well my sister and I, she’s a couple of years older than I, but I remember sort of getting around the tape deck and listening to ABBA Revival.\(^{37}\) I remember, I guess I would have been about four or five, and listening ...

— James, age 41

It is significant to note here the influence of siblings as evidenced in James’s recollection, especially those who are older, on an individual’s listening habits, and in turn, their lifetime soundtrack. Previously in the chapter, the dominance over the soundtrack by parental figures was explored; however, interview narratives also show a potential for siblings to influence music preferences within the family. This was noted especially where the participant was the younger sibling, where older brothers or sisters possessed the disposable income to afford physical music releases. The

\(^{37}\) Refers to ABBA’s 1976 album *Arrival.*
ownership of physical copies of recorded music and listening technology that could be transferred to places like the bedroom allowed young people to further engage with their developing tastes, and also thereby influence other family members via direct exposure to new or different music.

The narratives below also exemplify the influence of siblings:

The first time I went to Singapore, me and my next brother up... got a little bit of pocket money ... and we put all our money into buying a CD Walkman and the Robbie Williams CD, *Sing When You’re Winning* and we used to listen to “Rock DJ” like constantly on this trip. So we made it a task to learn all the words so that we could sing along with “Rock DJ” so I associate that specifically with [my brother] and being in Singapore.

— Stella, age 22

So but before that we were influenced by [my brother’s] music at home, he was a big jazz fan so we had all the old 33s of Benny Goodman and Bob Crosby and – not Bing Crosby – very heavily jazz influenced from those days, Louis Armstrong. So from you know, first stage of recognition of music from say ten, ah him being 13 years older than me so ten gave him 23 ... meant that I was influenced by his music. He was buying records and playing them and that was the sort of thing we listened to. There was no popular music ever played in the house.

— Ron, age 59

In these excerpts, both Stella and Ron place a high value on the physical item or music technology, as well as the relationship with siblings this physical item now signifies. An interest in the same music can function as a bonding activity between siblings, as in the description from Stella. She and her brother (also an interview participant) shared the ownership of the music, with both siblings investing emotionally in at least one particular track. The bond between Ron and his brother is somewhat more distanced than that of the first example; despite this, the age and importance of the memory to Ron is indicative of the strength of the association.
Relatives outside the immediate family can also have a lasting influence on an individual. Participant Jeremy gives a vivid description of his first encounter with what would go on to become his favourite band:

I think that would have been around grade six, I was at my cousin’s place and she was a full sort of head banger ... she was listening to Guns & Roses and she had the “Paradise City” video clip on TV and I just went “that is awesome!” and to this day Guns & Roses Appetite for Destruction is my favourite album, yeah. And I always remember where I got introduced to it and then I became pretty much obsessed with it.

— Jeremy, age 36

Here, it is not a sibling but rather an older cousin that led Jeremy to discover new music. It appears that Jeremy didn’t need much convincing to accept Guns & Roses as a valuable musical pursuit. His description suggests that a number of factors external to the music may have added to his first impression: that his cousin had already embraced the culture that went along with late 80s/early 90s rock was influential for Jeremy, presenting a contrasting ideology to his own at the time. This narrative also marks the prevalence of music videos in the 1980s and beyond. The MTV phenomenon emphasised the variety of identities taken on by performers, which was couched in popular cultural discourses (see Baxter, De Reimer, Landini, Leslie & Singletary, 1985; Mercer, 1993; Walser, 1993), changing the way audiences perceived pop music and performers. Although interview questions for my research did not extend to music videos, it is acknowledged that this is an aspect of culture that may influence musical memories in certain age groups, and as such, is a potential topic for future research.

Members of the extended family can also play a part in influencing an individual’s lifetime soundtrack. Will was quoted previously as saying that his father’s music collection had strongly affected his own music preferences. In the narrative below, he notes how a family friend added to his experiences with music:
My godfather’s one of those people who buys himself an album a week, so his record collection is phenomenal. I’d always ask him when I was getting into music, when I realised I liked it more and you try to look cool I’d always ask him, because he always knew it. Things like Jeff Buckley, I’d say “I found this” and he’d say “oh I’ve had that albums for years!” ... and when I said I was getting myself into Neil Young he said “I’ve never been so proud!” kind of thing. So my godfather, like in my early years, never had an influence on my music but now I always try to impress him with my music taste because he knows so much about it.

— Will, age 26

Will’s anecdote highlights the variance in the concept of “family”, as noted in the introduction to this chapter. His description of his godfather suggest that this person was frequently present within the household, and by extension, he becomes a type of caregiver. The participant emphasises that his godfather was very knowledgeable about music, and that he subsequently wishes to impress his godfather with his own music collection, which also suggests that the maintenance of a good relationship between them was important to Will. This narrative strongly exemplifies the ways in which broad and varied concepts of “family” interaction can impact upon the development of the lifetime soundtrack.

The physical surroundings of the home as a venue for listening to music seem to be emphasised in memories that include recorded music. Some participants could vividly recall their listening environments associated with particular artists, genres or albums. Will, quoted above, went on to relate his cloud memory of a familiar home environment:

I always remember, like Sundays for me are synonymous with Beethoven or Tchaikovsky or Bach, maybe some Grieg ... just on a Sunday, my Dad reading the paper. That’s from an early age, every single Sunday there was classical music on, early morning. And sit and read the paper so, definitely in my new house, yeah since I was ten. Don’t necessarily remember that beforehand, but from ten, the nice room of the house, that sort of Sunday, you go in there,
especially in summer. So ... now because of it, like today - no one was in the house and I feel that it’s a Sunday, even though it’s a public holiday Monday, I will put on classical music, because I don’t know, it’s a nostalgia thing or whatever.

— Will, age 26

Here, Will relates as much to the atmosphere of the house as he does to the influence of his father in this memory. The music triggers a sense of time, including the season and the time of day, making the circumstances of the memory quite unique. The fact that this music (and its required technology) is accessible for Will means that he can authentically reproduce the feelings associated with this memory, especially at times when his current physical environment resembles that of the original experience.

Another example, this time from Matthew, extends the concept of musical memories in the home with the advent of the music video and concert recordings. In the following recollection Matthew has intertwined the auditory and visual experience with a vivid memory of the listening context, including the physicality of the (then) current technology:

[Speaking of Queen’s Freddie Mercury tribute concert] ... George Michael, he got up and did ... “Somebody to Love” which is amazing, it’s the best version, I reckon it’s better than Freddie’s version. But they use - like they get a whole gospel choir up there, a black gospel choir up there, it’s just amazing. I associate that with the house, the uh house we lived in called Bintaro or in an area called Bintaro [in Indonesia] ... So yeah I always associate the floor, the Sony TV that we had ... Panasonic laser disc player um yeah and the red couches that we had which had been with us forever, I sort of associate it with that.

— Matthew, age 25

Much like Jeremy above, who speaks about seeing the film clip for “Paradise City” for the first time, Matthew has a strong visual element that directly accompanies the musical experience in the form of a recorded concert. From information revealed later in the interview, this memory had to occur
before Matthew turned 13, because it was at this point that his family moved to Australia. Leading up to this anecdote, Matthew gave a detailed description of the house itself. This starkness of memory that is maintained for long periods of time lends credence to the viability of the household as a centre for memory creation in younger life. The familiarity with the layout of the home and the relationships that manifested themselves within it allow for musical memories to be framed by visual recollections. The accounts from both Matthew and Will infer the sense of importance that they associate not only with the music but also with the atmospheric context of their experience.

**Domestic Attitudes**

Earlier in this chapter, it was mentioned that previous studies such as Nagel and Ganzeboom (2002) and ter Bogt et al. (2011) had established that cultural values, especially taste in music, can be passed from parent to child. Many studies have also found some correlations between values, attitudes and behaviours of parents and their offspring (e.g. Barni, Ranieri, Scabini & Rosnati, 2011; Hoge, Petrillo & Smith, 1982; Kalish & Johnson, 1972). While there are some inconsistencies in the outcomes of such studies, collectively they suggest that political, religious and social values are passed on generationally. As such, these studies indicate that the attitudes of caregivers can have a great influence over beliefs and activities within domestic spaces. In terms of the lifetime soundtrack, this trend dictates that it is not only music taste that is passed on, but also a value system in regards to music and musical activities more generally, which in turn shape the development of the lifetime soundtrack. Previous accounts from research participants given in this chapter clearly evidence participants’ perception of caregivers’ music within their soundtracks, such that they reported purposefully engaging with it.

The majority of my participants viewed music as a positive presence in early life, apparently incorporating mediated music tastes into their own preferences as adults. The typical mediation of music that is played in the domestic sphere by parents involves, to varying degrees, the sharing of values, including an emphasis on things that are not valued. This may result in the purposeful
exclusion of music, or a certain genre thereof, within a household; this trend was evidenced in the narratives of several participants in this study. In the first instance, the absence of music in this lifetime period was signalled through a general lack of childhood stories described by some participants within interviews. The notion of an absence of certain music in this lifetime period was further reflected in descriptions of listening habits within the home, and moreover, the development of the lifetime soundtrack as described by some participants. For example, Ron was quoted previously in this chapter as saying: “there was no popular music ever played in the house”. In Ron’s recount of his taste in music to date, he notes how he never liked popular music, and moreover, as an adult and a musician, he could not muster any respect for musicians of that genre. Ron’s lifetime soundtrack reflects this, being comprised primarily of jazz and classical music.

The value placed on certain music as expressed by domestic authority figures can significantly affect the ways in which individuals may interact with music in their adult life. A restriction of activities that involve music may also influence the kind of music experienced at that time of life for an individual, and potentially in the future. In a similar way to Ron, Angela described her childhood experiences with music as rather inhibited by the beliefs of her father:

... my Dad was a Mason, so when he would go out on a Friday or Saturday night, that was our time at home to watch whatever we wanted on the TV with Mum, so it always seemed to be musicals, Fred Astaire and all that, so I love all those standards ... it was something we did as a group of girls together at home on a Saturday night sort of thing. And we’d have like toasted cheese sandwiches so you didn’t have to cook dinner.

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38 While the lack of memory verbalisation could be purely attributed to personality type (e.g. extroverted versus introverted personalities), it should also be mentioned that for some individuals, childhood may not be a source of fond memories. Many people may have experienced trauma during this lifetime period, resulting in a lack of desire to recall memories from this time (see Koutstaal & Schacter, 1997; Terr, 1991). It is unknown whether such experiences were present for participants in this study; additionally, this is an area of specialised academic focus that falls outside the scope of the current research and hence it will not be discussed in further detail here.
This kind of activity was highly prized by Angela, given that much of her other involvement with music was restricted to classical instrumental lessons. The additional detail of relinquishing the traditional style of dinner further emphasises the way in which these occasions were viewed as treats. Many of Angela’s memories that were recollected during her interview featured the music of older musicals, representing how this restriction shaped her lifetime soundtrack. The effect of domestic attitudes towards music again highlights the cyclical nature of the lifetime soundtrack, suggesting that a restricted sharing of the parental soundtrack provides a limited foundation for the lifetime soundtrack of offspring. This practice could be caused by a number of factors, including that the parents themselves were subject to similar domestic attitudes and varied cultural climates of past eras.

It is worth noting that the change in domestic habits that developed throughout the 20th century would certainly have shaped the range of lifetime soundtracks present in the current research. As Nelson (2003, p. 132) notes, child rearing practices of adults who grew up during and after the Second World War were much different from those used previously. Nelson particularly notes factors such as the sexual revolution of the 1960s, women’s lifetime employment prospects post-1970s, the influence of television and music, as well as an increase in unmarried or single-parenting as contributing to a change in household attitudes and routines (ibid.). Such changes are evidenced in the ways family interactions are described in the interview narratives collected for this study. Paired with the limited (but growing) availability of music, the formal nature of household habits meant older participants described stricter listening regimes and a lack of individual access to or choice of music. As discussed in the previous sections, younger generations were given comparatively generous freedoms with music, with the ability to gather personal collections of music in private listening environments such as the bedroom. According to McRobbie and Garber, this space was a physical centre for teen-oriented cultures, especially for girls, in the period

The prevalence of listening in private spaces was evidenced in older and younger female participants in my study:

[Hearing David Cassidy or the Osmonds] takes me back to when I was a teenager you know. I would listen to them in my bedroom you know or on like the little cassette players or you know, cos they were the big things back then, cassettes.

— Robyn, age 52

I was obsessed with [radio station] B105 ... completely obsessed, I listened to it all day, and I used to call up at night, for like all the competitions. I used to listen to “Kyle and Jackie O”, “The Hot 30” ... I used to listen religiously, every night I’d listen to the entire three-hour show, like, just sit in my room. Sometimes I would write down [the lyrics to] songs. And they were just terrible pop songs, like I probably wouldn’t even remember them now, but occasionally an old pop song will come on and I’ll strangely know all of the words.

— Stella, age 22

I can remember the night that “Waterloo” won the Eurovision song content. Cos I was listening to it on this little yellow radio that...my mum had bought in Singapore and I was in bed at night-time with the little radio, tucked up listening to the Eurovision song contest in Germany or wherever it was broadcast from, and ABBA won [with] “Waterloo”, so I do remember that.39

— Vivian, age 51

Experiences like those narrated by Robyn, Stella, and Vivian correspond with the trend of privatised listening as noted above. The activity of listening to music alone means that the experience becomes

39 In 1974, the band ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest with their song “Waterloo”. The contest was held in Brighton, United Kingdom.
highly personalised within the confines of the bedroom. In these scenarios, individuals are able to spend more time listening to music than would be possible in shared spaces within the home. Both the quality and quantity of music engagement in private listening spaces influences the development of the lifetime soundtrack such that younger individuals may have experienced more music in the lifetime periods of childhood and adolescence than older participants.

**Music in the Family Car**

The above overview of music in the domestic domain shows that the home provides a platform rich in interactions, between music, people, and their physical surrounds - the familiarity of which allows the freedom of intense memory creation. Through analysis of interview narratives for this project parallels were found to exist between the domestic home and the family automobile. As mentioned earlier, the concept of ‘home’ can be mapped onto spaces that do not necessarily resemble the physical domestic home – this was exemplified by participant Vincent, whose “home” was also his boarding college. The car becomes a bounded space in which both social music sharing and parental mediation occur, defining it as a secondary location of soundtrack foundations. In this section I would like to extend the interactions that occur between music and the family, and examine how they work in an alternate space to the home. The idea of comparing music listening in the home to that conducted in a car stems from research conducted by Bull (2004) and Walsh (2010). Their studies into the culture of music and automobiles provided interview data that suggests their respondents compared their car to a second home: a privatised, intimate space within which they can control the sound environment (Bull, 2004, p. 249). While most participants in my research related stories of mediated listening in the car, in which they were not in control of the sound environment, other parallels between the interaction with music in car and in the home are readily identifiable.

From the transportable transistor radio to the current mp3 technology, the availability of recorded music in the car has been a reality for the majority of participants in this study. For families
and individuals, music has accompanied journeys both long and short. While Bull (2004) and Walsh (2010) discussed drivers’ attitudes towards solitary and accompanied listening in the car, only a few participants in the current research had strong memories of listening alone on a journey. More apparent in these narratives were associations between the car as a listening venue and the people - generally family members - within.

Typically, narratives incorporating music, cars and family concerned road trips and holiday time. Walsh (2010) notes the intentionality of choosing music for extended periods of travel in order to “disrupt the static quality of car habitation” (p.214), a view that was supported by his interview participants. While respondents in my study shared this deliberate action of selecting travel music when in their own vehicles, they typically described situations where, as children, this was beyond their control:

Well we drove from the top of New Zealand to the very bottom of New Zealand when I was like seven and then we left the country [to immigrate to Australia]. We didn’t see much down there but we moved to a place called Gore [in the South Island of New Zealand], and the entire way down we listened to Enya, and it was like, repeat, and it was just like, I’ve never listened to Enya so much, nobody else would have, why would you? ... I think it was like the only tape we had, it was just like constant Enya for an entire country!

— Stella, age 22

And I do remember listening to Hot Chocolate when we were young, as a family going through Tasmania. Through Christmases and stuff like that, when I was probably 11 - 10, 11 or 12, so that one’s just come back. Just remember the albums, like Hot Chocolate Greatest Hits and we just had it on in the car the whole time. ‘Cause it was all tapes you know, didn’t have CDs or anything like that, it was all about tapes at that stage.

— James, age 41
Such stories of youth being at the mercy of their parents’ musical mediation are reminiscent of circumstances within the household discussed earlier in this chapter. Adult’s musical preferences in the car inform and shape younger people’s lifetime soundtracks in much the same way as they would within the confines of the family home. Both of the stories above also bemoan the technology of music available at the time – cassette tapes. The use of tapes in the car usually meant listening through all the music on the tape, with the ability to exclusively skip tracks effectively limited. This further intensifies the experience for both Stella and James, in that they were not only confined to a small space with their family members, but were additionally restricted to repeated music over which they had little control.

Territoriality over music seems to be much more apparent in the car than in the home, perhaps spurred on by the responsibility for other occupants’ safety that is placed upon the driver, and hence their need to be in control of the vehicular environment. Prior to the 1950s, the main musical entertainment option for families in the car was singing, similar to household trends in the same era (see excerpts from Bea and Hazel, p. 100). In the following narrative in which participant Bea fondly remembers trips from rural Queensland to the capital city Brisbane, we can see the dominance over the musical surrounds where recorded music or radio is absent:

... my Mum’s name was Kathleen, and we used to sing all the way to Brisbane of course, in the car, but then Dad always sang, ah, for mum [pause, Bea is getting a little bit teary] - that’s silly. Ah yes, he always sang “I’ll Take You Home Again Kathleen” and Dad always sang that, that was the only song he ever sang, and we all kept quiet in the car while Dad used to sing it. Oh, they had a wonderful married life.

— Bea, age 81

Here Bea’s father commands the musical space of the vehicle – his contribution to singing, whilst singular, was attributed more respect than other family members’ songs through the family’s silence. Bea’s recollection is framed through the perspective of her own life; having married and had
children of her own, the reverence for her father remains. Also of note is the presentation here of a cloud memory, where the common theme of her father’s repeated solo performance ties separate encounters together.

Below, Hazel describes her method for keeping her children amused on long car trips. Music interaction was seemingly used primarily as a way of maintaining attention and preventing boredom:

Now in the car ... my kids and I would sing. It might be “Three Blind Mice” or it might be “Humpty Dumpty Sat on a Wall”, bit by bit ... [they] got to teenagers. But we would sing, didn’t matter where we were, pull up, and no air conditioning in those days, so I don’t know what the other cars thought about us when we stopped at traffic lights and things like that, but we always sang in the car and we never had “are we there yet?”

— Hazel, age 72

Singing as a family unit activity occupied many car trips for Hazel’s family. In some ways this activity still presents some layer of parental mediation as far as song choice was concerned, however the level of participation was ostensibly much more voluntary. It should be noted also that the action of creating music can interact with memory in different ways than hearing or listening to music. The level of involvement when one is making music is arguably more purposeful than listening and is perhaps embedded more deeply between memory and the lifetime soundtrack. The performative dimension of music and its relation to memory is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

The above narratives of family, car trips and associated music all share commonalities, not only in their portrayal of the familiarity and security provided by the family unit but also in their description of the vehicle as a domain of memory creation. Not all memories associated with the car need to involve long trips. In a narrative mentioned earlier to illustrate association between music and parental roles, research participant Stella notes the memories she has for her father’s preferred
music stem from car trips to school (see p. 98), which were ostensibly short in duration. Participant Matthew also recalls music accompanying short car trips with his father around Jakarta, Indonesia:

My Dad’s very religious, and we used to go to this church, the actual parish moved a number of times, but I remember the first church was this old beat up church that was in the middle of the city in Jakarta ... I guess the things that always stood out about going to mass at those times were listening to what my Dad had on tapes. Um so I guess the music that came along with that was ah the album [by] Chick Corea, Light as a Feather ... he had some Ry Cooder on there, in his tapes. Wilson Phillips Sisters...I guess for the most part it’s positive, ah you know, Dad was always tapping along to it, singing along to it ... but I guess on the other end...he used to have really bad road rage. So that was the other thing I always remember about driving around with him.

— Matthew, age 25

What is important to note about this narrative from Matthew, is that is exemplifies the atmospheric difference between short and long car journeys. Traffic congestion and other factors lead to a disrupted sensory and temporal space, where both the continued momentum of the car and the mental absorption of the music are frequently interrupted. Additionally the driver, as is characterised by Matthew’s father, may facilitate a disrupted focus on the music, calling attention to the environment outside the car on journeys within higher density areas. In the above narrative, Matthew as the passenger on these trips appears retracted in contrast to narratives provided previously, such that he is observing the events play out, but is less involved with them personally. While driving in an urban landscape may influence the creation of memories such as Matthew’s, there is a further level of distinction at play within participants’ narratives. Indeed, stories from Hazel and Bea (above) are also contextualised within partially urban settings; however, the inclusive practice of music making within the car as described in these narratives alters the way the event is memorialised and subsequently remembered. The effect of these different levels of music
engagement is also evidenced in the above narratives from Stella and James. These participants described a situation in which they were passively listening to music within the domain of the vehicle; their recollection, like Matthew’s, reflects this through less personalised retelling. The effects of music participation are further elaborated on within Chapter 8, where musicians’ narratives are examined for specialised engagement with musical memory.

It also interesting to note the recurrence of male-dominated listening experiences in the car. Participants above - Bea, Stella, and Matthew – as well as many others denominate the music in the car as being “Dad’s music” more often than “Mum’s music”. This again reflects trends in the household, where we saw a father’s music having much greater influence over a child’s lifetime soundtrack. This is potentially also a reflection on family dynamics of power, such that the father figure or dominant male person is more likely to be in control of the vehicle than the maternal or other female figure (see Berger, 1986; Wachs, 2000).

As individuals mature and develop the freedom to choose their own music, they are endowed with the ability to create their own mobile sound environments, claiming dominance over what Walsh calls the “aural territory” of the car (2010, p. 211). Participants speak of choosing their own music for road trips, as well as having certain albums in the car, for easy access. In one story, participant Susan tells of the special relationship between her car and music:

... [my ex-husband] was fantastically talented at doing up cars, we had a Corvette...the black Corvette 1974 model. That car had a song and it was “LA Woman” [by The Doors]. That was the car’s song. We both agreed that driving in that car, tried all sorts of music but put that one in the CD player [sings] “LA woman” - that was that car’s song, very, very clearly.

— Susan, age 52

In this instance, the control over the sound environment appears to have been influenced by the aesthetic match between the car and certain music, from Susan’s point of view. Both car culture and
music have been significant facets of Susan’s life and for her - and her husband at the time – it was important that these two aspects were in agreement.

The interaction between family members and music in the physical family home and in the car are quite comparable. From the interview narratives we can see that usually one parent held dominance over music that was played (recorded or performed) in both the home and the car. Relationships between individuals, and the interface of the family unit with music were replicated between these spaces. In both the vehicle and the home music can be seen as strongly mediated for younger individuals, becoming more individualised and personalised over time.

**Sharing Soundtracks: Foundations of Identity**

The discussion within this chapter has so far related mediated music listening that is typically experienced by individuals in childhood to memories of people and places that are subsequently triggered by this music. At the nexus of this interaction is the activity of music sharing that creates the basis for lifetime soundtracks. Given the contrasts between autobiographical memory as an aspect that is unique to the individual, and the collective dimensions of music as a shared experience, it would appear that the lifetime soundtrack is situated as an intermediary between the two. As this chapter has shown, the experience of music as shared among family tends to form significant memories for individuals, and acts as the basis for the development of musical preferences, values and engagement. Indeed, the following analysis chapters demonstrate that acts of music sharing continue to shape the personal soundtrack throughout a lifetime. On the other hand, autobiographical memories for music can only be constructed through a personalised perspective: each new experience is understood in relation to those that have gone before. In this way, memory for music, and its counterpart, music that accompanies memory, is problematised between being an individual or a collective construction.
In her study of collective and individual memory for popular music, van Dijck (2006) states that autobiographical memory for music must be embedded in larger social contexts and that musical memories “become manifest at the intersection of personal and collective memory and identity” (p. 358). Van Dijck’s idea of the collective refers to a broader sense of music sharing, much like that proposed by Strong (2011, see Chapter 2). Engagement with the collective in van Dijck’s work emphasises a shared opinion of artists and genres between fans that, while they have never met personally, are connected through their shared music preferences. As such, her idea that musical memories are co-authored between a collective discourse and a personal interpretation describes the memory-music relationship in a generalised way. In a departure from this view, my research examines this relationship at a micro-social level, such that the activity of sharing music with a collective (i.e. with people outside of the self) is enacted on a much more focused and literal plane. The individual perception of music and its integration into memories creates perspectives that are the sole property of the rememberer. I would, therefore, argue that the personal canon of musical memories, the lifetime soundtrack, is an entity that, while vulnerable to influence from collective sources, remains individually constructed.

Bringing support to this argument is the additional concept of self-identity. As mentioned by van Dijck, above, identity is closely involved with memory; furthermore, previous literature has established the significance of identity development in tandem with exploration of musical taste (e.g. Bennett, 2000; DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1981, 1987, 1996; North & Hargreaves, 1999). Certainly, the expression of self-identity through music may also intersect the realms of both the individual and the collective, such that Frith (1981) notes the use of music to serve both “as the badge of individuality” and as a way of connecting with peers (p. 208). Just as music serves the construction of self-identity, so too does autobiographical memory facilitate a sense of self. As discussed in Chapter 2, previous research has established that one of the key functions of memory is to consolidate identity through reflection on the life story (Alea & Bluck, 2003; McAdams, 1996; Williams, Cohen & Conway, 2008). Together, the sense of individuality and identity is produced two-fold through
reflection on the lifetime soundtrack, and while the aspects of music and memory both take
influence from broader collective planes, the personal experience through which musically triggered
memories are filtered sustain the lifetime soundtrack as individually constructed.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the relationship between memory and music as it develops throughout
childhood and adolescence within the home. The domestic space, which extends to the family car, is
shown to be an important site for the creation of memory that is associated with music. In these
places, the consumption of music is typically mediated by authority figures such as parents or
caregivers, such that early memories of music comprise a sound environment that is beyond the
immediate control of the individual, principally reflecting the musical taste of mediators. In this way,
the lifetime soundtrack is shown to be initiated by people outside of the self; cultural preferences
and values are passed on from parent to child, providing cultural infrastructure while the individual
develops autonomy of taste. Narratives from participants in this study demonstrated how this
mediated music becomes ingrained into memories of childhood, and as such, is regularly
incorporated into the lifetime soundtrack.

Domestic sites engender shared musical activity, enlisting the listening technologies of the
time to facilitate this engagement. Within the home, the presence of a radio or home stereo allows
music to permeate shared spaces, where the dominance over the technology reflects family
hierarchies. Acts of music-making in this space demonstrated a contrasting level of engagement to
listening that further personalises the integration of music into memory. The space of the family car
offers a more concentrated space in which dominance over the sound environment within family
hierarchies can be played out. This raises questions about gender and cultural transmission within
the home, and warrants further investigation.
Cumulatively, this chapter problematizes the construction of the lifetime soundtrack. Whilst the foundations of the soundtrack are established principally through the sharing of parental soundtracks, the notion that musically triggered autobiographical memories are conceived with individualised perception contradicts the idea that soundtracks are collectively constructed. Rather, this chapter advocates that the lifetime soundtrack, while it continues to be influenced by others, is a unique and individually formulated conception that aids in the development of self-identity. The following chapter exemplifies how acts of sharing between family and friends continue to influence the lifetime soundtrack in adult life, in increasingly significant and emotional ways.
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack
One of the fundamental aspects of being human is the ability to feel emotion in reaction to our surroundings and to our own thoughts. Causes of and reactions to emotion are enacted in everyday life, typically reaching their greatest heights at momentous occasions or during peak experiences, both positive and negative. Its prevalence in all we do means that along with the visual and aural aspects of our environment, emotion also becomes encoded into memory.

This chapter will explore the role that emotion plays in memories of the self that are triggered by music. Although the idea that emotionality forms part of memory recall is well supported in the literature, the third aspect of investigation, music, somewhat complicates the ways in which emotion was involved with memory for interview participants. For many people, emotion is also closely aligned with a personal perception of music; as David Hesmondhalgh points out, “music often feels intensely and emotionally linked to the private self” (2013, p. 1). Music has been clearly shown to induce or exaggerate mood (e.g. De Nora, 2000; Hargreaves & North, 1999; Sloboda, 2005), and as such it can be used as a powerful tool in clinical and alternative therapies (e.g. van den Tol & Edwards, 2011). Therefore the connection between music, emotion, and memory comprises a multitude of interactions that vary from person to person, dependent on factors such as personality, range of personal experiences and the importance of music to the individual. While quantitative psychological studies on music and memory such as Juslin, Leljestrom, Vastfjall and Lundqvist (2010) have established that memory is an underlying factor in the connection between music and emotion, further investigation in this area is somewhat scarce. Other quantitative studies, such as those mentioned in Chapter 3, measured emotion as part of their data collection but do not investigate the intersection between music, emotion and memory in any great detail. Qualitative studies on musically triggered memories such as that by van Dijck (2006, 2009), and Gabrielsson...
(2002, 2010, 2011) engage with emotion as an effecting factor on these memories, and suggest broad ideas on how and why music, memory and emotion might come together. While both quantitative and qualitative studies have something to offer in the way of piecing together this connection, the relationship between musically motivated memories and emotion remains rather nebulous.

Through the analysis of interview narratives this chapter will engage directly with emotions described, perceived, expressed or felt by research participants in recounting their musically motivated autobiographical memories. In doing this, the chapter offers an in-depth examination of emotionality, and its connections within these memories; moreover, it emphasises the plurality of emotion as it exists within the lifetime soundtrack. Ideas surrounding physical reactions, the use of music at major events and the purposeful use of music to elicit emotional reaction are among the themes guiding the following discussion of the role emotion plays at the intersection of music and memory.

A Note on Emotion and Affect

The term emotion was used within interviews in a way that allowed participants to interpret this concept for themselves. Common understandings of emotion include the use of discrete descriptors such as “happy” or “upset” typically aligning with the specification given by Patrick N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda who describe emotion as a “quite brief but intense affective reaction” (2010, p. 10). Generally, interview participants avoided language that so definitely categorised their emotion within musical memories, preferring more amorphous terms suggestive of a feeling or an atmosphere that became evoked by music. This is potentially a result of the form of my research interviews, which contrast with those carried out by Juslin and Sloboda. Ostensibly, participants in my research were allowed a greater freedom through the use of open ended questioning, which may have resulted in more elaborate descriptions of emotional engagement.
What is expressed here, in written form, goes only part way to describing the true levels of subtlety with which participants connected to their musical memories. Ideals expressed in eye contact, facial expressions, hand movements, articulations and body language were the real signifiers of a deeper understanding of an emotional resonance that exists in the space between music and memory. In order to recapture the essence of this experience for the reader of these written words, the consideration of the concept of “affect” is hereby added to further enhance the interpretation of participant’s narratives.

Originating in the writing of philosophers such as Brian Massumi (1995) and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1994), the concept of affect has been used in various disciplines and is host to a multiplicity of meanings. Indeed, in the introduction to their collection of essays on affect, Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg state that

…there is no single unwavering line that might unfurl toward or around affect and its singularities, let alone its theories . . . .The concept of “affect” has gradually accrued a sweeping assortment of philosophical/psychological/physiological underpinnings, critical vocabularies, and ontological pathway (2010, p. 5).

While in the remaining pages of their introductory chapter the authors make suggestions as to how affect may be approached, the sentiment of the above passage is echoed: the boundaries of the definition of affect are decided in the greatest part by its usage in a particular framework. Margaret Wetherell (2012) has also suggested that the use of the concept of affect is nebulous, escaping detailed definitions that can range from descriptions of subjective emotional experiences to ideas of physicality and forces, and every combination in between.

A breakdown of the concept in terms of the embodiment and appreciation of music is given by DeChaine (2002), whose overview of work by Seigworth leaves us with the phrase “an emotional resonance that affects the entire body” (2002, p. 86). Such an explanation opened the gate for interpretation, and through reviews of recent collections such as that by Marie Thompson and Ian
Biddle (2013), I have asserted a definition of the concept of affect that is not only applicable to the current research but also carries with it a fluidity for future use.

As I use it in this thesis, affect is the occurrence of feeling beyond the discrete descriptors of emotions; it is the stirring of fundamental human motives; it is the resonance of these feelings within oneself, and also the sense of an affect as being shared with other bodies. One can be both affected by, and also affect others. The affect generated by musical memories can be at once overwhelming but also tenuous. As evidenced from the face-to-face interviews conducted for my research, this type of affect can be enacted through brief glimpses into the past that can be achieved through the triggering of musical memories.

At the interface between music and memory then, we can replace the concept of discrete emotional reaction with the more pervasive and resonant capacity of affect. The term “emotion” is used throughout this chapter, and the thesis at large, due to the semantic confusion that can arise from repeated use of the word “affect”. Henceforth these two terms are used interchangeably; yet a reader’s understanding of the concept of emotion should take account of the fact that participants’ narratives refer beyond typical perceptions of emotion.

**Music and affect in memory**

As Ben Anderson describes in his study of in/voluntary remembering, autobiographically salient music “does not act primarily as an object of meaning but becomes a facilitator, or affective catalyster, that enacts the emergence, and therefore affection, of ‘a’ memory” (2004, p. 16). This statement highlights the triangulation between music, memory and affect such that music ceases to be essentialised as an object from which meaning is drawn. Rather, these three elements interact in a fluid dimension in which one harnesses the other, as is explored in the next section of this chapter. Anderson’s comment also suggests that music acts as a conduit for emotion, rather than enacting emotional meaning from musical elements alone. For participants in my research, music acted as a
portal into past experiences and hence past emotions as Anderson suggests, but further to this, individuals often described an intense personal engagement with salient music, and specific aspects therein. In observing this, I would expand upon Anderson’s work to postulate my own theory that rather than music acting as a more or less hollow facilitator of emotion and memory, it enriches the communication of feeling through the affective elements of melody, harmony, tone, timbre and rhythm. Analysis of participants’ narratives on this level demonstrated the relative flexibility of music to become associated with experiences that do not necessarily “match” the perceived affect of that music. An example of this was found in the following narrative from participant Henry:

One other thing that they used to do on local radio in those days was they used to broadcast the reading of the funeral notices from the paper. They used to do it three times a day, one in the morning, once around noon and then once early evening ... The theme music they used to play to lead up to these was um, a Largo by Handel from Xerces. It’s not a particularly sad piece of music, it’s a beautiful piece of music, but whenever I hear that now it kind of makes me feel sad because it was always associated with people dying, and the funeral notices. In a lot of cases they were people who you knew, or they might have been parents or grandparents of kids you were going to school with and things like that because they were all local people. And even that now still, I hear that, it’s a beautiful piece of music, it makes me feel sad.

—Henry, age 70

In his reflection, Henry notes his more objective perception of the music as “beautiful”, such that without his mnemonic association he does not feel that the music communicates any particular emotion. However, it appears that Henry’s association between the music and a feeling of sadness was enforced from a young age through repeated experience, and so the music, despite its own

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This is, therefore, also an example of a “cloud” memory in that the one piece of music has come to represent a set of collective experiences.
relatively neutral affect, embodies a certain atmosphere in the context of Henry’s experience. Perhaps it is also only in retrospect that Henry can differentiate between his objective and subjective responses to the music.

Music that becomes part of emotional experience need not be novel for the listener. Familiarity with certain music allows it to take on different associations and meanings throughout a lifetime. An avid metal and hard rock fan, Jeremy described in his interview how a pivotal encounter changed his memory for a particular album:

I do remember an instance of what I was listening to when I was feeling particularly shitty about how long it was taking me to immigrate down here [from Canada to Australia]. I was skateboarding to work and I had Pantera on my CD player and I had it because it was just a fully aggressive band and I was just, I was starting to feel numb at that point, being in limbo but not doing anything. And I was skateboarding along and obviously wasn’t paying attention, hit a rock or crack or something and just flew forward and just ate it and tore my hands open and I just [had] an intense burning gravel rash pain on my hands, “oh well, I can feel something now”, and I remember Pantera, it was the CD I chose to put in that morning was Pantera.

— Jeremy, age 36

It’s clear that this event does not describe the first time Jeremy had listened to Pantera: his choice to play that particular CD because of its aesthetic qualities is evidence of his familiarity with the music. The intent with which the music was chosen for that day has helped to reinforce the vivid nature of the memory. Jeremy seemingly chose the music to match his emotional state at the time - an action which could be seen as aiding the potentiality for a reaction between emotion, music and subsequently memory to occur. The music in this scenario also acts as a kind of legitimizing agent: simply that it was playing at the time Jeremy injured himself allows both the starkness of the memory and the emotional reaction to be carried through time, almost as in a vacuum, along with
that particular Pantera album. Without the music, it is possible that the recognition of reality and a change in attitude by Jeremy may not have persisted in his memory due to a lack of sensory engagement; the point remains though that the intersection of emotion, music, and also the pain and shock of the event have caused it to be caught in the net of autobiographical memory. While the idea that musical elements can come to represent experience is covered in more depth in Chapter 8, its mention here prefaces the approach to the discussion of music within this chapter, and indeed, throughout the thesis, as an agent of both memory and emotion that interacts in meaningful and unique ways with individuals.

**Processes of affect, music and memory**

Throughout this chapter, narratives from participants will demonstrate that emotion and music can be tied into autobiographical memories in a variety of ways. For some people, the music itself brought on emotional associations in memory, and for others musically triggered memories brought back atmospheric feelings and affected states. In discussing these interactions, a significant contribution can be made to the understanding of the processes that underlie them.

As noted in Chapter 3, it is common for scientific studies of memory and music to include a measure of participants’ emotionality in regard to their memories. Although it has been established that emotion is an existing factor in the recall of such memories, it is rarely spoken about in terms of its occurrence. Senske (2008), whose doctoral thesis outlined a type of extended auditory pathway for musical memories, suggests that music evokes autobiographical memories, and the associated emotion then follows on from this junction. However, Senske does not provide any evidence for this in his principally theoretical dissertation. In another attempt at defining the role of emotion, Schulkind et al. (1999), note that interfering factors of age and some methodological concerns could effect the outcome of emotionality ratings, conceding that it is difficult to ascertain whether emotion elicited the memory, or if the memory elicited the emotion (p. 953).
A more definite outcome in this regard comes from a study by Janata, Tomic and Rakowski (2007), in which the authors queried the familiarity, autobiographical relevance and emotional response to music excerpts in American undergraduate students. One of their key results was that, “of the songs identified as autobiographically salient, there was significant agreement with the statement that the song, on average, evoked an emotional reaction that was associated with an event, period, or person in the participant’s life” (p. 845). While this statement in itself does not refute Schulkind and colleagues’ point in regards to negating factors such as age or methodology, it is suggested in Senske’s thesis that what Janata et al. essentially determined was that they were able to elicit a reaction between music, memory and emotion using the process illustrated in Figure 6.1:

**Figure 6.1 - Process 1 of Memory, Affect and Music**

Within Janata et al.’s method, music was played to test subjects as the trigger point for autobiographical memory, with the end reaction of emotion being the result measured in the study. In order to support the demographic of the current research, which extends well beyond that of the university students used by Janata et al., the method for discussion of music, memory and emotion in interviews was altered to allow for the elicitation of participant’s narratives without the need for cue music (see Chapter 4). Figure 6.2 exemplifies the typical process of retrieval as it occurred within the interviews conducted for my research:
By eliciting information for musical memories in this fashion, I have extended the known boundaries for the ways in which these three factors interact. What I therefore suggest is that there are several ways that emotion is bound to the interaction between music and memories. Indeed, the positions of affect and music are interchangeable in Figure 6.2, in agreement with Baumgartner’s finding that feelings aroused by listening to music may derive from feelings associated with an autobiographical memory evoked by that music (1992, p. 616). In this way, affect becomes caught between music and memory, such that the original source of emotionality becomes disconnected. This issue was highlighted in participants’ narratives, such as in this example from research participant Vincent:

Only a month, two months ago, on “Hymns of Praise” there was - I can’t even remember what it was, I can’t remember why, but I sat there, [my wife] was sitting there, and I have to surreptitiously take my glasses off and wipe a little tear away, because it brought something back, hearing whatever that was. But it has to play again for me to remember what it was - do you understand what I mean? So I’m either a softie or you know, the music was part of the experience that opens the door and lets you re-experience it.

— Vincent, age 77

Vincent’s astute comment came after nearly an hour of reflecting upon the importance of music in his life. This participant was quite aware of music’s emotional effect on him in a general sense, however, in this narrative the loss of connection between affect and source is evidenced. The notion

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Refers to a television program aired by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *Songs of Praise*, which features performances of sacred songs and hymns.
of music allowing the repetition of an experience as described here also aligns with the point made in the previous section regarding music and the expression of emotion. Here, the affect flows with the music to enrich the associated memory; meaning is constructed by the individual through reference to the music.

The remainder of this chapter is concerned with the expression, context and meaning of emotion within interview participants’ narratives. It should be noted that at times, participating individuals shared personally significant, and often times moving, stories of deceased loved ones. At this point, I would like to acknowledge that every effort has been made to speak about these individuals and their memory with the respect and reverence that is deserved.

**Physical Reactions to Emotion in Musical Memories**

Within research interviews, the outward expression of emotion was one of the first aspects of emotional connection to music or memory mentioned by participants. Common to several individuals was the recollection of the reaction of weeping. For some, this reaction had occurred at the time of the event in question, and for others the music itself triggered associations that in turn produced such reactions. The prevalence of this kind of reaction was also noted by Gabrielsson, whose long-term project probing the public on strong experiences with music resulted in nearly a quarter of his participants (the total numbering nearly one thousand) including the physical reaction of tears in their accounts (2011, p. 374). This begs the question of why individuals may react to strong emotional experiences with the outward expression of crying. Hillary P. Lipe (1980, p. 27) states that weeping serves as “one method of coping with emotional states that seem to be intolerable. The release of tension, or arousal that accompanies weeping may mobilize more effective means of handling the emotion.” Conversely, Jack Barbalet (2005) argues that weeping may express joy as much as it expresses sadness, and communicates a “transformation of self” in both of these forms (p. 138). The following excerpt from Tony’s interview is an example of joyous weeping -
an expression of gladness. In this scenario, Tony is getting back together with some of his old band mates, sometime after they had gone their separate ways:

So maybe 10 or 15 years ago I was contacted by ... one of the writers of [“Little Ray of Sunshine”] and the organ player in the band, um, and he asked me if I’d be available to do some gigs with him, ah so I joined his backing band. And the first night that we played was at ah, Southport RSL,\(^{42}\) and when it got to “Little Ray of Sunshine”, I found myself tearing up, because subsequently I’d had a baby daughter, sort of, she’s 20 now, so she would have been about four or five at the time, so my emotional reaction to that [was] completely out – the rehearsal was fine, it was just doing the song you know, same old same old, nothing new here, nothing to look at here let’s move on – but when we actually were performing it, it completely resonated with me as a father of a young girl, and I had tears streaming down my face, complete emotional venting on stage ... But you forget, I mean there’s a song I would have played at least hundreds if not thousands of times without any kind of emotional impact on me whatsoever, and because my circumstances had changed, and it had been a long gap so it had a chance to slowly morph into something meaningful, the meaning just sort of descended on me in a torrent, um and it was one of the most joyous experiences of my playing life that I can recall.

— Tony, age 62

This recollection exemplifies not only the strength with which music can draw out emotion, but also how the passage of time can often create a deeper meaning between known music and memories that may not yet be associated with this music. Tony’s perception of his young daughter became crystallised during this performance, which as he notes, would not have been possible when he had originally played on the recording of this song.

\(^{42}\) RSL refers to a national chain of popular Australian neighbourhood venues and is an acronym for “The Returned and Services League”. These venues are part of an organisation that supports past or current defence force service men and women.
More commonly mentioned in interview narratives were expressions of sadness through weeping. Take this example from Angela, where even the thought of the music brought on an affective state:

And probably the worst thing [is] ANZAC Day.\textsuperscript{43} I cannot handle it when bagpipes are playing “Amazing Grace”.\textsuperscript{44} That just, oh I tear up just thinking about it, I can’t even sit there and look at them walking because it just upsets me so much ... it’s just the knowing that they went off to war and a lot of them didn’t come back.

— Angela, age 43

Angela explains that even though she has no immediate family members who were involved in war, the sentiment of the day, and the reflection upon the loss incurred by many families is a consistently emotional episode for her. Participant Vivian is similarly affected by the sound of bagpipes:

I tell you what really makes me cry almost every time, are the bagpipes, yeah I think so, that must be a history thing, a Scottish, it’s almost like a proud thing. I don’t necessarily listen to a song and burst into tears, but if you put the bagpipes in front of me inevitably every time I’ll tear up. So I think that’s like a... could be just the sentimental or - because when you think about it they’re a bloody awful sounding instrument, there’s nothing nice about them - but yeah it’s just that feeling that I get from bagpipes.

— Vivian, age 51

While Vivian identifies that the \textit{sound} of bagpipes moves her emotionally, she also hazards a guess that this is due to her Scottish heritage. What is most likely occurring here is a product of association and a notion of patriotism, as exemplified by Angela. The use of bagpipes to stir a sense of nationalism was recently covered in research by Carol L. Shansky (2014), who analysed the use of

\textsuperscript{43} ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. ANZAC Day, recognised annually on 25 April, marks the anniversary of the first military operation of these troops in World War I, and now commemorates all Australian and New Zealand servicemen and women, past and present.

\textsuperscript{44} A Christian hymn.
pipe bands in recruitment for the British army in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States prior to the First World War. The traditional use of the Scottish bagpipes in battles was used in propaganda as a symbol of cultural identity: the sight of national dress (kilts) and the sound of bagpipes were employed to rouse a sense of nationalism that would drive men to enlist. Given that Vivian notes that she spent part of her childhood in her homeland, it is possible that she associates the sound of bagpipes with autobiographical memories of this time, and by extension this evokes a sense of patriotism and pride in her familial origin.

Physical emotional reactions to musically motivated memories were not always motivated by a distinct autobiographical episode. In some instances, such as the one told by Bea, below, music came to represent a “cloud” memory and the emotion associated with it:

Bea: Ahh, Shirley Bassey, that song “This is My Life” - I can have a damn good cry at that one.

I: Is it the lyrics?

Bea: Yes, and it’s the emotion that she sings. She really sings with her whole heart. Well I find, I find [it] so. It affects me, that one.

— Bea, age 81

Perhaps Bea feels a resonance with the lyrics, but most prominently she is moved by the affect she perceives from Shirley Bassey’s performance. Bea has strong connections with several songs as she describes throughout her interview. She has a deep-seated connection with lyrics and the way music conveys the message, especially she feels, when the lyrics describe something akin to her own experience in life. An examination of musical elements and biographical reciprocity is carried out in Chapter 7.

Weeping was not only described in interviews, but on some occasions it actually occurred at the time of the recollection. Such displays show that an associated music does not necessarily need
to be present to evoke an emotional reaction. For example, the excerpt below arose while participant Paul was recounting childhood memories:

I remember once quite vividly being in bed - and we quite liked the song and there were other songs on the cassette that we quite liked - an album called *Fate for Breakfast* [by Art Garfunkel] um, but yeah my father once, [he] wasn’t a very emotionally expressive man at all, I was lying in bed and he came in and he told me the when he hears “Bright Eyes” he thinks of me.

— Paul, age 42

The thought of this sentiment that was likely accompanied by a quick snippet of the song in Paul’s mind causes him to pause in the interview; tearing slightly, he gives himself a moment, and then moves on to another topic. This memory is clearly special to Paul who mentioned Simon and Garfunkel and both artists’ solo music to be part of his own lifetime soundtrack.

Similarly, Bea (mentioned above), was teary several times throughout her interview. When speaking about songs that are particularly special to her, she recounts the loss of her husband, and her son, both of which occurred in the few years preceding the interview. She connects music with them that was played at their funeral, and also songs that were their favourites. In the following quote, she describes how music helps get her through her day:

The song I do sing a lot to myself [pause, Bea dabs at her eyes with her handkerchief] isn’t it terrible, I’ll be right in a minute [pause]. One of them is “Over the Rainbow” and, I get a bit emotional with that. And ah, “One Day He’ll Come Along, The Man I Love.” So I don’t know, people might think I’m a bit funny, but I’ll lay there and just have a little sing to myself.

— Bea, age 81

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45 Refers to “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” written by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg, published 1939.

46 Refers to “The Man I Love” written by George Gershwin, published 1927.
Bea now lives alone and finds that listening to the radio and singing to herself helps her express her emotionality.

The final instance of weeping triggered in interviews is illustrated in an interview with participant Ian. As mentioned previously in Chapter 4, Ian (age 60), had a playlist on hand that he had compiled for his sixtieth birthday party, which had been held some weeks before the interview. He explained the playlist as containing a great deal of songs that were significant to him and represented different eras of his life. In this interview, we sat beside the computer and played songs from the playlist in a rough chronological order, while Ian noted how each song reminded him of an event, person, or geographical space he had experienced in his life. During this process, Ian became tearful at a number of points. The first song Ian played - “Mambo Italiano” (the version by Dean Martin) – he described as “Mum’s song”, then going on to talk about her fondly, before he became tearful. Changing the song, Ian continues. Another twenty minutes on and Ian clicks onto “Georgia on My Mind” by Ray Charles: “I used to really like Ray Charles. This was different. This is beautiful.” I begin to ask him if it reminds him of anything special, however there is a long pause – Ian is getting very emotional about the music, and obviously does not wish to speak further about it. He switches to the next song, and pushes ahead with the interview.

It is particularly interesting to note that these three participants, who showed physical reactions to music in their interview, all related associated memories concerning loved ones who had died. These examples are a testament to the deep connection between music, memory and emotion that occurs at an especially strong level when the association involves people who have contributed significantly to our life experiences. Indeed, participants also reacted to ideals of location or of world events to which they have attached a certain sentiment. Physical reaction is but one way in which participants expressed their emotional connections to musically triggered memory.
Associations with Romantic Relationships

Not only did participants’ narratives involving music, memory and emotion feature family members, but there was also a strong mention of partners in significant intimate relationships. Interestingly, interview data suggested a trend towards musical memories for past partners rather than current ones. Quantitative data showed 12 references for ex-lovers, seven for current partners and two for those that had passed away. Romantic partners can often greatly influence each other in many ways, including preferences for arts and culture. Music is frequently used as a bonding tool and is also sometimes used to express feelings which may not be as subtly explained in spoken words – an aspect of music which is examined in Chapter 7. Indeed, a study by Boer et al. (2011) concludes that cultural preferences can represent value systems, and are therefore used in social contexts as a gauge of personal similarity. When used as a basis for creating social bonds, especially in terms of courtship, strong emotions can become tied to specific music that a couple experienced together, or with music that was preferred by only one person in the relationship. This connects to findings from an empirical study into the connections between music, memory and recalled emotion by Baumgartner (1992) who found that the most common type of experience to become associated with music involved current or past romantic partners.

This point was illustrated through interview narratives from two individuals who were dating at the time of interview. While they were interviewed separately, both people referred to music that is significant to both themselves and each other:

My mum used to play the Riverdance soundtrack a lot, so if I ever hear that I sort of think about her. And I also think about Stella as well because she, when we first started talking to each other we were showing each other all music that we liked and then she randomly sent me some Riverdance thing and I told her all about how that was in my childhood.

— Mark, age 22
Like when I first met Mark, we would like chat on MSN\(^{47}\) in the night times, yeah classic MSN conversations, and you could link each other like, files, and so we like shared our favourite music, so some songs I link with him...There’s this musical called Riverdance ... it’s probably my favourite CD right, Riverdance on Broadway ... And I told Mark that, and he was like, you know what I have a live version, and he sent me this – like my favourite song off it, but a live version and I like, lost my shit. But I associate that with him.

— Stella, age 22

Both Mark and Stella already held “Riverdance” in their own lifetime soundtrack prior to meeting. Of note is Mark’s mention of childhood: in close relation to discussions carried out in Chapter 5, “Riverdance” accompanies part of Mark’s childhood and as such represents elements of his identity. Indeed, in offering this story to a potential partner during courtship, Mark must feel that the music is linked in important ways to his sense of self. Through their continued relationship, both individuals’ associations with the song have been broadened to include reference to each other.

In the current research it was found that the dissolution of romantic relationships featured more often in narratives than any other point in the course of a romantic pairing. Participants described reaching for music that described their situation or emotional state at times of relationship breakups, perhaps looking for comfort or empathy in the music:

I got dumped by my first big love when I was 22 ... there was a song that came out which really clicked ... the song was um, how does it go, “I was in love with you but you weren’t in love with me” ... and basically that was the situation at the time, I was in love with him and he wasn’t in love with me, and I remember sitting in the ... middle of the lounge room floor listening to this song, drinking a six-pack and crying.\(^{48}\)

— Susan, age 52

\(^{47}\) MSN is an online instant messaging service.

\(^{48}\) Refers to “You Weren’t in Love with Me” by Billy Field, 1981
There’s a song that I listened to when I broke up with certain people, or when they left me rather, that’s the stuff when you immediately associate that music with that person and what you’re going through, and the music is what makes you cry, because it constantly is reminding you of whatever is going on.

— Anna, age 18

This tendency towards referring to music that reflects the state of emotionality that follows a relationship breakup is reminiscent of the results from a study by Silvia Knobloch and Dolf Zillmann (2003). These researchers investigated young adult’s relationship status and their preference for love-themed music, finding that those who were “romantically disenchanted” had a preference for music that presented a “love-lamenting” theme over a “love-celebrating” theme (2003, p. 657).

In other instances, individuals may not have been seeking out empathetic music but simply by virtue of its manifestation it becomes tangled into the memory of the time. Angela speaks of such a time below:

When I relate to the first movie I saw after I broke up with my husband [which] was “Love Actually” and there’s that whole Joni Mitchell song what’s it called, can’t think of the name of it, but it’s just really depressing and it was just like, just brings – I mean I love it now to listen to it, but if I listen to it I’m feeling a bit sad because it brings back that memory ... something about her and the way she sings and the words she uses.49

— Angela, age 43

The situation described by Angela may be a product of an affected state, similar to that noted by Knobloch and Zillmann; however, instead of purposefully listening to “love-lamenting” tunes, perhaps individuals who have recently ended a relationship are more receptive to the messages in songs. Certainly, the majority of popular songs at least, contain lyrics referring to love in one way or

49 Refers to “River” by Joni Mitchell, 1971
another (Horton, 1957/1990), and so while we may ignore these songs when we are in a stable emotional state (be it single or partnered) it is plausible that one could be more sensitive to love-related songs when recovering from a relationship breakup. In addition to the lyrical content, Angela refers to her perception of the vocal aesthetic as equally important in the association she possesses between the song and memory of her divorce. This is a significant aspect of memory and music integration and is covered in greater detail in Chapter 7.

The idea that an individual may be more or less receptive to music is reminiscent of the dichotomy of “hearing” versus “listening”, as explored by Kassabian (2008, 2013). In her expositions on “ubiquitous listening” Kassabian notes entries in Webster’s Dictionary defining hearing as the ability to perceive sound, and listening as the action of making a conscious effort to hear. The same distinctions can be made in discussing sensitivity to love songs: individuals who have heightened emotions may be in a certain mental state that means that rather than simply “hearing” songs that drift through daily life: they are in fact “listening”. Reasons for this emphasis on listening at specific times remain unclear, although it is possible that people in fragile emotional states are seeking support and empathy from various sources, and this could include messages found in song lyrics.

Similar to the way Angela came to engage with the song “River”, Vivian, below, describes how she chanced upon a certain song that she found herself playing repeatedly throughout her divorce process. It seems that she did not seek out the music that became synonymous with her marriage breakup, but rather, it was coincidentally a popular song of the era:

Yes, well and actually I am divorced ... but I remember at the time, I remember there was a Cher song that I used to listen to, and I think it was something like that song, I don’t know what it was called, do you believe in love after life or life after love. Yeah that song, and I remember thinking, “Oh god this is a really good song” ... I remember my husband saying to me, “God, is this some sort of anthem for you?” or something like that, and I thought, “Gee, I must be playing it a lot”. But I really liked the song and that was one song at the time I
remember thinking maybe this is relevant. It just came out at that time and maybe it was relevant to what I was experiencing at the time ...

— Vivian, age 51

Vivian’s recollection suggests that she was more inclined to listen to songs that she identified with emotionally at the time of her divorce. In this case the song communicates through its lyrics a sense of hope that related directly to Vivian’s situation. Although she did not fully recognise the reality of why she was relating so strongly to this particular song, with the passing of time Vivian has come to see her circumstances expressed in the music. Laura Vroomen (2004) recognised similar behaviour occurring in her study of female Kate Bush fans. She notes that in identifying with song lyrics that describe female-centric experiences, participants could maintain feelings of self-worth, drawing on discourses of strength and female empowerment. Vroomen’s interviewees connected with various aspects of feminism as they perceived them to exist in Kate Bush’s music and persona. Songs such as “Believe” by Cher, and also “River” by Joni Mitchell, similarly present feminist elements of the strong, autonomous woman. Both Vivian’s and Angela’s connection with their respective songs is founded in a personal resonance with these properties such that the song’s message helped them through an emotionally difficult stage.

In a ratio that is representative of interview narratives more generally, quotes regarding relationship breakups in this section have mostly come from female participants. This trend may have come about due to gender-based differences in remembering styles, such as those explored by Pillemer (1998). Pillemer explained this point by noting studies comparing the clarity of memory in males and females, as well as those on conversational differences in gender, concluding that personal event memories (i.e. autobiographical memories) are “remembered more clearly and valued more strongly by women than men” (p. 184). Moreover, he notes that this finding is based principally “on memories of personal relationships, an area in which girls and women invest a great

50 Refers to “Believe” by Cher, 1998.
deal of intellectual and emotional effort” (ibid.). Further evidence to support a bias in recollections of breakups is provided by Alea and Bluck (2003) who note that women tend to reminisce more than men, and they also recall a greater number of personal memories especially those with a high level of emotionality. Rubin and Berntsen (2009) also confirm this idea in their study of voluntary and involuntary memories, finding that females tend to focus more on emotional aspects of the past and are more expressive about them than males. These findings, together with trends in the current research, suggest that females may place a greater emphasis on emotional aspects of both music and memory, and these in combination produce highly emotional reactions to musical memories.51

Balancing the trend of female-dominated narratives exemplified so far, a male participant, Paul, recreated a vivid history of what retrospectively became the ‘breakup music’ that accompanies an experience in his life story. Sparked from a discussion about travel and transportation, Paul began a story about his strong association between particular music and a past love interest. Not only was the music already part of Paul’s lifetime soundtrack due to the influence of his partner during the relationship, it also crystallised in retrospect as a distinct soundtrack for a temporally discrete event in the final stages of their involvement:

There’s an Australian band called the Black Eyed Susans. I got into this band because I loved a girl whose name was Susan who had black eyes [laughter] ... and they had an album called This One Eats Souls ... and I just had broken up with this - my first long term relationship - and I’d gone to Sydney and she was there but had no money and we were both nuts over each other, and all sorts of crazy things happened. I was staying with my grandparents but going into the city and we were kind of chasing each other round the city being silly, spending time together in hotel rooms when we shouldn’t, but I’d be heading to and from

51 It is worth noting also the influence of gender within the interviewer-participant relationship. Studies have found that male and female interview participants respond in contrasting ways to female interviewers, especially on topics that engage with traditionally feminine, rather than masculine, discourses (Herod, 1993; Huddy et al., 1997; Pini, 2005). As a female researcher, it is possible that male and female participants responded in different ways to interview questions based on my gender and also the nature of the topic of relationships and emotion as more feminine than masculine.
those very traumatic engagements with her listening to *This One Eats Souls*. Actually, that particular track.

— Paul, age 42

Paul’s narrative makes this memory seem somehow chaotic - indeed, he uses the word “traumatic” to describe the experience, which is perhaps a feeling that developed through self-evaluation repeated over time. In reflection, the temporal flow of events becomes compressed and jagged, though the memory itself remains quite vivid. From this narrative it is also possible to construct parallels of intentionality and unintentionality; at the time of the event Paul ostensibly chose to purposefully listen to the music due to its association with this particular girl; however, Paul did not intend for this music to become the soundtrack to their breakup. Paul bookends the story by recounting how it was only recently that he was reminded of the music and the whole experience, whilst riding on a train in Sydney. Anecdotally, music that reminds one of something painful is not sought out after the fact; much of this type of music exists in a vacuum, trapped along with the starkness of associated memories, such as exhibited by Paul. The ability for this music to subsequently be labelled as “break-up music” for that particular relationship is only revealed through the passing of time.

**Bereavement and Grief**

As part of the interview schedule, participants were asked about both their associations between musical memories and loved ones, and also their experiences at major events such as weddings or funerals. The nature of music to become associated with deceased loved ones often manifests in the selection of music to be played in their remembrance, especially at their funeral service. The dynamic between funeral ceremonies, deceased family or friends, and music varies greatly between individuals. Musical associations for that person are generally made prior to the person passing, but are often only realised at the time of bereavement. The connections made between memory and
music at this time become strong bonds that can allow an individual to maintain a link to their deceased loved one. This is the case for Bea, who below describes her emotional attachment to her favourite songs:

I’ve got a couple of songs, especially old Satchmo with “It’s A Wonderful World”. Yes, I can get very emotional on that. Because I think it’s a very true, true song, I love the words on it, and I think um, it depicts my life. We played it at [my husband’s] funeral, um, and I think the words in it where you greet people and you smile, that’s yes, so that I would say was my favourite, um, my favourite song.

— Bea, age 81

Not only does this song connect strongly with Bea in her own life, she also shares this part of her soundtrack with her late husband. Further on in the interview, Bea reveals how the strong connection she feels between music and her husband has also confined her listening habits:

Isn’t that terrible, you know I haven’t played my tapes since I lost Nelson? I just can’t handle that at present. And yet Nelson’s been gone 15 months, but I have not played our player since he’s gone, because he played it all the time.

— Bea, age 81

The bond between music and loved ones is a tenuous one – the ease with which music can allow memories and their associated emotions to replay in the mind can be at once a link to happy memories but also a stark reminder of the sadness of loss. For Bea, the music she and her husband used to play is the ultimate representation of their bond. Even the technology once used to play this music has been left untouched, because of the memories that it embodies. In a paper discussing the ideas of grief and biography, Tony Walter (1996) notes that the process of grief includes the resolution of feelings; these emotional attachments may be stopping an individual from re-

establishing themselves as autonomous from deceased loved ones. From the interview with Bea it would appear that she is still working through the grieving process; music that was associated with her late husband continues to create emotions that seem too strong to re-experience just yet.

As with the loss of a husband, the loss of a parent can be especially difficult. The potential for strong musical bonds to be developed between parents or caregivers and children was emphasised in Chapter 5, where the sharing of the adult’s preferred music often provides the building blocks for younger people’s lifetime soundtrack. In times of grief these musical memories can manifest, intensifying this connection within the relationship. In the following excerpt, interview participant Matthew describes the development of the association between a particular song and his mother. Battling with illness for some time, Matthew’s mother was being cared for in their home in Indonesia, refusing to see Western physicians. At the time, Matthew had been learning the tune “Round Midnight” and over a period of time began to associate this song with his mother’s passing:

I started associating it with, you know, with my mother’s death because that was like one of the first times she ever asked me - one time I remember her asking me one time to uh to play something for her, she’s like “just play me something” you know, and she was on her way out ... you know, I played it and she sort of just went “that’s nice” you know, and I was like, “oh, it is nice I guess”... by that time my Mum was in the ICU, and ... I got there and she was basically going through a fit of some type, um and I played that and she calmed down immediately ... So yeah I sort of associate it, and that was the song that I played at her funeral in the end ... I guess, these days I guess I associate it more with change rather than with my mother’s death.

— Matthew, age 25

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53 A jazz standard written by Thelonious Monk.
54 Intensive Care Unit.
For Matthew, this song has a long history; rather than being associated with one discrete event, Matthew described how the song has come in and out of his life since his mother’s passing. Its continued presence in his life potentially contributed to his feeling that the song represents change rather than death or bereavement. Soon after the illness and death of Matthew’s mother, his family moved to Australia, which likely further emphasises the symbolism the tune holds for feelings surrounding change.

Participant Anna described how she had already thought about the cultural bonds shared with her father that represented a very firm association. Below she describes her ideas of what it will be like when her father passes away:

... but the concept of like, when Dad dies, The Beatles will make me cry because it’s something I associate with him, and it won’t necessarily matter the kind of songs I think, just that that’s a musical genre or band that’s associated with him. And so [it] doesn’t necessarily have to be the content of the music that is emotionally pulling but the associations with it.

— Anna, age 18

The participant’s rationale for knowing that any of The Beatles’ music will forever be reminiscent of her father resonates with the idea of affect flowing within music. Rather than attributing sadness to the articulation of this affect in the music itself, Anna understands that it is what the music means to her personally that will cause upset. It also highlights again the bonding between parent and child that can be signified through shared soundtracks, which is exacerbated in times of bereavement.

Experiences at funeral ceremonies

The nature of ceremonies associated with death in Western and non-Western culture often calls for the use of music. As noted, we associate music with loved ones both before and after their passing, and such music is often used at a funeral service. What is interesting about the choice of music for these occasions is the unique meaning it may have for both the deceased and for the family and
friends and the lifetime soundtrack. Secular music at funerals may signify something about the person, although it is not necessarily about death itself. As Baraldi (2009, p. 257) notes, the aesthetic meaning of music is transformed when it is embedded in social action, that is, a secular song that is played at a funeral may just as easily be used at a wedding, however, its meaning is informed by the occasion. Where music was pre-selected by an individual, it is likely to have been experienced previously and is possibly be part of that person’s lifetime soundtrack, representing some aspect of their experience or identity. Where music is chosen by others, it may comprise a projection onto the individual’s lifetime soundtrack, such that family or friends feel that the music represents that person, or the bond they shared with the deceased in some way.

As such, music mentioned in the narratives below represents the unique bond between people that can be encapsulated in music. In these events of sorrow and loss, music also serves a distinct function. In one of the few studies conducted into funeral music in modern Western societies, Adamson and Holloway (2012) found that music was not only used to streamline the flow of the service, but also to aid emotional expression. In the interview narrative from one of my research participants, Paul, it is clear that music’s interaction with emotion is most acute in its use at funeral ceremonies:

... someone very close to me, their parent died, and I helped them through the ceremony and all that kind of thing, and I think it was a song called “You Raise Me Up” or something like that which I imagine is pretty standard funeral fare ... I think the deceased person really loved that song but ... it’s not something I would ever listen to in my own life. But in that particular context - because apparently there was a connection between the deceased person and the piece of music - plus the actual moment in the ceremony where it was played it was extremely moving. It was the moment where you know the taps turned on and then everybody cried. Um, but actually the music was contingent in that situation, you know

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55 A song composed by Rolf Løvland and Brendan Graham, populariaed by artists such as Josh Groban and the singing group Westlife.
they could have just as easily played “It Was a Good Year for the Roses”\textsuperscript{56} or you know, or certain things that would be aberrant - “Ding Dong the Witch is Dead”\textsuperscript{57} or something wouldn’t be appropriate in that moment, but that was quite instructive to me because I thought, you know it was context dependent ... at that particular point after everyone had stopped talking and the casket was being wheeled out, we needed something at that time that would allow us to you know, cry.

— Paul, age 42

In Paul’s encounter, the music was used as a signifier that aided the release of emotion collectively. The music itself, as Paul suggests, did not need to be meaningful to every person present at the event, indeed, it did not hold any value to him prior to this experience; however, the intent of the music in the situation was clearly understood. Additionally the choice of music is reflective of the deceased (Paul notes that the person “really loved that song”), and as such it may engage with family or friends’ memories of the individual. This process reflects Baraldi’s opinion that the meaning of music is malleable, and is dictated by its use within certain circumstances.

One of the younger research participants, Will, stated that he rarely connects emotionally with music. Upon questioning his encounters with music at major events however, Will recounts a moment of unexpected emotion that was triggered by music at his grandfather’s funeral:

I remember just sitting there, everyone is bawling around me like, during the funeral, and I didn’t, I was a bit like, “should I be crying?” And then as soon as my sister’s [pre-recorded piano] piece came on, that just sent me off ... and that song would set me off again probably, if I heard it again ... I think it was just a random piano piece my sister had [played] but it’s that kind of slow Moonlight Sonata kind of style, and my grandad had done this rusty

\textsuperscript{56} Refers to “A Good Year for the Roses”, a song written by Jerry Chestnut, and made famous by artists such as George Jones, Alan Jackson, and Elvis Costello.

\textsuperscript{57} A song originally composed by Arlen and Harburg for the 1939 film \textit{The Wizard of Oz}. The song has more recently become associated with the death of Margaret Thatcher in 2013, however my interview with Paul pre-dated this occurrence.
recording [of her performing it], meaning he’d done it with whatever, a tape or something like that. Oh I definitely have been moved by music.

— Will, age 26

Within the interview Will noted that his associations for these significant people in this scenario extend more towards his sister than his grandfather due to her involvement in the music itself. Nonetheless, the emotion triggered by the music is due to its use in the typically emotional context of a funeral ceremony. In a similar way to that described by Bea (p. 147), the technology used to record or play music that is associated with an individual imbues the music with a certain aesthetic, and has been incorporated into the emotional and mnemonic connections within Will’s lifetime soundtrack. Even though Will describes his connection with music as principally non-emotional, it is interesting to note his admission that this particular moment resonates in such a way that he would feel a similar wave of emotion if he were to hear the music again.

Interview narratives revealed that sometimes emotional experience with music can become trapped in a vacuum; such is the case for Vincent, below:

There is a piece of music which is done at military funerals. Don’t hear it very often, but drums and whatever ... you hear it occasionally at a royal funeral or something. When I hear that I’m taken back to the funeral of a very good friend of mine who was killed in an accident in the army ... national service, when we were doing a follow-up for training. When I hear that, I’m at that funeral, feeling very, very, very sad, very, very upset, um, so in a sense, I probably agree with what you’re saying, it does happen. It’s not the sort of thing I find easily recalled, it takes the music to make me recall it.

— Vincent, age 77

Vincent’s memory for this event is only triggered upon hearing the music, bringing with it a torrent of strong emotion. Such instances may indicate that very strong experiences in this regard are somewhat suppressed, and are only recalled involuntarily. Reasons for this memory lying dormant for
long periods of time may lie in the music itself: Vincent mentions that the music he experienced at this event was typically reserved for certain occasions. In this way, this instance serves as an exception to the selection of funeral music from the lifetime soundtrack described earlier. The nature of the music used for events such as military funerals engages with a traditional custom and stimulates a sense of collective reverence. With the music seldom being replayed in Vincent’s day-to-day life, and ostensibly, all other reminders of this time also rarely re-appearing, the memory itself remains stored but relatively dormant in the mind.

Just as music at funeral ceremonies can be used to aid the expression of emotions associated with bereavement, it can also be used to change the atmosphere of proceedings. In their study of music choice within funerals in the United Kingdom, Adamson and Holloway (2012) found that celebrants or religious figures suggested families pace the proceedings with musical interludes, especially in the middle and at the end of ceremonies, to allow mourners time to reflect or pray. Families interviewed for the study noted especially their choice of music to end the ceremony, which was intended to “lighten” the mood and have an uplifting effect (pp. 44-45). This last point was described by a young participant in my study, Amelia, who outlined her first funeral experience:

Probably the first person, the closest, that died, which is my Nana. And it was just when they played “Time to Say Goodbye”58 I just remember ... none of us could contain ourselves, it was just the saddest moment. But at the same time we felt happy, they played this really nice video that [my aunt] put together ... I don’t remember what was playing behind it but it was really daggy music and it was really happy and it just ... lifted the mood completely. Like everyone pretty much had stopped crying by that point and was laughing and, more celebrating rather than mourning.

— Amelia, age 19

58 Refers to the partially English version of “Con te Partirò” written by Francesco Satori, Lucio Quarantotto and Frank Peterson, 1995.
Here the music signals that the time of mourning is over: the plurality of music is highlighted in this narrative, demonstrating the interaction between the aesthetic “feel” of the music and the emotional reactions that it is supposed to engender within the context of the ceremony. These associations may well continue for Amelia, such that she connects the music with the more celebratory aspect of the situation.

The narratives in this section have demonstrated how the choice of music for funeral ceremonies interacts with memory and moreover, the lifetime soundtrack. While music chosen by individuals prior to their passing is likely to be an expression of their perceived self-identity, music chosen by others typically represents a shared bond and engenders collective affect within the setting. The acknowledgement of music as an artefact of the self is ever-increasing, and was further evidenced in participants’ discussion of the future, rather than the past, as is explored in the following section.

**Projected Memory: Commemorating the Self**

**Funerals**

Academic studies into funerals in the Western world agree that there is a growing trend for funerals to be more personalised and secularised than in the past (Emke, 2002; Holloway, Adamson, Argyrou, Draper & Mariau, 2013; Howarth, 2000). As summarised by Holloway et al. (2013) there is a pattern of modern funeral ceremonies that act as a celebration of the life of the departed, rather than acting as a temporal marker of the passing of both the deceased and the bereaved into different forms of existence. During interviews for this research, there were several references to thoughts or activities that suggest the growing prevalence of this attitude within this sample of Australian residents.

Although it did not form part of the interview question schedule, participants of various ages mentioned that they had considered or had already chosen the music they would like to be played at their own funeral service. Sometimes this response stemmed from a question regarding music that
had become a long-term favourite for the participant. In thinking back over their life for examples of significant music, participants seemed to come to the realisation that this music may represent either their experiences or their identity, and as such they felt it was appropriate for a celebration at the end of their life. In a study of short-term and long-term musical preferences, Alexandra Lamont and Rebecca Webb found that long-term favourites were usually associated with “positive emotional and personal circumstances” (2009, p. 235). With this in mind it is logical that participants would choose music that positively represents their life in a collective way.

This idea is additionally supported in the findings of a study by David R. Unruh (1983), who investigated the preparation processes of individuals nearing the end of their life. Unruh describes how individuals reflect upon their life to collate aspects of their identity that represent how they would like to be remembered. The author found that this activity involved a process of “identity preservation” in which individuals collect “artefacts” or symbols that represent some part of themselves and distribute these to loved ones (either in a legal will or in a more casual fashion). While Unruh does not mention music in his study, Holloway et al. (2013) and Howarth (2000) mention music as one form of memory in which the departed can be remembered. In this way musical memory could be thought of as a non-tangible artefact of the self. In planning the musical aspect of a funeral well in advance, it is clear that individuals are seeking to impress upon the bereaved some part of their identity as represented by music. For example Jeremy, at a fairly young age, has made a considered choice:

I know one song that I want played for sure, and I’ve made sure that [my wife] knows what it is: “Paradise City” by Guns & Roses. And I’ve actually just been thinking a bit about it lately, but yeah that’s the only one that I know for sure. I’ve thought about it but nothing’s made the list as a definite yet other than “Paradise City”, but yeah I’ve been thinking about making a list soon.

— Jeremy, age 36
Throughout his interview Jeremy had described an obsession with Guns & Roses that had captivated him since first hearing their music in adolescence (see also Chapter 5, p. 107). Although Jeremy has a love for many other genres of music, and has avidly followed other bands, it seems that his connection with Guns & Roses features heavily in the memory he wishes to leave behind in others. A musical legacy like this aligns with the notion of the deceased “continuing in memory” as mentioned by Holloway et al. (2013). The authors note the difference between this concept and “remembering” is the implication of a continuing relationship, which in this case is via a musical connection.

Instances where individuals have pre-selected music for a future event are dissimilar to the majority of memory and music interactions represented in this thesis. However their inclusion is warranted due to the process through which such an action takes place. What is occurring here is a projection of memory that is a result of a reflection on autobiographical experience. Through personal experience at funeral ceremonies comes an understanding of how the self can be represented through a number of facets, including music. It has been established that music can become personally meaningful due to what it represents to oneself, and how it may express a sense of personal identity to others (e.g. Frith, 1981). In pre-selecting music for one’s own funeral ceremony, the individual is choosing to communicate something about themselves to their audience. Within the funeral setting, this action takes on a special significance, such that it may represent a communication with loved ones after death.

In their aforementioned study, Adamson and Holloway reported that music “was a central element in the complex process of seeking, creating, and taking meaning . . .” (2012, p. 45). In this case, the authors were speaking of this occurring for those experiencing the ceremony, however, an individuals’ understanding of how the music aided their experience at funeral services could lead them to pre-select music for their own service, which they believe will aid their loved ones in these processes. Another example of pre-selected funeral music comes from Ian, who has held an affinity with Jimi Hendrix’s music from an early age:
[Speaking of “Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)” by Jimi Hendrix] This is my all-time favourite. I said to [my daughter], they can play this at my funeral ... He was so good. I mean, this was just genius. And I always congratulate myself because I was the one who told everyone about Jimi Hendrix at school. I was the one who found Jimi Hendrix, and no one else was listening to Jimi Hendrix and I told them all about Jimi Hendrix.

— Ian, age 60

Here, it would seem that this music is significant not only on the level of aural enjoyment, but also due to its significance in Ian’s social development and maturity in musical taste. Indeed, this anecdote could serve as a metaphor for Ian’s interaction with music over his lifetime: during his interview Ian described that he often felt at the forefront of new musical trends, especially during the 50s, 60s and 70s. Music has clearly been significant to Ian throughout his life; in choosing this Jimi Hendrix song, it seems he is selecting something that is the pinnacle of this aspect of his identity, and therefore, in the context of a funeral, the music portrays a substantive part of himself to others.

For Paul, however, there were other reasons for his choice of funeral music. The interview excerpt below recounts his selection process:

Paul: So this is a song called “New Grass” by Talk Talk and it’s one of those songs that I still don’t know what it means, I can barely hear the lyrics, all of the pieces of music don’t quite fit together even though it’s still quite melodic ... yeah, I mean that’s the sort of music, one of those two songs [the other song being “Weightlifting” by Trashcan Sinatras] I’d like to have played at my funeral, that would be quite nice.

I: ... for what reasons have you picked those songs?

Paul: Uh I have mused that ... I’ve thought about the fact that particularly that Talk Talk song “New Grass” is long, it’s beautiful and I don’t really know what it means, and
think that’s a little bit like life itself really, you just have to experience it, or something. I mean, that’s going to sound really tacky to write it down.

I: ... were you hoping for a certain reaction if that song is played at your funeral, were you thinking about what other people’s reactions might be?

Paul: It’s very egotistical isn’t it? Um, no, just a certain kind of stillness and a stillness and suspension maybe, for a longer period than one might ordinarily expect to listen to pop music or something like that, maybe that would be it, just want that feeling of stillness and suspension.

— Paul, age 42

The process of identifying music that is representative of oneself requires reflection upon the lifetime soundtrack and its parallel flow with the life course. For Paul, his musical choice seems to be a broad metaphor for his experience and life in general; he also considers the function of the song within the ceremony as part of his rationale. In all of the above examples, the music has been chosen in the first instance because it is significant for the individual and they envisage it retaining this importance throughout their lifetime. It has also been chosen to engender specific feelings in the listeners. In Paul’s case, the music is not necessarily meant to evoke an appreciation of his identity in others, but rather to create an affect associated with a sense of reverence between mourners.

**Marriage ceremonies**

Alongside funerals, the other major lifetime event in which music is used as a vehicle for emotion is the wedding celebration. In a similar way to funerals, wedding music, in Western countries at least, has over recent years become somewhat more personalised and secularised, rather than reflecting traditional music and customs of religious ceremonies. With the advent of portable technologies and digital access to a wide array of music, couples are able to choose music that represents and
celebrates their union. Anecdotally, one’s own wedding is purported to remain a significant reference for an individual throughout their lifetime, such that the music provides some kind of narrative trigger for both the bride, groom and their guests. However, verification of the enduring importance of such music is not evident in academic research. Within the present study, there were few references to “wedding music” despite the 18 of the 28 research participants being married at some point in their lives.

Although inquiry into the role of wedding music formed part of the interview schedule, only one participant (married once, now divorced) recounted a trigger for memories of her wedding:

My brother in law drove the wedding car to the church when I was getting married and he had playing in the car “You Are So Beautiful” by Joe Cocker, and every time I hear that it takes me back to that car every single time, I’m sitting back in the car in my wedding dress. So there’s that one, and on that same day we had “Can I Have This Dance for the Rest of My Life” by Anne Murray, same thing, taken back to dancing at my wedding.

— Robyn, age 52

These two songs are very strongly connected to this special experience for Robyn. Despite the marriage in this memory later ending in divorce, the participant retains positive memories of the event via song. Interestingly, some participants who were not yet married had already made some choices towards music they want played at their own wedding ceremony. This pattern is similar to the pre-selection of funeral music: individuals are empowered to create interaction between music, memory and emotion at events that are personally significant.

Unlike the process that participants used to choose music for their own funeral, which is representative of the self, music that is selected for a wedding more often draws similarities to the union that is being consecrated during the event. That is, the selected music is more likely to be a representation of the couple’s shared experienced with music that is significant for both individuals.
Leading on from our conversation about music for funerals, Paul went on to speak about his outlook on music for his own wedding:

And there’s a particular joyous piece of music called “You are the Best Thing” by an artist called Ray Lamontagne, and I thought that would be a brilliant walking down the aisle song with my partner, ‘cause we haven’t got married yet. So that’s a slightly more joyous thing I’ve thought, if there were a soundtrack to my wedding that would be the walking down the aisle tune ... It’s a very joyous piece of music, it’s almost too obvious so it’s ... good-spiritedly ironic, in its ceremonial use in my mind, like you know we’ve experienced something more stately but it’s really a party song.

— Paul, age 42

Paul has thought carefully about how this music might symbolize the emotionality of the ceremony, by capturing both the serious and celebratory sections of the day. It is also likely that Paul has his partner in mind, given the direct, positive lyrical message of the song. As with the funeral music choices, participants like Paul are projecting memories based on their past experiences. The emotional sentiment of music chosen for such an event is clearly also important.

As with Paul, who notes his choice is a “very joyous” one, Stella below describes the rationale behind her decision:

I would want the Eric Whitacre song “A Boy and a Girl” that I listened to [when I was travelling] in Africa. I want that! (Speaks louder so her partner in the next room might hear:) That’s all I know that I want, I want that at my wedding, I desperately want that. Whoever it may be. Anyone. Anyone who would. I would have that there. That would mean something to me. It’s like a little love song but not in a cheesy way. I think that would mean something to me. I know it does, that’s why I want it.

— Stella, age 22
Stella emphasises the part that music would play in adding meaning to this occasion, such that the music would communicate an emotional message to those in attendance, as well as fulfilling her own desires. In this instance, the music does not appear to be quite as significant to her partner, although the readiness with which Stella speaks of this pre-selected song infers that she has certainly thought about this choice before the interview. Returning to the trend cited earlier from Pillemer (1998), it is supported in the literature that females tend to put more emphasis on relationship memories than males. This idea could be extended to include projected memories, or intended memories. As such, it is possible that anticipated choices of wedding music and the value placed upon the memory to follow could be emphasised more by a female partner than a male counterpart.

Several similarities have been drawn between the pre-selection of funeral music and the planning of wedding music, however there is one significant difference between these two events which lies in the experience of the individual. Both events present an opportunity to create memories for those in attendance; such is the intent behind pre-selecting music that is meaningful to the individual. In the case of a wedding, the bride and/or groom choose music, and then are able to experience and subsequently memorialize the music, the activities and the emotions that accompanied it. They choose certain music because they purposefully wish to make associations between the event and the music: an association that will remain in their lifetime soundtrack. In the case of a funeral, however, the individual will not be present to memorialise the occasion. The music choice in this instance then offers a sense of conclusiveness, a last message, and a final chance to make a memory with significant others.

**Negative Emotional Associations**

When conducting interviews, I found that many participants held unique bonds between their memories and music, and as this study testifies, there are diverse ways in which individuals can perceive this relationship. As shown so far, there are range of emotions and expressions associated
with musical memories such that neither pleasant nor unpleasant memories dominate within the lifetime soundtrack. In discussing music and emotion during interviews, one respondent, Susan, went into great detail about music she had trouble listening to due to its associations with people in her past.

Some years ago, Susan’s marriage was breaking down. It was a tumultuous time for her, as she went through phases of weight-loss and emotional confusion over the state of her relationship with her husband. In the excerpt below she describes how certain music became caught up with the memories and emotion of that time:

Susan: I would actually like to undo a memory that I have with a certain album ... ‘Cause I love the album, but I played it a lot when my marriage was breaking up. And now when I play it I feel so horrible and sad inside that I um, I’d like to get rid of that, I’d like to undo that connection ‘cause I really love it. It’s the Foo Fighters album, they made it in honour of [Kurt Cobain]. Now Grohl and he were close, they were close friends and, he made this album, even one of the songs is called “In Your Honour” and it’s actually a double album, one CD is full of heavy, ‘cause Foo Fighters is heavy, but the other one’s all ballads. And I used to play the ballad one because I loved it, I discovered it around that era, but uh and I used to listen to it to try and relax but at the same time now it’s caught up with that pain, and sadness, so um, I’d love to be able to undo that ... I might work on it ‘cause I just love it.

I: Do you avoid putting it on?

Susan: Yes. Umm but maybe I should so I can, I don’t know, see some schools of thought say that you’ve gotta go through it to release it and other people say you don’t have to go through all that pain you can just do something and release it.

— Susan, age 52

59 Refers to the album In Your Honour by the Foo Fighters, released 2005.
Susan still desires to listen to the album, even though she knows it may trigger a range of possibly unpleasant feelings associated with this experience. Hence Susan feels torn between her aesthetic enjoyment of the album and her mnemonic associations.

During this time Susan engaged in what she termed an emotional, rather than physical affair, in which she became infatuated with a co-worker. In terminating that relationship while her marriage was still breaking down, Susan describes how she often used to listen to, or was exposed to music. Subsequently this music has become very strongly entangled in her memories and emotions for that time:

One song particularly through that era ... around the time our marriage was breaking down, I got a crush on somebody at work and that crush was just an emotional affair ... And had this enormous sadness oh and feeling, well I can’t do anything about it, and then having this emotional affair I had this huge amount of guilt ... So around that era I watched the movie *The Closer* with Julia Roberts, Jude Law, and Owen somebody, Clive Owen. And the song, in that, song in that movie is “The Blower’s Daughter” by Damien Rice. That song can reduce, did reduce me to sobs, it is just so poignant, and, and specific to what was going on at the time, that it, I remember, playing it over and over again. If you’ve got a bruise you push it. And I played it and I would be bawling my eyes out.

— Susan, age 52

Here Susan describes purposefully playing music that fuelled her emotional state. This is similar to the connection that another participant Vivian formed with a Cher song (pp. 143-4); however while Vivian related to music in a positive way, Susan is further endorsing her negative feelings by purposefully playing the music. She later describes another whole album, *Food in the Belly* by Xavier Rudd that she associates with this time in her life, but hasn’t listened to since. In the interview excerpt below, I attempted to find out what it was about the music that made Susan want to continue listening:
I: Did you take comfort in that music at all, Damien Rice and Xavier Rudd, was it music that ... reflected how you felt, was it comforting in any way?

Susan: It was more than that, it was, it was you know somebody says, you know, a mind fuck? It was, it was just like a total flip - it was a total, wow! There it is! Um, like, you can’t believe that it can be put into that song, and that, total mind fuck, I s’pose. Not only, but it’s really unusual for it to hit so many levels ... but I think it actually hit that soul part.

— Susan, age 52

It seems that Susan identified herself and her circumstances within the music: lyrically and aesthetically the music appeared to describe her in deeply personal ways. Susan’s perception of this leads her to examine the music repeatedly, and to indulge in the feeling that her situation could be so accurately explained through music. By playing and replaying the music, she was able to come to understand her emotions and also attain a form of empathy from the music. This situation aligns with the expansion of the theory created by Knobloch and Zillmann (2003) developed earlier in this chapter, which proposes that individuals are more receptive to “love-lamenting” music when they are experiencing synonymous emotions.

The activity of listening to sad music while in negative emotional states has been the topic of a number of studies. One such example comes from van den Tol and Edwards (2011) who established a variety of strategies and functions that lead to such musical choices. Among other explanations the authors list “memory retrieval” as a reason for choosing to listen to sad music whilst sad – this is in order for the listener to be reminded of certain emotional events (pp. 12-13). This could be likened to the kind of memory rehearsal that Susan was demonstrating. While this claim is supported by interview data presented in this study, it is does not explain the reason for listening to music while presently sad. Another more likely reason given by van den Tol and Edwards is that the chosen music represented an affective similarity (musically or lyrically) to the individual’s
emotional state. This is quite likely what is happening in the case of Susan, in her own words she explains:

You dwell on it, again it’s like pressing the bruise, and it actually helps you, it may not be that. That may be the negative way of saying [it], the other way of saying it is, that piece of music is reflecting how I feel inside, therefore I want to look at it.

— Susan, age 52

This admission from Susan adds the aspect of ego, and also the implication of self-assessment to the situation. Being able to recognise and come to terms with emotions due to their articulation in song means that Susan was able to reflect on herself whilst listening to the music. The music mentioned in her narratives comprises a therapeutic element such that Susan used the music to reflect upon her experience and validate her emotional state. This self-administered treatment enables a process of emotional and mental healing; while Susan may not have been consciously aware of this element, her desire to repeatedly listen to the music is potentially driven by a need to process her feelings in various ways.

Within previous literature from music psychology and music sociology, it has been well-documented that music is commonly used to enhance or regulate mood (e.g. De Nora, 2000; Hargreaves & North, 1999; Sloboda, 2005). In a study that contrasted musical choices of individuals with depression with those without depression, Wilhelm, Gillis, Schubert and Whittle (2013) found that while mentally healthy people chose music for stimulation, motivation and energy, those who were depressed tended to select music to express or reflect their emotive state. In this case study, Susan selected her listening material not only based on its emotional match with her mood, but also because of its poetic reflection of her situation. Susan has identified a number of artists, songs and albums that she has associated with the drawn out experience of her divorce. All of this music is now part of her lifetime soundtrack, serving not only to aid the perception of her identity in the past, but also to construct her sense of self in the present.
The activity observed in Susan’s narrative also suggests an alternative process for the interaction of music, emotion and memory that contrasts with those described earlier in this chapter. As visualised in Figure 6.3, rather than music or memory acting as the primary trigger, the factor of affect or emotion is the element that is first perceived by an individual. This leads to the use of music to engage with, or indeed, alter a feeling or mood such that memory is triggered by the music.

Arguably, music and memory are interchangeable in this process, given the close relationship between all three factors. Rather than advocating the three processes of memory discussed in this chapter as steadfast rules of engagement, their mention is intended to underscore an awareness of the varying paths to understanding the processes occurring between music, memory and emotionality.

**Purposeful Emotional Use of Music**

Participants often mentioned their use of music to engage directly with their emotions, aligning with the aforementioned literature that establishes the capacity of music to enable such activity. In terms of the current study, the involvement of memory adds another layer to this process: in interviews participants were asked to describe any occasions in which they had used music in times of need; the discussion with Susan, above, highlights the kind of responses to this query. Further to this, participants were asked if they knew of music that they “re-visited” as a result of such instances, such that it becomes something of a coping mechanism. A question of this type is one that requires a little more thinking time to reflect on the past, and so within the context of the interview, some
participants had difficulty coming to a response. Others came to answer the question through narrative, such as Paul, below:

> I remember after some, you know, dreadful argument with my partner, going for a drive and you know feeling so angry that I could have crashed the car or if I was a different kind of person, got hammered drunk or done something like that. But instead, played this particular piece of music on the car stereo that I found soothing, and [it] was almost like being talked down by a sort of hostage negotiator. It felt like a very skilled piece of meditation that was being brought upon me. It was a song called “Weightlifting” by the Trashcan Sinatras and the chorus goes “you will feel a great weight lifting” and I, you know, I’ve used that song as a balm or a salve in my life, you know I’m feeling bloody terrible I’m going to put that song on. And I still don’t really know what the song means, um, but I’m going to listen to that and it’s going to lift me out of my emotional funk.

— Paul, age 42

This excerpt exemplifies a reflexive use of music, where Paul has sought out music in order to relive the state that this music may bring upon him. Interestingly, Paul notes that the meaning of the song isn’t clear to him, yet he feels like he is being “talked” out of his emotional state. This suggests that aesthetic aspects of the music are considered almost more instructional than any direct communication expressed by the lyrics. This is akin to “voluntary remembering” as described in Chapter 2; however, in this case it is not the memory itself the listener is after (one may not want to recall times of tension) but the feeling invoked when the music is playing. It is also significant that experience as a whole acts as a memory directive, as described by Alea and Bluck (2003) and Pillemer (1998, 2003) (see Chapter 2). When Paul feels a certain attitude or mood is present, he remembers the action he took on previous occasions (listening to “Weightlifting”) and is able to take positive action. The memory of the original experience is recalled for directive purposes in the
present, much in the way that semantic memory, such as factual information for people, places or concepts, is used in the everyday.

Purposeful use of music was also described by some participants in the form of cravings or habits. As supported by DeNora (2000), the use of music in routine ways creates a structure that, when absent, can leave a marked hole in our rituals and routines. In the following narrative, Jeremy describes his emotional need for certain music:

... ‘cause a lot of the music that I get more enjoyment out of isn’t [enjoyed by] a lot of people that are my close friends and [my wife] and people, they just don’t like it, so it’s probably not appropriate for me to play it all the time around other people. But I get a craving for aggressive music and I actually feel more relaxed once I actually get to listen to it. I think that’s the biggest emotional connection I have, is if I’m not getting the music that I like, it’s like a craving ... I feel sometimes that I have to come home and I have to put on something that I’m gonna really enjoy because a lot of the people that surround me aren’t into the same sort of music.

— Jeremy age, 36

Jeremy sees his favourite music as a comfort that he feels he is only allowed to enjoy once in a while. In some ways, his experience of it as an occasional interlude in his life validates his preference for music that is typically unacceptable in his social circles, with the drip-feed of such music only fuelling the craving. Jeremy describes this craving as his only emotional connection with music: his desire to listen to heavy music is likely based within his memories of the way that music has made him feel, or the past experiences that the music accompanies.

In a similar way, Ron also identifies with the need to be satiated by his favourite music:

It can be anytime of the day or night I’ll put on a record because I want to hear that. I haven’t heard it for a while. Basically it’s a time thing. It’s like, starving to death, I’ve gotta
eat, and so I get to a stage where [if] I haven’t listened to my sort of music for a long time
I’ve gotta go and do it.

— Ron, age 59

Ron notes the temporal measures that allow or disallow him access to music, similar to the way in
which Jeremy describes his ability to only hear his favoured music in certain time intervals. The
language used by both participants to describe their need for listening is comparable to basic human
needs, such as eating and sleeping. They portray their desire as something on which their survival
depends, and in some ways, perhaps they are correct. With purposeful listening, individuals may
gain aesthetic or spiritual fulfilment. Neither Jeremy nor Ron claimed to have any great emotional
connection with music in their interviews; however, this need for music that they express suggests a
more nuanced way of being affected by music, such that the memory of engaging with certain music
provides the rationale for re-experiencing it as often as possible.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the emotional connections between music and memory through the
memory narratives of research participants. Understudied within the previous music and memory
literature, the element of emotion has been shown to exist in complex forms, such that the term
“affect” is a more appropriate description of the feelings that musical memories can evoke. The
processes through which emotion, memory and music interact as outlined in this chapter serve to
highlight the plurality of emotion within the lifetime soundtrack; a range of nuanced atmospheres
and feelings have been shown to be integrated into musically triggered memories. Furthermore, the
presence of emotion was shown to influence the ways in which participants noticed or were
invested in music; this was especially evident in times of heartache, where the lyrical and aesthetic
messages of songs became more important to individuals. Through the passing of time it was shown
that affect becomes disconnected with the original cause, such that emotion, memory and music
interact in a fluid network, and further, that music and emotion tend to be perceived equally important by individuals.

Participants’ descriptions of emotional musical memories emphasised the importance of people within the human experience, underscoring findings from Chapter 5. Music plays an important role within events where the others or the self are celebrated through musical representations of their identity. Such occasions are memorialised through the sharing of music which can come to signify personal meaning in an individual’s lifetime soundtrack. The ways in which individuals gather meaning from music, and the capacity for music to embody memory and emotion warrants special consideration; in-depth discussion of this topic is carried out in the following chapter, in which music elements are examined for their ability to encapsulate memory.
MUSIC AS A MEMORY ARCHIVE

The wide age range of interview participants in this study confirms that people of all ages connect with music, and further, that they frequently connect music to their memories. The individuality of life experience and musical encounters within those experiences has been evidenced through the broad variety of interview narratives exemplified in the last few chapters. The uniqueness of personal narratives is due in the first instance to the nature of autobiographical memory, where experience is perceived through the lens of personal contexts. The second factor that individualises musical memories is the varying ways in which participants identify and engage with music as meaningful. This chapter will explore how distinctive interactions with music can affect its incorporation within memory. Four key aspects: sound, lyrics, physical embodiment, and technology guide discussions of the range of ways in which participants connected with music and moreover, how this interfaced with autobiographical memories.

To conceptualise the relationship between memory and these elements of music experience, the idea of the “archive” is applied to both components. In a literal sense, an archive refers to a place, physical or digital, where documents and records are stored (Featherstone, 2006). The concept has also been commonly used as a metaphor for memory within many disciplines (Brockmeier, 2010), such that memory is a proverbial storehouse of information, especially that which is biographical. The description of memory as an archive, however, is somewhat problematic. As Brockmeier (2010) explains, the emergence of memory studies as a legitimate field of inquiry challenged traditional ways of thinking about memory from the 1990s onwards. This is commonly referred to as the “memory crisis”, a time in which psychological, cultural and sociological research demonstrated the fallibility and malleability of memory in its individual and collective forms, thereby refuting the concept of memory as an impervious cache of information. In the context of my
research, I have described the nature of autobiographical memory as fallible, and as such, I concede that memory, as a singular concept, is not an effective archive. This chapter seeks to establish a rationale for the effectiveness of music as a medium for memory storage – an archive for the archive. By identifying the principal ways in which participants interacted with music on a mnemonic level, it is suggested that elements of music itself act as reservoirs for memory. The perceived biographical resonances within music are at the core of the interface between memory and music; the sources of these connections will be explored in the following analysis.

**Memory and Music: Fallibility versus Fidelity**

The foundation for this chapter’s postulation on music’s mnemonic facility lies in the juxtaposition of qualities inherent in both memory and recorded music. As discussed in Chapter 2, autobiographical memory does not function as a moment-to-moment record of our experiences; unlike recording technology such as photographs or film, memory rehearsal does not replicate experiences in accurate ways. Rather, as Pillemer (1998) explains, memory for the self is reconstructed upon each recollection, incorporating or omitting details as dictated by the circumstances of the rehearsal. Memory is also extremely fallible: as accounts from psychologists Schacter (2001), and Loftus (1975, 2005) demonstrate, memory quickly becomes inconsistent over time, and is easily influenced by the views and recollections of others. On the other hand, recorded music is able to replicated, retaining certain qualities over time; although there are limitations to this action, the contrast between music and memory in this regard deserves further investigation.

A number of authors have attempted to rationalise the common integration of memory and music. In a study that compared the temporal distribution of memories for books, movies, and music, Janssen, Chessa and Murre (2007) found that favourite records prevailed over other mediums as reminiscent of certain lifetime periods. While this is also a reflection on the development of cultural taste and temporal memory trends, the authors suggest that music is most effective because it is re-experienced more frequently in later life. In the context of this research, the findings
from Janssen et al. infers that memory rehearsal takes place when salient music is replayed, thereby reinforcing the association. While this activity is a likely contributor to the relationship between memory and music, I suggest that there is a deeper reason for their integration over a lifetime.

Certainly, this concept has been touched upon by other scholars. In her analysis of music in everyday life (2000), DeNora does not dwell on the prospect of memory; however, she does make an important point which contributes to an understanding of its interplay with memory. DeNora makes the comment that memory is indexed by music, such that music becomes a reference source for personal experience. This comment can be clearly seen as a reference to the concept of the archive, where information is traditionally classified or indexed. Further to this she notes the ability for music to be replayed “verbatim”, further facilitating the relationship between memory and music. In this way, recorded music, which is ostensibly able to be replicated without a major loss of fidelity, can be contrasted with the imperfect nature of autobiographical memory. The idea that recorded music is more easily and accurately reproduced than memory has also been suggested by Keightley and Pickering (2006), who note the complementary qualities of replication between memory and music. While this contrast is ostensibly correct, further deliberation proves the idea is somewhat problematic. In modern times, formats such as compact discs and digital mp3 files are easily replayed and duplicated; however, the same cannot be said for older formats. The original technology through which a recording was heard influences the way music is memorialised. As such, music that was originally heard on a vinyl record, and subsequently heard on a compact disc, will not necessarily engender the same mnemonic trigger. The figurative loophole in this theory suggests that a more focussed approach is needed to clearly conceptualise the relationship between memory and music.

With reflection upon the data collected for the current research, I assert that music’s ability to act as a reliable cache for the fallible record of memory is the overarching reason for their frequent integration, however I argue that this theory alone does not sufficiently explain the connection between memory and music, particularly, the ability for music to engender aspects of
personal experience. Whereas the theory of replication as proposed by DeNora and Keightley and Pickering ostensibly involves the technical reproduction of music, I would substitute that the musical elements, rather than the aesthetic experience is the effecting factor of reproduction. This means that while playback technology still influences the memorialisation of music, properties of melody, harmony, timbre and so on, which can be played and re-played with fidelity, play a role in capturing the essence of human experience. In addition, I propose that physical elements of musical engagement can affect the integration of music and memory through processes of entrainment. Through reference to research participants’ narratives, I will demonstrate that elements within and external to music itself facilitate the ability for music to act as an effective archive for memory.

**Lyrics and Language**

Participants in this research identified a diversity of musical genres that they felt were part of their lifetime soundtrack. From this plethora of styles, instrumentation, timbres, and so on, it would be impossible to produce detailed accounts of how each genre interacts exclusively with memory. Around two-thirds of my research participants spoke primarily about popular music, and so discussion of musical elements that are particularly prevalent in styles under this umbrella term dominate some sections of this chapter. It should be noted that it is not the intention of the thesis to suggest that popular music interacts more or less effectively with memory than other genres of music, although it interacted more frequently with memory for research participants in this study. Much of the music referred to in interviews could also be described as vocal music\(^60\) – that is, containing lyrics rather than being purely instrumental. This therefore warrants an examination of lyrics where they were mentioned by participants in terms of the meaning placed on them by individuals. Although content analysis is a typical method of understanding fans’ attraction to lyrics, the links between lyrics and fandom argued in previous research are tenuous, as noted by Frith

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\(^60\) Of course, not all vocal music uses identifiable words (e.g. scat, doo wop, scream core metal), nor is it necessarily in a language comprehensible to the listener. However, due to the demographic of native English speakers in this study, the majority of vocal music contained lyrics in the English language.
(1989). I would draw a distinction between the meaning of lyrical content in a more literal sense for music fans as a collective and the present examination of autobiographical resonance that certain music provides for individuals in my research.

Of all the potential musical elements, the poetic form of communication presented by lyrical content appears to provide the most direct connection to aspects of self-identity and autobiographical memory through the use of (ostensibly) comprehensible language. For some participants, lyrics created a narrative that resonated in some ways with their own personal experiences. As mentioned in previous chapters, participant Angela emphasised the significance of the artist Shirley Bassey in her lifetime soundtrack:

> Whenever I need to get motivated or if I’m feeling sad - Shirley Bassey - because that was the music I listened to when my ex-husband left you know all the ‘I tell myself da da da da!’ that really sort of angry, strong, pull yourself together and just get on with it ... I just love Shirley Bassey and I play her CD incessantly.

— Angela, age 43

For Angela, listening to Shirley Bassey originally started to take on specific meaning during her marriage breakup. Similarly to participant Vivian (discussed in Chapter 6, pp. 143-4), Angela looked to draw upon the work of a female artist who features discourses of strength and fortitude in her music, seeking to find these qualities within herself during times of emotional distress. She goes on to speak about this further in the interview, relating how she returns to Shirley Bassey to release feelings of frustration or anger, but also plays this music in celebration. The lyrics that Angela speaks of do not reflect her own autobiographical circumstance; they do, however, resonate with her life experiences in a way that allows her to continually revisit this music, gaining similar satiety each time.

An older participant, Bea (age 81), was very attached to music, connecting to it on a number of levels. Performing as a singer in her younger years, she seemed particularly aware of lyrics and
their meaning. Within her richly detailed soundtrack, she described strong biographical bonds with certain songs. Recall, for example, the extract from her interview cited previously in Chapter 6 (p. x), who described the lyrics to her favourite song, “What a Wonderful World”, as depicting her life. Bea became outwardly emotional in recounting songs that she felt a special relationship with. In the way she narrated the songs and their related stories, it was clear that lyrically, they represented for her much more than a single episode, but rather connected her to loved ones who had passed on, her family, and her collective life experience.

As documented by DeNora (2000), at times when we do not have words as subtle or appropriate as needed, music – and moreover, the lyrical message within - is sometimes the most effective substitute. In his 1987 article, *Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music*, Simon Frith notes that one of music’s key uses in society is as a link between public and private emotional lives (p. 141). He states here, as is also identified by Horton (1957/1990), that the reason the majority of popular music is about love and romantic encounters is to enable such emotions to be expressed in such a way that is not possible in ordinary speech. These ideas are attuned to the style with which Bea and Angela interact with certain music, where they feel that personal feelings are expressed in affective ways by the lyrics.

Lyrics can also resonate biographically with individuals through their role in shaping self-identity and social attitudes, especially in adolescence. Although this is not necessarily purposeful, the influence one may take from lyrics can be recognised in self-reflection, as Jeremy demonstrated:

> When I was a teenager and in I s’pose early 20s it was a lot to do with lyrics and messages, that’s what really, really appealed to me about punk rock was most of the people playing the music were suburban kids my age. And sort of, their lyrics had to do with sort of what was going on in my life ... and some of them got a bit more political. I sort of think music had a lot to do, that sort of music, had a lot to do with shaping sort of, what I thought were good values as well ...
For Jeremy this connection went beyond a representation of his individual circumstances and, moreover, reflected his identity and sense of belonging within a wider community. Jeremy goes on to say that he no longer reads as much into lyrics as he once did, suggesting that he currently uses music in different ways than he did in his youth (cf. Bennett, 2013; Frith, 1987). The participants above demonstrated the ability for lyrics not only to be perceived as speaking to them in direct and empathetic ways, but also that lyrics can be interpreted as metaphors for broader episodes within a lifetime.

**Between Sound and Lyrics**

While lyrics can be a direct source of autobiographical resonance, it was rare for research participants to refer only to lyrics as their primary way of connecting with music. More commonly, the message of lyrics was mentioned in combination with prominent musical elements. Indeed, factors such as melody, harmony and rhythm aided the perception of the music as significant or autobiographically resonant:

... Or if the song’s really good, got a really good beat, the lyrics don’t mean a thing, but if it’s got it all that makes it a better song. I’ve never liked the song just because of the lyrics - then it’s not a good song. So lyrics would probably be the least important. But [they] do make a song whether it’s good or it’s great.

— Debra, age 54

The balance of musical elements was important to participants, such that the holistic “sound” of music communicated almost as much as the lyrics. Ian, below, describes his enduring appreciation for the music of Stevie Wonder:

“Living for the City” ... this is one of my favourites here. When this came out I thought, what a song! It’s got that same sort of thing where he’s not really playing, the notes sort of merge,
yeah. Where’s that coming from! But the words, and the energy, I love it, I love it when they’ve got this energy and they’re really singing - they’re desperate. This is meaningful. He means every word of it.

— Ian, age 60

In our interview, Ian went on to explain why he identified so strongly with this song: lyrically he identified with the descriptions of the struggling working class as the subject of the song; aesthetically, he felt the music rising up to match the desperation of the lyrical message. Ian feels that the song depicts part of his life experience and it seems that he finds empathy amongst the combination of lyrics and music.

Aesthetic Connection: Timbre and Sound

That participants could relate to the direct communication afforded by comprehensible lyrics is not surprising, given that music is often used as a tool for self-expression. As such, it is easy to see how this element aids the encapsulation of memory within music, especially where the accompanying music supports the lyrical message, such as in Ian’s narrative, above. Somewhat more intriguing was the tendency for participants to refer to the “sound” of music as the primary source of their musical engagement. Human attraction to music is a topic that has gained much attention in academia, especially in regards to the development of music throughout human evolution (cf. Cross, 2001, 2005; Mithen, 2005). Indeed, the mystery of attraction to musical sound goes beyond evolution and into the realms of cognitive science: neurologists Jaak Panksepp and Günther Bernatzky note that music possesses an affective power that surpasses spoken language:

. . . the exquisite sensitivity of our species to emotional sounds may be related to the survival benefits that subtle emotional communications had for us during our evolutionary history . . .

. . . We can rapidly convey levels of love, devotion and empathy through music that would be hard to achieve with any other mode of communication . . . (2002 p. 136).
Just as emotive lyrics can surpass the subtleties of spoken language, so too can the sound of music connect with humans in complex and meaningful ways. Some research participants, such as Dennis below, expressed that they valued the sound of music more than the lyrical content:

... The music’s a bit too much about what they’re saying now, whereas I like music ... to sound good. I don’t even know the lyrics half the time, except for the main chorus - you’d pick that up - but the rest of it I really wouldn’t have a clue, because I like the sound of it.

— Dennis, age 61

This sentiment, which is echoed by participants cited throughout this chapter, suggests that the aesthetic elements of music, rather than merely the lyrical content, provide the memory trigger for listeners. Whilst the importance of lyrics to individuals is not refuted, musical elements that communicate with the listener in tandem with language are the driving forces behind music’s connection with memory.

When participants’ referred to “sound”, much of the time they were referring to the timbre and tone of either individual instruments or vocals, or the overall perception of the music as characterised by a combination of these. Participants’ discussion of sound was dominated by reference to vocal tone, even for participants who didn’t necessarily identify with lyrics of particular genres, the timbre of the human voice prevailed as an aspect of participants’ connection with music:

My favourite stuff to listen to is either soul or gospel kind of stuff or choral music. I think I like black music, pretty much is what I like, black people singing. I like that because, I, it’s really emotional. Or I don’t even know, it’s soulful or something, it has like substance to it. I really like listening to the yearning of somebody else in music.

— Stella, age 22

What Stella’s description of vocal magnetism suggests is that the communication of any emotion associated with the lyrical content forms a significant part of a participant’s connection with lyrics.
Although it was not specifically mentioned by participants such as Bea, Angela or Jeremy (above) when they described their bond with certain lyrics, theories of music semiotics purport that communication between creator and receiver must contain established motifs of transmission, such that, in this case, vocal delivery should match the sentiment of the lyrics (cf. Chandler, 2002; Tarasti, 2002).

The intangibility of musical sound is often thought of as ineffable: difficult to describe in lay-terms, the musical lexicon also struggles to accurately capture what it is that we find attractive about sound. In discussing the affect that music can have on individuals, DeChaine describes how perceptions of music or lyrics differ:

Whereas linguistic signification can undoubtedly provoke emotions and meaning-full experiences, these appear to come by way of reflective cognition. One thinks language into meaning and feeling. Sound, by contrast, seems to find a path that traverses or short-circuits conscious reflection. . . . Sound feels more deeply, or at least more immediately, than language (2002, pp. 90-91, emphasis in original).

I would expand on this to say that the immediacy of music aesthetics as described by DeChaine can contribute to its place in memory. As this section explores, “sound” was often described by research participants as encapsulating temporal periods of their life, representing collections of experience. A direct example comes from the interview with Ian:

Buddy Holly actually sums up that whole era for me. His voice ... that sort of pre-Beatles era type thing you know ... ‘cause we were the poor relations so we lived in Palmerston North [New Zealand] ... out where Hook’s Bay was, where all our Italian relations was, was about a hundred miles away and whenever they used to have the Italian parties and that sort of thing they would come and pick us up and we would go there. It was incredible ... and there were a lot of boys ... with the little skinny ties and the swish-back and stove pipes and that sort of thing.
The thought of Buddy Holly’s music immediately leads to Ian reminiscing about family, friends and especially the fashion of the time that differentiated these parties from any others. This suggests a number of experiences become collectively triggered through the music, specifically the vocal timbre of Buddy Holly. As such, Ian’s recollection here is an example of a cloud memory.

Descriptions of emotional reaction to vocal timbres were prevalent among participants. Below, Susan recalls how her obsession with David Cassidy hinged on his vocals, above any other aspect of his performance:

His eyes particularly had me spellbound, he had really pretty eyes, pretty teeth, long hair and um, but his song, his voice had um, a gorgeous softness and huskiness to it, that just used to make my heart melt.

— Susan, age 52

In narratives such as Susan’s, we can begin to see how musical elements can embody affect; the reaction to the vocal that Susan describes via metaphor could not be characterised by typical emotive descriptors because it is more of a nuanced feeling that is evoked through the vocal timbre.

Another participant, Bea, related a similar opinion:

I adore Barbara Streisand, I think she’s got the most glorious voice, and she can reduce me to tears with um, just the beauty of her voice.

— Bea, age 81

Just as with Susan, the timbre of the vocal tone speaks directly to the individual, invoking a kind of affect that is particularly meaningful. The attraction to the sound of the human voice as a musical element could be explained partly through biology, as a reference to infantile recognition and response to parental timbres. A topic of considerable coverage, leading researchers such as Sandra E. Trehub (2003, 2006) have studied the various musical interactions between mothers and babies,
and found that infants show sustained attention to their mother’s singing, with shorter attention given to her speaking voice. Other investigators such as Fernald (1989), Malloch and Trevarthen (2009) and Papousek and Papousek (as cited in Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009) have found that Infant-Directed Speech (IDS) uses exaggerated features of adult language, such as prosody, rhythm and vowel sounds, and as such this speech becomes quite musical. The timbre and range of the vocalising is paramount; the quality of a mother’s tone and inference of emotion is essentially what is attractive about her singing – not what she is saying. Using such revelations as a springboard, we could deduce that attraction to certain vocal timbres is instinctual, especially in the form of song.

Questions relating to maternal singing did not form part of the interview schedule for this study; however, in discussing childhood or their own children, it was evident that from a young age such musical interactions can remain entrenched in memory. Indeed, as explored in Chapter 5, family members play a significant role in the formation of an individual’s lifetime soundtrack.

For the children, I always sang the little song called “Tammy” but I sang it as a lullaby, and I would put their name in rather than Tammy, so therefore that’s always meant a great deal to me.

— Bea, age 81

For Bea, her own form of maternal singing brings back fond memories of family life, passing on a tradition that she had perhaps received in her own infancy. Although many studies focus on maternal singing, it has not shown whether singing from fathers would have a dissimilar effect. A study by O’Neill, Trainor and Trehub (2001) found that while paternal singing differed in minor ways to maternal singing, it still captured infants’ attention in a similar fashion. An example of paternal singing was given by 82 year old participant Esther while recalling her early musical experiences:

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Unknown song

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One of my earliest memories ... was when I was little because my father used to sing me to sleep. And one of the lovely things that comes back to me always, is the song that he used to sing to me, and quite often I find myself singing it now ... it’s called [sings] “Dear Little Laughing Babe of Mine”\(^{62}\). Oh, I get a bit emotional, and then he would sing while putting me to sleep, so you know it’s very much a part of my first experience of music and also my association with my father.

— Esther, age 82

As with Bea, this participant finds the recollection of close family to be a joyful one. Her close association between the lullaby and her father reaffirms the importance of family relations in the creation of the lifetime soundtrack, as well as outlining the implications of musical communication between parent and infant. Admittedly, there is a substantial gap between an infant’s interpretation of parental singing and an adult’s perception of vocal music. Despite this, the point remains that the attraction to singing in both life stages could be due to the interpretation of singing as non-verbal, i.e. as timbre and melody, but not necessarily as language, as was demonstrated by participants Susan and Bea (p. 181). This suggests biological reasons for the incorporation of vocal music into the lifetime soundtrack. As such, the reception of timbre can be seen as occupying a deep-seated place within musical memories, such that the aesthetic sound of music remains an important feature of music throughout the lifetime.

### Listening Technology

The concept of “sound” as contributing to the memorialisation of music also extends to playback technologies. The medium through which participants experienced recorded music that became part of their lifetime soundtrack is an aspect of listenership that should not be overlooked. Collected memory narratives are infused with details of listening technologies, representing the aural

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\(^{62}\) Unknown song
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack

environment with which the participant was engaging. Technologies of recorded music in the 20th century developed quickly, with each subsequent format increasing the fidelity of recorded sound. The perception of sound both at the time of the musical experience and as it is re-created within recalled memory is affected by the playback technology originally present. Whereas the elements of music such as lyrics and timbre can engender a feeling of biographical or mnemonic resonances in the listener, it is the playback technology that captures this memory and allows the connection to endure over time.

In a study of memory in a Dutch music poll, van Dijck asserted that:

Incontrovertibly, the materiality of recorded music influences the process of remembering. . . . Music listened to from live radio, records, cassette tapes, or mp3 players has a different emotion attached to it . . . . Hearing a familiar song on the radio constitutes a different memory experience than playing that very song from one’s own collection . . . (2006, p. 366).

Van Dijck’s observation of the effect of listening devices on memory was reflected in my research participants’ narratives, where recording and playback technologies embodied a significant role in the reconstruction of musical memories. In the form of recalled memories, these contexts are what I am calling ‘situational receiving’ – instances of music/memory association in which the way the listener heard the music forms an integral part of the recalled sound. The participants’ age range in this study led to narratives constructed around various forms of technology, including wax cylinders and transistor radios through to magnetic tapes, laser discs and finally mp3 players, all of which have evidently played a role in shaping the lifetime soundtracks of the participants.

Although many instances of listening technology embedded in memory narratives occur throughout the thesis, this section focuses on several prime examples of the potential affects that different listening circumstances can have on memory. One participant, Henry, described his childhood household as awash with various styles of classical music. With vinyl records being the modern playback device of the era, Henry explains how his recollection of the “Concerto
Symphonique” by a composer of the Romantic period, Henry Litolff, has been affected by his original experience:

And even when I hear that music played today, I always expect a big long pause where I would be going to turn the record over. I just, I can’t blank out that association, because I was so used to it, and that’s 60 odd years ago.

— Henry, age 70

Assumedly, Henry had many encounters with this one record, such that the break in the music and the physical activity of arising to overturn the disc is firmly entrenched in memory. This kind of affect changes the way Henry perceives the music in the long term, and further underscores the individuality of the lifetime soundtrack – this experience combined with the emotional and literal associations Henry has for this piece are likely to be unique to him.

Research participant Paul narrated another account involving the affect of vinyl records:

I recently found a record player, 20 bucks, it’s pretty bad, but one of the first records … one of the most important records that was important for me to get was Bridge Over Troubled Water [by Simon and Garfunkel] because even as I recall that album, I recall the tape that I made of that album that I taped off … the LP which had scratches and clicks and stuff, it had skips at certain moments in the songs so even now when I listen to those songs I’m expecting those clicks to still be there.

— Paul, age 42

In this anecdote a mix of technologies can be seem as influential in Paul’s memorialisation of this collective experience. Whilst he speaks in the first instance of the cassette tape as the purveyor of the record’s inconsistency, the original circumstance of listening to the vinyl record prior to making the recording is at the heart of the recollection. Further to this, the clicks and crackles of the record were transferred onto a different medium, thereby altering their fidelity. Paul’s perception of the
album is mixed between what he originally heard on the vinyl record and its replication on cassette tape, both of which have informed his current listening expectations for that particular music.

Also arising from Paul’s narrative is the notion of “technostalgia”, a term devised by van Dijck (2006) to describe a desire to recreate original sounds and atmospheres using the technology of the corresponding era. Reflecting her stance on the role of technology in reminiscing, stated above, van Dijck goes on to describe technostalgia as an extended form of using music to reinforce memory, stating that “people who use recorded music as a vehicle for memories often yearn for more than mere retro appeal: They want these apparatuses to re-enact their cherished experience of listening” (p. 364, capitalisation in original). Indeed, Paul stated that it was important that he purchased particular records to re-experience on his newly acquired record player, such that he could try to recreate his original experience with as much authenticity as possible.

The developments in listening technology over the past century are influential not only in the aesthetics of reminiscing, but also in the development of listening habits that can additionally influence the lifetime soundtrack. Using technology to evoke a more authentic memory experience is the most accurate way of re-producing an atmosphere or affect associated between memory and music. It is acknowledged, however, that more generally, the original listening context and the aesthetic it adds to listeners’ perceptions is harder to replicate with older technologies. Undoubtedly, music that was originally heard through lower-fidelity mediums such as vinyl or cassette tape will sound different when played through modern sound systems, and as such, it may not engender the same listening aesthetic that accompanied a memory. Nonetheless, music played through more recent formats still has the capacity to trigger memory through the static quality of musical elements. Furthermore, it is through the increase in intelligent technology that music once issued in older formats is able to be reissued, further enabling access to memory. In this way, listening technology can be seen to further enhance music’s ability to act as an archive.
**Technology development and effects on memory**

An overview of participants’ engagement with music within this research revealed that some older individuals had a more limited access to recorded music and therefore had fewer memorialised listening experiences than the younger cohort. Although in some ways this inhibited the lifetime soundtrack, it was found that this limitation actually emphasised musical experience as a rarity and a treat, fostering a sense of importance. This suggests that access to technology may affect the frequency and effectiveness of music to embody details of memory. A saturation of music may invoke less meaningful connections, whereas a more limited engagement such as that experienced by older participants may place a greater emphasis on the presence of music within memory. In describing his musical engagement through childhood, Ian explained his eagerness for the new music of the day, which was given limited airtime:

> There was only one radio station so everything was fairly eclectic, and you would have, so like on a Sunday there was the two hour request session and we would come home from church and then ... the first half hour was sort of like “Georgia on my Mind” and that sort of thing and then the second thing was, it’d go through all of these cowboy ones like Hank Williams, and then for about the last half hour you might hear the Beatles or something, or you know, Elvis Presley or Buddy Holly or something like that. So you used to have to hang out, you know...

—Ian, age 60

The accentuation of waiting to hear certain music contrasts with the pervasiveness of music in modern life. Circumstances of music exposure described by younger participants could best be termed as an over-saturation of culture. Music, as Kassabian (2008, 2013) notes, is everywhere, accessible in the modern world at any time, in many locations, exacerbated by the prevalence of personal stereos and mp3 players. Its availability is no longer restricted to those who can afford it,

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with illegal downloading of music giving people access to an enormous amount of music on a world-
wide scale. While there are benefits for the individual (and severe drawbacks for the industry), such
a surfeit of music can influence the development of the lifetime soundtrack. When asked to describe
their favourite music in terms of artists, albums or genres, younger participants generally named
artists or genres, with several stating they don’t listen to albums – they keep their iPod on “shuffle”,
listening to a mix of songs randomly selected from a multitude of styles and performers:

[I] probably [don’t make those kinds of associations]. I think that’s partly because my iPod
has destroyed that, because for a long time I just played random music on it, it would just go
on shuffle, I wouldn’t listen to whole albums or anything, I stopped listening to whole
albums when I was like 15.

— Harry, age 24

Harry’s outline of his listening habits suggests that music may be integrated with memory in
different ways through the influence of technology and listening trends. This also suggests that
lifetime soundtracks for older and younger people may accompany memories or groups of memories
in diverse ways. For example, older individuals in this study at times emphasised the importance of
certain songs in longitudinal contexts: this is likely the result of the fashion of the release of “singles”
for radio play as well as individual sale, i.e. 45RPM vinyls. While in more modern times the music
market still thrives on the use of singles for radio play, and to lesser extent commercial sales, the
pervasiveness of music and the saturation of artists mean that individual songs take on a decreased
meaning. This trend is similarly observed with albums: the now out-dated playback technologies of
vinyl and cassette tape induced the habit of listening to whole albums in a linear fashion. In contrast,
the ability for CD and mp3 players to “skip” and “shuffle” songs precludes a more chaotic and
indiscriminate listening style, like that described by Angela, above. While these trends may influence
the development and content of the lifetime soundtrack, their implication towards music’s archival
capacity may only be evidenced in the ways that the younger individuals in this study are able to interact with their memories in older life.

Physicality and Entrainment

Music philosopher John Blacking (1995) suggests that the mental and physical appeals of music are highly integrated – that is, our attraction to music is not just confined to its effect on thoughts and feelings: these mental activities also give us the inclination to move to music. This action is a form of entrainment, which constitutes two rhythmic processes that interact with each other such that they eventually establish a common phrase (Clayton, Sager and Will, 2005). In terms of music, this can include any kind of movement to music, such as foot tapping, head bobbing or dancing. Both Middleton (1990) and DeNora (2000) identify music as symbolizing the movements it invites from the body. DeNora explains:

[Music] may . . . rouse them because of the movement it implies and, more fundamentally, because it is doing movement in a similar manner, because the materiality of how notes are attacked and released, sustained and projected partakes of similar physical movements and gestures (2000, p. 107).

At the basis of this instructive patterning is the tempo and meter of the music. Movement to music is yet another way in which an individual interacts with that music, such that it also affects how music is encoded into memory. In Chapter 3, van Dijck (2006) was cited as describing musically triggered memory as “embodied, enabled and embedded” in daily routine; the author describes her use of the term “embodied” to refer to the everyday creation of memory through interaction with music. However, this term can also be extended to include more literal interpretations, such that I would advocate that musical memory is embodied through physical interaction with music in various forms.
In describing her connection to music, Vivian elaborates on how rhythm allows her to embody music:

So for me, I really like the beat, and probably because I’m a very structured sort of person... yeah so probably my taste in music now that I think about it and talk about it aloud is probably because it has the constant predictable beat and I know exactly, so yeah. But I like slow songs too, it’s about the beat that gets me wanting to dance.

— Vivian, age 51

During Vivian’s interview she mostly spoke of parties as the context of her most common associations with music, primarily because dancing was usually involved. Whereas many participants could relate narratives of events in vivid detail, Vivian told of her ability to judge “an event on how much I danced or if I enjoyed the music”. From this interview it appeared that much of Vivian’s memories could be recalled via their embodiment within her lifetime soundtrack.

For older participants, movement to music often came in the form of organised community events such as dances. These were special events for Bea during her youth, and she has vivid memories associating dance and music:

In those days it used to be just a three-piece orchestra for the dancers and that was the violin, piano, the drums. And then at halftime they’d have the fellow with the accordion, and because I came from a country town, we still did the lances and the quadrilles ... Anyway, you see them doing it, you twine in and out between the boys and the girls then you would swing on the corners with your hands like that, do a circle and come back again, then the girls go through to the centre and come back, so the boys swing on the corners, you know. It was like a reel, a sort of reel. And um, from the country era, I suppose we went to dances when we were babies, and we used to go underneath the seat, when you’re mum and dad
danced, and everybody danced. No one mimed it, especially when the gypsy tap and this came on, the little kids would get up, and the men would dance with us.

— Bea, age 81

The repetition of this experience for Bea means that the idea of moving to music is strongly embedded in her recollections, and could also alter her evaluations of some music as appropriate for these kinds of dances. The accompanying music becomes ingrained as part of the lifetime soundtrack, with specific movements cementing the music and its personalised meaning. This is true not only of dance, but also of other movement.

In an example of specialised movement, one participant recounted a strong memory for the action of marching. Participant Vincent has striking associations between music and marching which take him, in this instance, back to his time in the National Service:

... this takes me back to Wacol, on parade, march – “Waltzing Matilda” [sings]. I can never hear that, unless I think I’ve got a rifle on my shoulder and I’m [makes marching noises] does that make sense? They had other tunes but that’s the one that stirred my blood ... Well in the military sense, the martial, physical, pounding of your feet and pounding of whatever as you are marching to [sings] “Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda” and you get a high out of that song when you are physically doing something that’s you know, stirring you ...  

— Vincent, age 77

In Vincent’s account, the music triggers a memory of intense corporeal action. The physicality of marching posture and the positioning of the rifle comprises a strong feeling of embodiment for Vincent. Of particular interest is the combination of action and affect that is present in the narrative; the participant describes the music as “stirring” him, meaning that it was provoking powerful sensations in both the body and the mind. As with Vivian, it is the repetition of a beat in a set meter

64 A traditional Australian folk song.
that produces an association with movement. Actions as described by these participants have produced strong memories that intersect with particular music, therefore further embodying the memory within the context of the lifetime soundtrack.

Movement to music can go beyond rhythmic bodily responses such as those used in dancing or marching. Research participants also made reference to domestic activities that were frequently accompanied with music. Common to a number of people was the action of cleaning their house to the rhythm of their chosen music:

And I will turn on specific types of music, depending upon what I want to achieve, if I’m vacuuming the floor I want beat music. If I’m quietly on the computer doing something, I want it nice and quiet ... I enjoy and am enhanced by different music for different applications in my life.

— Hazel, age 72

Probably, I remember listening to the Killers’ album Hot Fuss ... it was my cleaning music for our apartment that we lived in. And it was in a big block of flats, we were on the top floor. I remember every Saturday morning I would just, [my partner] would go to work so I’d be cleaning the house for hours and I used to have it up really loud.

— Rachel, age 27

The repetitive movements found in this activity align with DeNora’s (2000) ideas of how music incites action due to its reflection of physicality. The motivational properties of the music for Rachel and Hazel are therefore likely to comprise aspects of tempo, meter, and rhythm. Due to this, the music becomes memorialised through repeated use and association with the typically mundane tasks of housekeeping. That certain music allows individuals to channel affect through physical and rhythmic movement is another aspect that enables it to act as an archive for memory.
Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the ways in which music acts an effective archive for memory. Aspects of musical composition (lyrics and sound) and elements of musical experience (technology and embodiment) allow music to encapsulate aspects of human experience in specialised ways, which are further engrained through the ability for musical elements to be replicated in varying degrees through playback technology. Participants’ narratives demonstrated that elements of music have a capacity to embody the atmosphere and emotionality of memory in ways that exceed spoken language. While the lyrics of music may resonate in autobiographical ways with individuals through the description of feelings and scenarios, their communication is enhanced through aesthetic properties such as harmony and timbre to create nuanced and seemingly personalised expression. The timbres of instruments that create sound itself can also come to represent particular feelings and atmospheres, and can trigger whole collections of memories. The ineffable nature of music makes these representations nebulous and unique to each individual’s perception.

The para-musical elements of music experience discussed in this chapter aid the creation and rehearsal of musically motivated autobiographical memory. Playback technology allows for the reproduction of music that exists on formats that are now out-dated, thereby providing access to music that potentially embodies memory. These technologies also influence the ways in which sound is memorialised, with original fidelities often being ingrained in memory, such that individuals may seek to physically recreate these circumstances in order to be fully immersed in memory collections. The natural tendency to move rhythmically to music adds another dimension to the memorialisation of music such that memory becomes embodied within the lifetime soundtrack. With corporeal movement comes an expression of engagement, the repetitive movements of which can further embed the music into autobiographical memory.

Through a discussion of these elements, this chapter offers a full conceptualisation of music as an effective medium for the encapsulation of memory that has not been provided in previous
literature. The perception of musical elements evidently effects the ways in which music and memory interact in ways unique to the individual. The following chapter will examine how performative experience with music may affect the creation and rehearsal of musically motivated autobiographical memories and the lifetime soundtrack.
For musicians, music is more than a form of entertainment, a pastime, or social accompaniment; in addition to encountering music in everyday situations, musicians perform, compose, arrange, contemplate, and study music in a way that is integral to their everyday lives. A musician can take up the role of either audience member, or entertainer, both perspectives enriching the other in turn. This relationship was triangulated by research participant Paul, a musician himself:

Live music experience is somewhat different, but I think I probably listen to more recorded music than I ever have live music, and I’ve probably played more live music than I’ve ever experienced as an audience member.

— Paul, age 42

This chapter will demonstrate how key features of a musician’s everyday musical experience – perception and embodiment – can influence the ways in which music and memory interface from the perspective of musicians. Using interview narratives from participants who identified as musicians, I will show how a musician’s lifetime soundtrack is produced in a different way to that of a non-musician. Through their personal interaction with music via live performance and an informed perception of recorded music, individuals who play music professionally or as a hobby perceive and process music in specialised ways.

During interviews, participants were asked about their musical abilities and training. Although this study featured a small sample of 28 individuals, it so happened that 43% (12 participants) had experienced some kind of musical training. From this I have deduced a classification system with three tiers to apply to my contingent: professional musician, amateur musician, and non-musician. The distinctions lie in the level of musical training and involvement with professional performance outlined by each individual within research interviews. Non-musicians are
people who received basic musical training as provided in school music classes, and who may have participated briefly in further lessons or performance ensembles, such as school or community choirs and bands. Amateur musicians have pursued further study of music and participate regularly in community ensembles; however, their commitment level is that of a hobbyist – they do not intend to gain substantial earnings from their craft. Professional musicians are individuals who have had extensive musical training and participate regularly in paid employment pertaining to this training. A breakdown of participant attributes, including their musicianship status appears in Appendix 1. Henceforth in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, the term ‘musician’ will refer to both professional and amateur musicians for reasons of clarity.

The ways in which musicians engage with music on a psychological level are dominated by aspects of identity. Although not speaking specifically about musicians, previous research such as that by Bennett (2000), Frith (1987), and North and Hargreaves (1999), has established that musical tastes can account for a substantial part of an individual’s identity, and subsequently, a significant amount of time is invested in listening to and talking about music. While, ostensibly, musicians listen to music in the same ways that non-musicians do, the professional activities of a musician means that they spend substantially more time engaging with music because they spend time practising, performing and producing it. Music may, therefore, represent a much broader part of personal identity for musicians. In response to an interview question on the overall importance of music within a lifetime, participant Tony stated:

Being a lifelong professional musician, born of professional musician parents, it’s obviously been at the forefront of my life and still working in music but not as a performer, it’s a constant presence, and probably more important than anything non-personal. For me relationships are the most important thing, but probably after relationships music would have had the biggest impact on my life.

— Tony, age 62
For Tony, and for musicians like him, involvement with music is not just a daily activity but rather constitutes an aspect of their life and identity that is enduring. As shown through studies by social anthropologists and sociologists such as Ruth Finnegan (1989/2007), Howard S. Becker (1951), Robert R. Faulkner and Howard S. Becker (2009) and Sara Cohen (1991) music for musicians is part of the “working self” – it is the activity by which performers earn a living, as well as part of a social identity that differs to that of a consumer. The working knowledge of music too, both in terms of musical elements and constructs, as well as in relation to the industry, embellishes how a musician perceives and internalises certain music. This layering of perspective affects the ways in which musicians memorialize music; that is, the ways in which they experience music, either as “work” or as “leisure”, intellectually or otherwise, inform the ways in which music is encoded in positive or negative ways in memory. This in turn informs the lifetime soundtrack in at least two distinct ways.

Given the involvement of the self within the practice of music, memories of music experience are likely to concern the performance of music more frequently for musicians, such that music in the lifetime soundtrack may constitute performed music and recorded music. As a result of this, the meaning that a musician may glean from this kind of musically motivated memory can potentially involve aspects of self-identity on a deeply composite level.

Closely related to these psychological factors is the physicality with which musicians experience music. Of course, consumers can also experience music in bodily ways, usually as a form of expression in reaction to listening (e.g. dance, as discussed in the previous chapter), however, musicians have the capacity to embody music through physical interaction with their instrument. In performing music they can tangibly experience the creation of music in a way that is relatively inaccessible to a consumer. In Chapter 6, music was described as an “agent” for emotion; in speaking with musicians during interviews, it is clear that this agency includes the performer as the agent of the music, and therefore also a conduit for expression of emotion. The physical action with which musicians typically produce music aids not only their emotional expression within performance, but also affects their memorialisation of the experience.
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack

Aspects of physicality, awareness, knowledge and identity will guide the discussion of musicians’ interview narratives in this chapter. It will be shown that these factors facilitate a different view of music for musicians, with acts of understanding and performance altering the ways in which music is memorialised. In this chapter, distinctions are drawn between musicians and non-musicians to emphasise the importance of recognising the individuality prominent in musically motivated memory. Indeed, individuals who are delineated in this chapter as musicians have provided narratives that have been treated similarly to non-musicians’ contributions in other chapters of this thesis. The number of musicians within the cohort enabled this alternate view of how music and memory may interact; however, delineations given within this chapter do not serve to essentialise these contrasts for the thesis at large.

Music-making as “Work”

As previously described, music can constitute much more than an aural recreation for musicians; for professionals it can feature as a primary source of income, presenting a precarious balancing act between emotional or personal involvement and the professional delivery of a paid service. One of the key questions designed to spark discussions in interviews focussed on the individual’s perceived emotional connection to music. Although this topic was covered in Chapter 6, omitted from that analysis were the responses from musicians who perform regularly. The reason for this was the finding that their concept of “emotion in music” is strongly connected to their view of music as “work”, especially in light of live performance at significant events such as weddings and funerals.

The static nature of emotion when performing music as work is illustrated in the following quote from saxophonist Ryan, speaking about a performance at a wedding:

Like it was just a gig, it was pretty detached, you know - had this music, played it, got my 300 bucks.

— Ryan, age 20
Ryan neatly sums up a common feeling among musician participants of purposeful detachment from music that is performed as part of paid work. Whilst such an attitude may be deemed slightly offensive to clients who paid for engaged entertainers, it is comparable to levels of professionalism required from any number of vocations whose emotional involvement in work can cause psychological stress (see Hochschild, 2003; Pugliesi, 1999). Such situations are referred to by Becker in his study of jazz musicians (1951), where he notes the common conflict experienced by jazz musicians of needing to play commercial gigs to earn money, which often entails “playing for squares”. Generally the repertoire requests from these clients is perceived as repetitive or kitsch, and often goes against the musicians’ creative ethos. A similar scenario is described in a qualitative study on work in the cultural industries by David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker (2011), with research participants highlighting the friction between highly paid gigs in which the music is mostly ignored and the attractiveness of audience engagement that typically comes with lower paid gigs in working class venues such as clubs and public bars. Performers see no need to prove their creative ingenuity in scenarios where the music serves more or less as an atmospheric device, lacking a discerning listening audience, and as such they generally are less emotionally engaged with the music they are performing on a personal level.

Music that is performed for income can, in some cases, harness a negative reaction to re-hearing or re-performing certain music. Participant Matthew describes his frustration about music he is required to perform at certain events:

I guess I’m desensitised to a lot of weddings ‘cause I’ve played at a lot of them and you hear the same songs ... “Oh I can’t believe you asked me to play ‘Girl from Ipanema’ for your wedding waltz - that doesn’t make sense. It’s in four and you want me to play it as a

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65 The term “square”, used in the jazz culture of the first half of the 20th century, referred to an individual who is old-fashioned, out-of-touch, or boring.

66 A now standardised bossa nova written by Antonio Carlos Jobim, originally penned with Portuguese lyrics by Vinicius de Moraes in 1962. English lyrics were written by Norman Gimbel.
swing and it’s a Latin tune, and it’s about a girl who’s too stuck up to look at a dude.” So you know I’m pretty desensitised to the whole wedding sort of thing.

— Matthew, age 25

Matthew’s issue it seems is less concerned with performing for other people, but moreover that his creativity is seized by the demands of the employer, and as such, this also dampens his emotional connection to the music, and to the situation, again reflecting Becker’s observation. Due to the participant’s mention of the song, “The Girl from Ipanema” evidently exists in Matthew’s lifetime soundtrack, and appears to trigger mostly negatively associated memories for the participant. This point reinforces the plurality of the lifetime soundtrack which, like memory itself, reflects not only positive or “happy” recollections, but can resonate with feelings from the broad spectrum of emotion or affect. As with the quip from Ryan, this scenario exemplifies how the perspective of “music as work” has altered a musician’s association between music and autobiographical memory as a result of a neutral or negative emotional interface.

The instance from Matthew also refers to the problems that sheer repetition of material can generate: “The Girl from Ipanema” is known in professional circles to be an over-played tune, with its connotations of “elevator music” often leaving musicians loathe to perform this request. The repetition of repertoire is the most likely factor to give musical performance the reputation of “work” rather than a pleasurable income-generating activity. As both an instrumental technician and professional musician, James found that he needed to give away certain performance avenues during his career due to a lack of enjoyment caused by its repetitious nature:

I did years and years of covers music and stuff like that and I just don’t find it exciting anymore, at all. I don’t really want to do that again.

— James, age 41

Caught between musical jobs that pay well but are infrequent, James subsequently took up work as a tradesman to provide steady support for his family. The repetition of certain activities meant that
James withdrew from various circuits; he noted that his passion for parts of the industry was being sapped by the perceived drudgery of it, and it was very quickly becoming a chore. Despite this, James continues to play music in professional circles outside of his day-job, and is able to play on his own terms due to enhanced financial security. Through the experiences described here, it is already clear that interaction with music is somewhat different for musician participants in this study than their non-trained counterparts: whereas most narratives detailed in other chapters of this thesis exhibit direct or open engagement with music, the above excerpts display a level of purposeful disconnection with certain music. As the following sections will show, although musicians’ experience is not wholly negative or detached – indeed, sometimes it is quite the opposite – the particular nature of this interaction can affect the development of the lifetime soundtrack.

**Emotionality and Music Performance**

For musicians, performance can at times call for near total disengagement with emotion that might be evoked by certain music. In presenting music to an audience who is likely to be moved, the performer must communicate a believable performance. At the same time, however, the musicians’ need for professionalism in remaining unmoved personally by the music they are performing is paramount. Stella describes how this has changed her reaction to certain music in performance situations:

> Unfortunately, I sing at funerals quite regularly, so I would have sung at like 60, I don’t know, 60 plus. And I do it kind of regularly like one a fortnight maybe. And I’m pretty...poor choice of words for funerals but it’s like, dead to me ... I don’t feel emotional ... That’s probably just because I try and turn off so much, because I do not want to get involved. They pay me to do it, so I do not want to blubber down in mucus in the middle of a funeral.

— Stella, age 22
From Stella’s narrative it is clear that the element of professionalism in performance situations means that she can’t allow any emotion to interrupt the service she is providing to the mourners. As such she needs to both engage with the music on a performative level so that she can sing expressively, but also remain detached from the aesthetic of the context in which she is performing. So while the receivers of the music Stella was providing may have strong emotional reactions to the memory of the performance, or indeed to hearing the same music again, Stella has memorialised the music in a different way. Rather than associate the music with the emotional circumstance of her performance, the experience becomes part of her musical associations for “work” and typically carry little emotional significance.

The correlation between “work” and “music” appears to trigger a number of negative connotations for participants, in that some aspects of performance can cloud their experience through a need to disengage emotionally. On the other hand, musicians also need to be able to connect effectively on an emotional level with an audience, delivering authentic or meaningful performances. They must understand how emotion is perceived in music, and how it is communicated, and be able to replicate these aspects to a discerning audience. Researchers Anemone G. W. Van Zijl and John Sloboda (2010) carried out a study of practice and performance habits with musicians preparing emotionally affective pieces. They found that in order for the musicians to give a believable, expressive performance, they must engage mentally with the emotions present in the music (p. 212). This finding suggests that musicians are in some ways more vulnerable to the emotional pull of music, rather than being shielded through the need to perform.

A professional musician for much of his life, Tony began describing his work with a company playing advertising jingles, and below describes how this experience gave him a further understanding of affect in music:

So I’m totally conscious ... of what techniques that you can apply to try and ah, get people to respond in particular ways, but it still works, you know. I s’pose it’s like knowing a Nurofen is
going to stop a headache - it doesn’t stop it from working. But for me, you know, [being a musician] doesn’t protect you from being affected by it.

— Tony, age 62

The participant acknowledges that his awareness of affect does not hinder his ability to feel emotion through music. It is likely that this transparency between perceived and felt affect is the hinge that allows musicians to maintain a passion for their craft whilst still possessing the control to bespeak this affect through their instrument, refraining, for the most part, from personal physical expression of emotion within performance.

Ostensibly, the practice of music-making must also offer individuals some personal sense of fulfilment. Indeed, the typical financial hardships with which music-based careers are stigmatised infer some form of deep attraction between a musician and their craft. Music can therefore serve multiple yet conflicting purposes. As Matthew puts it:

... it’s an outlet for emotions I guess ... probably the simplest way to put it. I guess now it’s even more important than ever ‘cause it’s how I make money [laughs]. So not only is it an emotional outlet - back then it was just purely for that - now it’s also financial ...

— Matthew, age 25

The seemingly controversial dichotomy of leisure as work seems to work out for Matthew, who although above was quoted describing his frustrations at working for others, holds the emotional aspect of his relationship with music in a higher regard than its capacity to earn money.

Contrasting with many of the above professional musicians, Ron, an amateur musician participating in the research, held a contrasting view of the work/life balance of playing music.

Mmm, yeah I’ve got a day job, I’ve gotta work, so I can’t get emotionally involved in something that I can’t do because I can’t do it properly - professionally - because I’m not good enough to do it professionally. So what I’ve gotta do well is earn money and live. What
I then do for a hobby is play music the best I can, practise, and listen to music. So I’ve got two lives.

— Ron, age 59

For Ron, frustration is born of the conflict between acting as the financial provider for his family and pursuing his musical passion. This is compounded by the amount of time it takes to achieve proficiency on an instrument, which is perceived by Ron to be an activity that requires more time than he is able to sacrifice, given his domestic position as the bread-winner. The aspect of emotional involvement, described above as a requirement for strong performance, is emphasised by Ron where he notes his conscious decision to deny himself this kind of interaction with music. Stemming from this, Ron treats his musical pursuits like a form of work, allocating a defined temporal and mental separation between work life and music life:

Every day I practise my instrument, and three nights a week I go to three different types of bands. So we’ve got a jazz band, we’ve got a concert band and we’ve got another big band, so that’s my whole life but it’s separate from my day life. So you’ve gotta separate these things. I’ve got 12 hours a day at work and I’ve got six hours a day at home, so you’ve got 18 hours and whatever’s left, the other six hours - is for sleep. So that’s how my life is segregated.

— Ron, age 59

Ron’s attitude towards music practice is highly disciplined, with commitment to music as strong as any professional musician’s. As the only participant to mention this kind of mental separation towards music, it is also interesting that Ron was one of the few participants to hold a contrasting view on the memorialisation of music:
It’s painful sometimes, it’s not all good times, music is, being a hobby and being a memory as I said it’s not connected with bad things in your life or good things in your life it’s just always been there with me so I don’t relate it back to anything. I don’t wish back.

— Ron, age 59

Whether it is Ron’s strict attitude towards music practice, or perhaps the older style of jazz music that he has a passion for that contributes to this conscious decision is not clear. Further questioning only revealed it is not that associations between music and memory have not been made for Ron, but rather that he chooses not to seek the practice of memory rehearsal as many other research participants seemed to. Furthermore, it is likely that Ron’s apparently conscious disengagement with music may additionally contribute to the unappealing nature of mnemonic association for the participant.

It has been previously mentioned that for some musicians, performances at emotional events such as weddings or funerals present the need to “turn off” their affective perception of the situation in order to maintain composure and deliver a service. These experiences are often inconsequential for artists and hold little significance in autobiographical memory. However, research participants’ narratives revealed that performances at major events that are personally significant to the individual have the potential to become prominent and emotionally potent memories. This is fuelled by the act of performing meaningful music in a much more affected and authentic way than is required at external events. The passing of loved ones often provides for the selection of commemorative music that represents or was significant to the individual, as described in Chapter 6. Several instances of the performance of such music arose during interviews; below, George described his recent experience:

[Mum] just passed away, last year. So that was a very strong connection ... I always tell the story how she you know, she was a great one for practising unconditional love and the only
condition she placed on me was to sing “What a Wonderful World”\textsuperscript{67} at her service. And I said “Oh yeah Mum, I’ll do that, but what happens if I go first?” And so I had a pact that she was to sing at my funeral - anyway, I got to sing at hers and so “Wonderful World” is a very important song, in a number of ways, because she placed that condition on me, I threw it back at her, but then I got to - did get to - sing it at her service. So yeah that’s, ’cause she was um, she was beautiful.

— George, age 66

The song for George is not only extremely significant in itself, but moreover it is his performance of the song and the bond that it represented in the form of a pact between mother and son that possesses the highest implications for George’s memory. In the above instance, George was emotional in his recount, glancing over to the shrine he had constructed for her, but also seemed content that he possessed the ability to carry out the task entrusted to him. Here George made the choice to perform because it gave him a sense of fulfilment, emphasising the strength of the relationship within the bounds of one song.

In another scenario involving the passing of a loved one, Ryan relates a memory of his grandfather’s funeral arrangements:

... like at my grandad’s funeral, it was years ago now, but ... they suggested that I would play some song on sax, I think I must have been year nine or ten or something. So I think it was just like this - you know, the song with the CD from the book, a jazz sort of thing that they suggested I play. I didn’t end up playing it, I didn’t want to do it. I guess maybe it was because like, playing sax is sort of fun and like, I had good memories of playing this jazz song with the CD and I didn’t, I don’t know if I really wanted to do it ...

— Ryan, age 20

At the time, Ryan made a conscious choice not to involve his playing with the occasion. Knowing that it was going to be an emotional event, he felt conflicted in presenting a piece that he had positive experiences with. Despite his age, Ryan could foresee that playing any music at this ceremony would most likely form a certain kind of association for him in the future.

These cases further underscore the role that personally significant people play in connecting music with memory. As highlighted in Chapter 6, it seems we associate music with important people within the strongest bonds, tending to place a high level of emotional value on music that was shared or associated with family and friends. In Chapter 5 I discussed the idea that the lifetime soundtrack is cyclical in nature, taking for its foundation the music of childhood, where for the most part, the individual has little sway in the music that surrounds them. Typically, the musical taste of parents and carers accompany early memories. Here again I would like to bring this notion to the fore through an example narrated by professional musician Tony:

When I was a little kid ... if you were very good you were allowed to go to gigs, so my Dad for example was the bandleader at “Cloudland” for a time, and I have extremely good memories of when we were very, very good and me and my sister were allowed to go, in our pyjamas, and we’d go up to the balcony which was rarely opened in those days, and peer over the balcony, watch everybody dancing and watch Dad playing. And one of the big songs for a drummer in those days was “Golden Wedding”. It’s a drum solo, drum and clarinet sort of solo piece, done by Benny Goodman I think. So that song, whenever I heard that song I’m reminded, whenever I play that song it reminds me a lot of my Dad. And when I was playing if I was playing swing music, I mean, doing it well, if everything was gelling, I could sort of feel his presence, and it was nearly like I was channelling him when I played in that style. So not always, but sometimes, particularly when I was playing kind of in his style, as

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68 “Cloudland” was an entertainment venue and ballroom opened in Brisbane, Australia in 1940, and controversially demolished in 1982.
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opposed to the sort of more modern kind of style which was my natural way to play that stuff.

— Tony, age 62

Not only does this example accentuate the foundational relationship between parent, music and memory, it goes on to further explain how this can be a strong influence over the choice to become involved with music as a profession. This early memory became strongly associated with “Golden Wedding” for Tony not only upon re-hearing, but also in the physicality of playing the music. This is a primary example of the extra level of nuance that a musical memory can hold for a musician, over the relationship that is typically explored by a non-musician. Tony is able to rehearse a memory of his father by hearing recorded music. Like most non-musicians, however, the participant also suggests a spiritual element becomes present whenever he plays that style of music, and that tune in particular. In saying this, it is clear that the music represents not just one memory, but is a channel for a collection of memories that Tony has of his father. His passage also marks a development in his perception of music from that of an audience member, and non-musician, to that of a performer, encompassing the spectrum of roles that exist within the person/music/memory variation. The narratives detailed in this section reveal the proximity of music experience and emotion, such that it affects, in positive and negative ways, the relationship between musicians and music that is heard, practiced or performed. Due to this, music within the lifetime soundtrack has a specific meaning for these individuals; while it is not more or less meaningful than the experiences of non-musicians, it is worth recognising the contrasts between these interactions.

**Embodiment and Physicality of Music**

The ideas brought to light by the narrative from Tony, above, can be moved beyond the mental association between individuals and significant people via music. Further to this, it is the relationship between an individual and the act of playing music itself that defines the ways in which they
These activities require a connection, in cognitive terms, of motor coordination, and also in ways that allow for the communication of expression. As mentioned in Chapter 7, entrainment and embodiment are aspects of music experience which can further interlace music and memory. This kind of physicality has also been shown to have special implications within the practice of music. In a study of musicians in Liverpool (UK), Sara Cohen found that the physicality of producing music further enhanced the musicians’ relationship with it, such that she describes the musicians using “their instruments almost as an extension of themselves as a means through which to express their feelings” (1991, pp. 190-1). This embodiment of music is evident throughout the interview narratives from musicians already detailed in this chapter, and is especially present in the idea that musicians need to connect and embody the emotional aspects of music in order to display believability or authenticity. This aspect is essentially what differentiates a musician’s experience of music and their subsequent association with autobiographical memory from a non-musician’s perception of music/memory relationship.

The embodiment of music was most evident in stories from participants whose principal instrument was the drum kit. At a basic level, the act of playing interfaces with everyday life even when the musician is idle; an example of this comes from James:

I mean ... if I don’t do a gig for a couple of weeks I start tapping a lot more, [my wife] notices it. She says, you’ve gotta go and do a gig because your fingers are “tap tap tap”. So it’s affecting me in that way, in that I’m thinking about it more obviously when I’m not playing.

— James, age 41

The act of drumming involves the whole body where, arguably, the musician can be more easily observed as embodying the music through this involvement than may be the case with other instrumentalists. This process of internalising and externalising enhances the ways in which a musician interacts with their instrument and their repertoire, such that Nijs, Lesaffre and Leman...
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(2009) note that “the relationship between musician and musical instrument is a determining factor in the degree to which the musician’s interaction with the musical environment is embodied” (p. 138).

A strong example of a musician’s interaction with their instrument was given by Tony, a drummer, who recounts that in his younger days his style of playing was “very analytical and precise and mathematical”. This was to change quite suddenly for him, whilst playing in a Greek band:

... it happened by accident one night playing the Greek Club just around the corner, and all of a sudden there was a complicated thing, seven four time signature, complex, difficult arrangements, anyway, something happened and I lost track of where I was, but I kept playing because you never stopped – rule one, never stop until everyone else does. And much to my amazement everything kept coming out fine and I had no intellectual connection whatsoever, I was just sitting there, the music was coming out and it was sort of like an out of body experience in the sense that I was listening and observing what was happening but I was no longer in control of it.

— Tony, age 62

What Tony is experiencing in this recollection aligns with a concept referred to as “flow”. The idea of flow as a state of consciousness has been extensively investigated by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who describes it as “a state of optimal experience that people report when they are intensely involved in something that is fun to do” (2000, p. 381). “Flow” can occur in many professions or activities and requires total immersion in the activity such that one is in a state of focussed absorption (Bloom & Skutnick-Henley, 2005). It is often incorporated into deep performative musical experiences, like the one described by Tony, above. Csikszentmihalyi was the first to define the characteristics of “flow”, several of which are present in Tony’s experience, including: a distortion of one’s sense of time, a feeling that the activity is intrinsically rewarding, immediate feedback from the self, and ostensibly, 

70 A popular venue in the suburb of West End, Brisbane.
an exclusion of extraneous material from conscious thought (ibid.). In his narration Tony states a feeling of loss of control, an element which is contrary to Csikszentmihalyi’s definition of flow; however, in the performative context of this occurrence, such a notion could be attributed to a state of musician-instrument connection as described by Nijs et al. (2009), which is usually only achieved through a state of flow.

This epiphany would serve to shape Tony’s overall performance career and his understanding of music. In the interview extract below, he describes how this gave him a better understanding of his purpose as a musician:

... it made me realise that what was driving me was the intimacy of the relationship between me as a musician and the people, particularly people who were dancing, so it dawned on me that just by changing the intensity of how I played or the volume or how urgent or laid back I was compared to the pulse of the music, I could change the way large numbers of people responded, how they danced, make them dance more energetically, less energetically, more cohesively or less cohesively just by really subtle changes in how I played. And it dawned on me, this is a very intimate thing to do, you’re tampering with people’s sort of emotions, but it’s one on a large number of people, and nobody would know what I was doing.

— Tony, age 62

In recognising his own musical actions as affecting other people, this narrative from Tony draws on the discussion of emotion flowing within music as touched on in Chapter 6. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, this relationship can be expanded to include the musician as the true agent of emotion, especially in live settings. The participant refers to the manipulation of physical reaction in his audience through the application of different affects and energies in his playing. So subtle are these changes that he suspects the dancers are only mildly aware of his control of emotionality in this situation.
Originating again in Cohen’s (1991) work with bands in Liverpool is the idea that playing an instrument can act as an embodiment of a personal feeling. Participant Matthew was quoted earlier as describing music as an “outlet for emotions”; matching this with ideas of embodiment means in some instances musicians are able to channel not just emotions present in the music, but also their own personal emotions, as was also demonstrated by narratives from George (pp. 205-6) and Tony (p. 135). In watching interaction between musicians and instruments, Cohen notes that at times “music can also provide or encourage the opportunity to ‘let off steam’ and perhaps express violence or hostility of some kind” (p. 190). This idea could be extended to traverse both the mental and physical practice of music, as exemplified in this account from Matthew:

... go back to third year of uni, second semester, I got really, really horrible marks for my playing exam, which I was really upset about because that was the first playing exam I thought I played well on ... And um, uh my teacher at the time was um, he was the one grading me, he gave me a pass, and I was really upset about it and I thought about changing teachers ... so I, yeah I started fourth year listening to a lot more aggressive sort of really, really aggressive jazz I guess you’d say it’s called ... Relatively, I guess [those songs are] very important ... they sort of signify the strength of self that I learned in that year which was ah sort of bizarre I guess a lot of people always associate me with being very loud and noisy and but it was a lot introspective thought [sic] that came even before that ... for that year those were the tunes that inspired a lot of the deeper thought I guess, from that year.

— Matthew, age 25

The frustrations that Matthew expressed in his perceived standard of playing resulted in him choosing repertoire that in a number of ways allowed him to express himself. The pieces within themselves encapsulated an emotion that Matthew identified with, and so in rehearsing and performing them he was able to further work through his own issues via raw expression. This
instance is also an example of a “turning point”, in which Matthew was able to move to a higher plane of mental and physical engagement with his instrument. Matthew’s memory of this point in time is guided by musical interaction; the memory could be triggered not only by hearing a recording but also through Matthew’s rehearsal or performance of the music. This dual interface with autobiographical memory is unique to musicians, surpassing the involvement that a non-musician can have with musically-motivated memories.

Musicians as Music Consumers

In their day-to-day lives, musicians can take on the role of “music listener” as well as “music performer”. An intimate knowledge of their own instrument as well as others provides them with an understanding of what it takes to create certain sounds and atmospheres in both live situations and potentially, within the recording studio. While both musicians and non-musicians may possess knowledge of recording technology and processes, an individual who has experienced these first hand as a recording musician arguably has a more personalised connection. This brings an element of analysis to their listening that may bypass the ears of non-musicians. Take for example this memory from Tony:

I remember the first time I heard Blood, Sweat & Tears that was you know another life changer, because [it was] very, very sophisticated, it was recorded in a completely new way. Very clean, close to the mic drum sound that they hadn’t [used] before, so that was a serious big moment.

— Tony, age 62

This memory seems to be significant for Tony in two key ways; the leading aspect is that this is described as a “first experience”, which suggests it is remembered because it was a critical point in Tony’s encounters with music over his lifetime. In combination with this, Tony was attuned not only

71 “Turning points” are a concept coined by Pillemer (1998, 2001) and are discussed in Chapter 2
to the sounds he was hearing, but how they were created within the recording process, which was for him a particularly interesting factor. These aspects together make this listening experience a strong memory for Tony, one which, given the approximate time period of this experience, has remained a peak encounter through many similar occurrences over time.

In an example that resonates with Tony’s experience, James’s knowledge of production styles provided him with opportunities for analytical listening experiences. Now a part-time sessional musician, as a young adult James was involved in several bands that performed regularly around Brisbane in the 1990s. Gaining popularity around this time was the musical genre of grunge; below, James recounts his original encounter with Nirvana:

The first time I heard Nirvana was at Dooley’s Hotel when it was a live venue, and it came on and we all just sort of went, “Wow what’s that sound?” It was a really, really interesting sound. Um, and at the end, it was the first one off Nevermind, “Teen Spirit”, just the sound of it was something, it was so impressive, such a wall of sound ... I remember just being there and the guys in my band we were just floored by the sound, and that whole wall of sound thing came, they’re not the first ones to do it, but the first ones to really – when they knocked Michael Jackson off the charts in the states you just go “wow” that’s just huge, a couple of grunge heads you know. So that was pretty impressive.

— James, age 41

Like Tony, the recognition of new aesthetic sounds comes as a welcome surprise that acts as a critical point of recall in later life. The narrative exemplifies the reaction of a group of knowledgeable musicians who are in the first instance drawn to the production value of the sound, rather than the lyrical message or cultural impact of the music.

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72 A live music venue in Brisbane, popular in the 1990s.
Negative Emotional Associations for Musicians

The above interview extracts emphasise experiences that resonate in memory as critical moments when the individual was struck in a positive way by their informed perception of musical sounds. However, this result is only one aspect of the critical listening practices of most musicians. Other circumstances may result in an aversion to certain music that is differentiated from this behaviour in non-musicians due to recognition of personal involvement in sound production. An example of this comes from singer Stella, who describes the results of errors in her own performance:

Yeah well, there used to a talent contest every year at my school and so, I used to enter every year, because I’m like, you know, a ham. So every year the song that I chose has remained - like I can barely listen to it now, ‘cause I’ve got really awful memories of being really nervous and then usually failin... Those songs are all ruined, permanently.

— Stella, age 22

Through performance anxiety and self-perceived errors in performing, Stella has negative associations with particular songs, and subsequently avoids listening to the original recordings to avoid reliving those feelings. A typical aversion to emotionally negative association with music was explored in Chapter 6, with the key feelings being replicated here in Stella’s story. In this instance, however, the individual’s involvement in the experience as the musician adds another dimension to the emotion associated with this music due to the memory. This music remains part of Stella’s lifetime soundtrack despite consciously avoiding it. This action may act to further ingrain the music and associated feelings into her memory. Although Stella can avoid playing the music in private spaces, the prevalence of music (especially the popular style of music present in Stella’s narrative) in public places may trigger her memory more frequently through everyday routines.

The study of music itself produced unwanted associations with certain music among some research participants. A typical part of music education is the activity of engaging with recordings of
significant artists within (and beyond) the instrumental field. Ryan found that he was encouraged to
listen to complex kinds of music at a young age:

I think there is music that I avoid ... sort of early on when I was learning sax I got into the
whole John Coltrane thing, John Coltrane, Charlie Parker – ‘cause you know you pretty much
have to listen to that stuff – but I think at that age I wasn’t really ready to sort of listen to it. I
didn’t really understand enough about it, so I’d listen to it ‘cause I had to, and um and sort of
I didn’t enjoy it as much and then even to this day I could enjoy listening to Coltrane but I
just don’t tend to as much just because ... of those associations.

— Ryan, age 20

This negative association with music is driven not only by the act of listening but is fuelled by Ryan’s
continued daily interaction with his instrument. If Ryan was only occupying the role of a consumer
he would most likely be able to distance himself from this music with ease; however, the music of
John Coltrane is inextricably bound to the practice of jazz saxophone and as such it is much less
avoidable for Ryan as a professional musician. As demonstrated in Chapter 6, non-musicians are also
susceptible to negative emotional associations between music and memories, although they exist on
a slightly different level to some of those expressed by musicians in that they are not related to
music that is self-produced, such as in Stella’s narrative. Nonetheless, this kind of aversion in both
musicians and non-musicians indicates again the plurality of emotion within the lifetime soundtrack.

Ageing Musicians

The physicality that is involved in the creation of music is empowering for the able-bodied musician.
However, interviews revealed that the process of ageing can impair both mental and physical
abilities once possessed by individuals who revelled in musical activity. Although studies have shown
that continued participation in musical activities in older life phases can be important for social and
mental well-being (e.g. Gembris, 2008), these activities require an aspect of negotiation with the
challenges presented by ageing. Participant Ron is a musical hobbyist who spends most of his spare
time either listening to or performing with community ensembles; below he describes his current
feelings towards this pastime:

I’ve even got to the stage where it becomes so frustrating because it’s encompassing, that
you think of giving it away. Probably in the last five to 10 years I’ve seriously thought about it
five to 10 times of tossing it in altogether and trying to find another hobby or something like
that that wasn’t so demanding mentally and physically because I also play see.

— Ron, age 59

Ron goes on further in the interview to explain that he feels that in order to become a better
musician he not only needs to perform in bands and consistently practice his instrument, but also go
out to see live music. With all three types of activities occurring on both weeknights and weekends
around Ron’s day job, it seems like a hectic schedule. From a performer’s perspective, ageing can
affect the memorialisation of music that was once easily performed, but is now met with challenges.
As Barton (2004) notes in a pilot study on ageing musicians, younger players are able to handle
schedules similar to this one, but additionally, they are not burdened by typical symptoms of ageing
such as hearing loss, sight loss, diminished memory, fatigue, as well as joint and muscle pain among
other afflictions.

Ron is frustrated by his slowing ability to keep up with what he feels is required, and the
awareness of declining capacity shapes his autobiographical reflections. Indeed, this participant
described how only recently several aspects of his playing had begun to improve through a new
attitude towards practice and a way of thinking about music in general. This unfortunately only
compounds his frustration:

I wish I’d known that when I was 20 because I’d have another 10 years to perfect it and the
rest of my musical life to do it, whereas now it’s - you’re almost looking at the downhill side.
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When you’re 60 you haven’t got that many years, but we’ll see what happens. A burden is what I’d put it at.

— Ron, age 59

While Ron’s ideas of music as a ‘burden’ throughout life may not be shared by all ageing musicians, the physical and mental demands of music performances is an aspect that may affect most musicians in this stage of life.

A similar but somewhat more poignant lament of ageing comes from Bea. Although Bea was an active singer before marriage in her twenties, the societal norms of the time meant that her career stopped short as she became confined to the domestic domain, raising children and keeping a household. Now aged in her eighties and living alone, Bea takes solace in what she has left of her musical abilities:

… but if you are a singer, you do sing, you sing along with the music and things like this … but you can also sing within your head, have you noticed you can do that? So I get up and I have a little [sing], because I do suffer a little bit with the blues, I think because I wear my heart too much on my sleeve, but that’s the nature of the person, I can’t change, that’s just me … Um, you feel a happiness within yourself when you sing, and even if you don’t, if I don’t sing, I can’t sing now the old voice is gone, which it does, and the older you get, the tremor upsets the voice now, but when you sing in your head you don’t hear it, you don’t hear the tremor. You sound as you were.

— Bea, age 81

Bea spoke emotionally about this aspect of her daily life; her singing acts as a comforting reminder of happy memories. Much in the way she describes hearing her singing as it would have sounded in her youth, so too would she be able to imagine herself and surroundings visually to reflect that time. Just as some older people may bemoan ageing skin or stiff joints by placing value on their former nature, Bea maintains a strong connection with her singing voice. The expressive ability of the voice
means too that its decline can result in a much stronger sense of loss than might be felt over more aesthetic features such as ageing skin or hair. This participant’s connection with music runs deep throughout her life and her connection with it as a result of her musicianship is effective in her creation of memories through to old age.

**Conclusion**

This chapter charts areas of memory and music interaction that have received little to no attention at the time of writing. It frames the music/memory connection as fluid, and demonstrates the variable ways in which this relationship can be perceived by cultures or communities. This chapter has explored how the perception and creation of musically motivated autobiographical memories may be different for the sector of my demographic that identified as musicians. For these individuals, music represents their identity in more direct ways to that of non-musicians. As such musical memories are shown to capture and represent different aspects of experience for musicians. Like non-musicians, musicians cannot necessarily control the integration of music and memory; however, the ways musicians comprehend and enact music affects the way it is memorialised. Moreover, musical memories may be attributed a different kind of meaning in the reflection on the life story due to their connection to identity and sense of self. As such, the lifetime soundtrack of musicians may comprise a varied set of musical experiences that involve the self in complex ways.

In Chapter 6, the nature of emotion in musically motivated memories was described as variable, one that is present within such memories in many subtle ways. This notion was further exemplified in this chapter where it was demonstrated that emotion is both felt by musicians in the role as consumers, and expressed in their role as performers. While musicians’ perception of emotion is arguably no different to that of non-musicians, their ability to emulate the expression of this emotion in their own performance enables a different kind of memorialisation. This process is similarly replicated when speaking of bodily entrainment: whereas non-musicians may move in accompaniment to music (as in Chapter 7), musicians are physically engaged with the creation of
musical memories. This again represents a departure from forms of memorialisation already covered in this thesis and denotes another approach to the incorporation of music (and associated memories) into the lifetime soundtrack. The physicality of music becomes more noticeable by musicians as they age. An inability to perform may affect the perception of certain music within memory, and may produce altered emotional reactions in people for which this facility has declined. This suggests a change in the way musically motivated memories are understood, appreciated or retold by ageing musicians; however, further investigation in this area is required to more fully appreciate this process.
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This thesis has explored the connections between music, autobiographical memory, emotion and human agency through qualitative enquiry with a group of male and female Australians aged 18-82. Together the chapters in this thesis establish the concept of the lifetime soundtrack as a product of an individual’s mnemonic relationship with music. The ways in which participants describe their memories as being associated with music affirm the variety of discourses that exist within the lifetime soundtrack. This inter-textual relationship allows the life story to be reflected in autobiographically salient music in ways that are emotionally nuanced, and unique to each person. Analysis of interview material focussed on the contextualisation of detail: the specifics of music and memory interaction are brought to the fore with the recognition of the individuality of the life story. Participants typically reflected on their own soundtracks in ways that allowed them to validate their experiences and their sense of self; in this way musically motivated autobiographical memories are recalled over a lifetime to produce personal meaning. Many factors were found to influence the intensity and interpretation of the lifetime soundtrack, including domestic attitudes, emotional investment, cultural trends, and varying levels of engaging with or participating in the act of music-making.

Using interdisciplinary foundations, this research has produced new understandings of the sociocultural connections between music and memory and has broadened perspectives on the role of emotion within this relationship. Musically motivated memories are shown not only to aid the construction of identity but also to inform perspective on autobiographical experience and facilitate personal interpretation of the life story. This concluding chapter will demonstrate the significance of the research by positioning its innovations in relation to previous contributions to the study of music and memory. It will highlight the introduction of new concepts that have been developed.
throughout the thesis. Outcomes from the research are synthesised to reveal the extent to which this research informs new ideas in the field of memory studies and music sociology through methodological and theoretical departures from previous research. Finally, this chapter offers suggestions for further exploration into musically motivated memories, as well as noting the possibility of practical research applications.

Understandings of Autobiographical Memory

As one of the fundamental aspects of this research, the concept of autobiographical memory was discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 3. I wish to revisit some of the guiding definitions as cited in these chapters to show how my research has maintained and developed such approaches to memory for the self with the integration of music.

The most comprehensive definition of autobiographical memory was selected from work by Fivush (2011) who described it as a “uniquely human form of memory that moves beyond recall of experienced events to integrate perspective, interpretation, and evaluation across self, other, and time to create a personal history” (p. 560). The investigation of memory through the lens of musical associations carried out in this thesis both confirms and enhances the properties of memory listed by Fivush. By accessing memory through music both purposefully and involuntarily, participants engage in reflective and evaluative activities on a daily basis. Music allows individuals to revisit distinct moments in time where they can reflect on past ways of thinking and past ways of being. Indeed, the integration of music into memory facilitates the encapsulation of entire eras within a particular aesthetic tone. In this way, music aids the transcendence of temporal boundaries in memory, embodying atmospheres and affects that present opportunities for reflection and the development of personal perspective. As will be discussed later, the lifetime soundtrack offers an alternative reflection of “life history”, one that is at once more accessible and affectively nuanced than traditional forms such as written biographies. When the connection between autobiographical
memory and music is perceived in this way, the extent to which both memory and music can construct meaning for individuals becomes much greater than indicated in previous research.

The interplay between music and memory described above summarised the observed and analysed action of the lifetime soundtrack as it was portrayed by my research participants. In reflecting on previously conceived notions of autobiographical memory in the literature, it should be noted that these ideas align with the thoughts of van Dijck (2006) who asserts that human memory, and in particular, musical memory is “simultaneously embodied, enabled and embedded” through memory creation in everyday routines, listening technologies and memory rehearsal (p. 358, emphasis in original, see Chapter 3). While there are similarities between my work and that of van Dijck, my research expands on van Dijck’s to show how these actions can help to formulate and reinforce ideas of self-identity, acting as tools for meaning-making that are continually utilised throughout a lifetime.

**Development of the Self**

This thesis has established the individual as singularly important in the study of musically motivated memory. The memories that we keep within our minds or share with others help us to define our past and aid the development of a sense of self within the present. The association of music within memory enforces the intrapersonal nature of this process, where circumstances of time and place are unique to each individual. Ideas of identity are noted throughout the thesis, especially where research findings align with the findings from music psychology (e.g. North & Hargreaves, 1999) and music sociology (e.g. Bennett, 2000; DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1987). While notions of identity were not proposed within the research questions, the use of music and memory as representative of the self became apparent through the analysis process. My research expands on existing identity and music literature by examining personalised acts of music engagement as they occurred in reflections described by participants within everyday contexts. Interviews conducted for this research afforded
individuals the chance to voice their own narrative and thereby construct an expression of their “self” in the present.

This thesis shows that the articulation of the self is held effectively within the intrapersonal function of memory to construct a sense of self. The interpersonal role of musical memories was shown to encapsulate and express suggestions of identity. This symbiotic relationship was most clearly evident when participants made projections about memories they planned to create in the future. Some individuals envisioned the use of music at a future occasion as representative of themselves or some aspect of their perceived identity with the goal of creating a memory imbued with specific affect that would be experienced by both themselves and others. In demonstrating this I have extended previous research on the relationship between music and self or social identity, such as that by DeNora (2000) or Frith (1987), to examine more closely the role played by memory. Through in-depth engagement with this relationship on a micro-social level, my research demonstrates that memory and music work together in an interdependent relationship to aid identity development. The implication of memory within broader perspectives and the lack of its articulation within related research is discussed further on in this chapter.

**Emotion**

As established in Chapter 3 and challenged in Chapter 6, the role of emotion within musically motivated memory has been selectively covered in much of the previous research which was seemingly preoccupied with the occurrence of strong emotion, especially in connection to vivid detail (e.g. Baumgartner, 1992; Cady et al., 2008; Gabrielsson, 2002, 2003, 2011; Janata et al., 2007; and Schulkind et al., 1999). The approach to emotion in the current research was not guided by assumptions about the interplay between emotion, memory and music; instead, research participants were allowed to express openly how they felt they connected with music. The thesis has established that emotion is generally involved when music elicits an autobiographical memory; however, it does not prioritise “strong” emotion as a catalytic factor. Rather, this research
demonstrates that musically motivated memories are capable of invoking complex levels of emotional content, such that the concept of affect was implemented to more effectively describe participants’ responses.

That participants expressed meaningful and complex feelings within interviews exemplifies the value of conducting in-depth qualitative research. Taking a different approach to van Dijck (2006) or Gabrielsson (2002, 2003, 2011), the research sought to explore participants’ reactions in both the past and present, resembling the stance taken by Hays and Minichiello (2005) in their investigation of elderly persons’ use of music. In undertaking my research interviews, it became apparent that emotionality within recollections is fluid, changing and developing over time. Some emotions fade, others are looked at anew, and still more can become intensified as they age. I contend that the passing of time acts upon emotionality in such a way that a deeper and more complex feeling or affect arises. To this end, I suggest that the act of retrospection alters an individual’s perception of experiences within memory, and the feelings that accompany it. In the process of remembering, emotionality that is experienced at the time of an event is filtered through the range of life experiences that have occurred since. Inherent in this is a practice of self-reflection, in which experiences and emotions are re-evaluated. The sensitivity that one may have to a memory and the affect that is subsequently perceived can be amplified or dampened through the acquisition of perspective. DeNora (2000) describes this process in a similar way; however, she emphasises the direct engagement between music and the self, whereas in this study I establish the intermediary juncture of memory as the agent responsible for the formulation of perspective. Additionally, the wider demographic of participants in my research expands upon DeNora’s observation to illustrate that this process occurs in both men and women of various ages throughout adulthood.
The Lifetime Soundtrack: A New Concept for Music and Memory

Studies

As a foundational tenet, the idea that music can provide accompaniment to one’s life experiences has been developed over the course of this thesis. In Chapter 1, a working definition of the lifetime soundtrack was given as “a metaphorical collection of music that relates in unique and personal ways to a person’s autobiographical memories” (p. 6). Through exploration of analysis material, however, it is clear that there is much more to soundtracks than an aggregate of personally significant music. This thesis has shown that music in the lifetime soundtrack affords individuals access to memories of experience, typically in discrete instances imbued with personal meaning, e.g. a piece of music, song, album, or artist can be reminiscent of a certain time, place, person or era for an individual.

This is a new and innovative concept that assembles instances of music and memory interaction into a flexible framework. The idea of using music to accompany activity is a concept used by Bull (2007, 2009) to describe the configuration of playlists to produce a personalised soundscape. Although this is somewhat akin to the idea of a soundtrack, the lifetime soundtrack is a chronologically developed playlist that represents the past, rather than being constructed for the present moment. The lifetime soundtrack acts as an instrument for the construction of meaning within lives. This research has shown how participants were able to use music to re-experience some of their most valued experiences, to relive whole atmospheres and bodily affects. This use of music to achieve certain feelings aligns in part with Hays and Minichiello’s study (2005), where they found that elderly individuals used music as a tool for meaning-making and the maintenance of social, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being. Expanding on these outcomes, my study shows that participants of all ages engaged with their lifetime soundtrack in order to validate experiences and emotions.
Memory: The Missing Link

The study from Hays and Minichiello makes valuable contributions to the psychological and sociological understanding of music, however, like many scholars they have overlooked the significance of memory in arriving at their conclusions. Whereas Hays and Minichiello refer to memory as one reason for their participants’ use of music, my study directly engages memory as the principal instrument of meaning-making through music. This thesis shows that reflection upon autobiographical memory informs everyday actions and reactions, however, memory is neglected in a great deal of the literature concerning music and meaning-making, including Gabrielsson (2002, 2003, 2011), Bull (2007, 2009), Arrow (2005) and to a lesser extent, DeNora (2000). Studies such as these bypass memory when explaining the ways in which individuals interact with cultural objects; in this way they concede that memory is a generic process that is enacted in the same way by each individual. My research asserts that the process of autobiographical memory, while broadly characterised by its functions, comprises a unique set of actions and reactions in the human mind. This thesis draws attention to this process to show that memory, as an agent of the self, is responsible for much more in the quest to produce meaning from our interactions and experiences.

Indeed, the examination of memory and music in this thesis departs significantly from related research. The individual and the specific are promoted throughout my research as the primary boundaries in which the interaction between memory and music takes place. The incidence of this relationship is contextualised in the “everyday”, a concept used widely in music sociology. Where scholars such as DeNora (2000), Frith (2002) or Kassabian (2013) use the idea of music in everyday circumstances, they refer to broad and generalised acts of musical engagement. In this study, however, the routines and habits that make up the everyday are examined for their meaning within a single moment, rather than as achieving meaning only as part of a greater context. The emphasis, then, is on the micro-social: the very moment of a single interaction can resonate through
an entire lifetime, where a sense of meaning can be compounded through processes of self-reflection and developing maturity.

**Music as a Memory Archive**

The attention to the details of singular interaction also pertains not only to the occurrence of interactions but also to the interplay of factors within the creation of musically motivated memory. Rationales on the ability of music, rather than other mediums, to act as a conduit for experience have been explored throughout the thesis. While this idea is raised in previous literature (e.g. Janssen, Chessa & Murre, 2007), there are few suggestions that address the connection between music and memory in direct ways. In an acknowledgement of this relationship, DeNora (2000) describes memories as being “indexed” by music; that music becomes a referent for experience (p. 67). Aiding this, DeNora notes, is the capacity for recorded music to be replayed without change, save for perhaps the aesthetics of sound production in reissued music, it ostensibly sounds the same in the present as it did in the past – an idea that is also mentioned by Keightley and Pickering (2006). While this idea lends itself to connections between music and memory in this thesis, I extended upon this theory to produce a renewed conceptualisation of the relationship between memory and music.

As established in Chapter 7, I contend that the contrast in authentic replication between memory and music is a significant factor leading to their integration. It is well documented in psychological literature that memories change over time – with each re-telling, details are added or dropped, exaggerated or neglected not only due to cognitive processing, but via the influence of collective remembering. In contrast, the internal elements of music itself-- the melody, harmony, timbres, and so on -- remain static within various recorded forms. The original context in which certain music is heard is less able to be replicated, for example, music first heard on a vinyl record, or on the radio will of course sound different when played through more modern technologies. The quest for this primary experience drives what van Dijck (2006) describes as “technostalgia”, where
original playback technology is sought to reconstruct past musical experiences. Despite the differences in sound playback, listeners are still able to be transported back to circumstances of the past where the details of memory have become associated with music. The original experience becomes fortified by aspects within and surrounding music. Music can come to represent space, place and time not only through its occurrence within these boundaries, but also through its ability to accurately signify those things to an individual upon rehearing.

Analysis carried out in Chapter 7 documented examples of music taking the place of language, such is its power of expression, in terms of both lyrical and aesthetic content. In this way, I argue that music can come to represent an attitude or way of being through association of these things with a certain “sound”, genre, artist or album, which over time becomes a solidified reference. Participants spoke of music that seemed to describe their situation at a certain time; evidence of this ability for music to encapsulate these periods is taken not only in the narrative itself, but also in the way that participants recognised in the present tense, that specific songs or music represented broad yet distinct sectors of their life story. Instrumental elements too can denote aspects of experience in more covert ways. Sounds that aesthetically typify a certain genre or artist, for example, distorted guitar riffs, can become referents for whole temporal periods that contain “collections” of autobiographical memory.

To these ideas of how music becomes integrated into memory, I would also incorporate the influence of the modern soundscape. Music has become increasingly prevalent in everyday life; it prevails as an atmospheric facilitator in all manner of public places, but is just as commonplace as a solitary activity with the popularity of personal stereos advocating individual sound spheres. Such is the basis of Anahid Kassabian’s concept of “ubiquitous music” (2008, 2013) and the developed mode of listening that accompanies a bombarded soundscape. Kassabian’s observation is that the prevalence of music in everyday life leads us to perceive music in different ways, such that “hearing” music becomes different to “listening” to music. This idea that music accompanies our daily activities, in distinctive ways, resonates with the concept underlying this thesis: that music
accompanied memories. The ubiquity of music in modern times is contrasted in older research participants’ narratives; the age range of the cohort provided for individuals who had experienced a range of playback technologies, as well as a varying range of attitudes towards music over the 20th century. The access to or presence of music in daily life within these narratives is reflected in the value individuals invested in their lifetime soundtrack. Perhaps then, an increasing saturation of modern soundscapes with music is changing the way we think about music and its meaning within our lives.

Musical Engagement and Memory

Participants in this research expressed a range of attitudes towards their attachment to music that, in nearly all cases, affected the ways in which their lifetime soundtrack had developed in concurrence with autobiographical experience. The varied ways in which a person engages with both music and memory will affect the construction and their subsequent referral to their lifetime soundtrack. The research revealed that a greater amount of time spent around or near music has the potential to fuel a greater quantity of musical memories, and given that the pairing of activities and music can be unintentional or purposeful, this research suggests that music does not always require high attention or emotional states to work its way into memory, which departs from previous psychological research into memory and music interaction (e.g. Baumgartner, 1992; Cady et al., 2008; Janata et al., 2007; Schulkind et al., 1999).

Conversely, I would suggest that the value an individual places on music is principally influential on the quality of the lifetime soundtrack. As suggested in Chapter 5, the value that a household places on the playing of music can effect the foundations of the lifetime soundtrack. Moreover, a continued moderated engagement with music can be a partial determinate of exposure to music throughout life. For example, some participants held a strong opinion of their music tastes and maintained an enthusiasm for music that was part of the lifetime soundtrack and the memories that went with it. On the other hand, it was found that life experiences were less accessible through
music for individuals who perceived music to have a low level of importance within their life. This way of experiencing music is not an anomaly but rather a variance on what is a very broad scale of memory engagement. As noted in Chapter 6, a disinterest in emotional aspects of music does not preclude individuals from possessing a vivid lifetime soundtrack.

In the case of one participant, the value of interacting with music was incredibly important; however, the ways in which the individual connected with music and memory over his lifetime varied from those cited by most other research participants. As discussed in Chapter 8, Ron’s lifetime soundtrack does not engage with specific events, but rather, the participant uses music to provide general temporal markers. In addition, Ron describes his aversion to memory “rehearsal”; the result of this claim is that details of events and circumstances are not consolidated with reference to music. This represents a different way of interacting with music and memory and as such suggests an agenda for future research. Using the key concepts from my study, including the lifetime soundtrack, and a continued focus on the individual, future explorations into musically motivated autobiographical memory could incorporate larger samples that comprise a broader range of economic and social demographics. A greater cohort may reinforce the findings of the current research to show further variance in the engagement with musically motivated memories.

Another variation on value and perception of music in memory revealed by this thesis comes from the perspective of active musicians who rely on the performance, production and sale of music for their livelihood. Their experience with musical memory is a deep and intimate one, maximised through contrasts of interaction between being an audience member and also a performer. Musicians’ emotional relationship to music is also one of extremes: performers need to connect with audiences through effective communication; however, this expectation to reproduce affects countless times can also lead musicians to develop a distaste for certain music. Conversely, musicians are also able to emotionally invest in performance in a personal way, enabling a different perception of this kind of emotion from that possessed by non-musicians. While there is some published research on the psychology of performance and cognitive perception of music (e.g. Peretz
Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack

& Zatorre, 2005; van Zijl & Sloboda, 2010), there is presently little research that considers musicians’ interaction with music on the level of personalised perception. My research demonstrates that the way an individual understands music affects the manner of its integration into memory. This finding can be incorporated into other factors that influence the memory and music relationship. For example, the point was made above that the extent to which individuals value music could influence the reference to it within memory. The physical engagement with music through participation may also compound the value that an individual places on music, in turn changing the way they perceive music to be connected to autobiographical memories. Another related concept is that of identity: earlier in this chapter, parallels were made between the construction and expression of identity through both music and memory. Where the performance and production of music also forms an aspect of individual identity, the integration between memory, music and a sense of self becomes intricately complex. The recognition of these concepts within my research suggests a new area in need of academic attention, and is demonstrative of the great potential for further development within interdisciplinary research.

**Temporal engagement with memory**

In reflecting upon their lives during interviews, participants in this research were found to engage with memory on different temporal levels. As described in Chapter 2, recollections of past experiences can comprise acute detail of a specific moment within an experience (as in vivid memories), or on the other end of the scale we are able to have memory for actions and attitudes that occur within a discrete time period which can be referred to collectively. My research demonstrates that music has the capacity to “store” details of both specific events and broader time periods. Previous literature on musically triggered autobiographical memory, psychological or otherwise, gives more attention to the occurrence of singular and typically vivid memories, while memories that refer to broader time periods are largely neglected. Although there are some efforts
to characterise these memories (e.g. Groves et al., 2004), there did not appear to be a term that effectively described the kinds of recollections given by participants in this research.

To rectify this, I devised the term “cloud memory” to describe instances in which research participants engaged with a group of memories that they found to be representative of a particular self-delineated time period. The referral to cloud memories throughout the thesis demonstrates that this kind of reminiscence comprises a greater level of depth and complexity than has been credited in previous studies. Not only do musically motivated cloud memories embody the circumstances of an era, the atmosphere and affect present at that time is engendered by personally salient and meaningful music. The conception of this term breaks down barriers between psychological and sociological perspectives on autobiographical memory: the concept is at once mentally and socially constructed through processes of self-reflection and evaluation. It therefore contributes to the continued exploration of autobiographical memory from cross-disciplinary foundations.

**Implications**

The above discussion has outlined the findings of this research in terms of its contribution to new understandings of autobiographical memory. Through the use of qualitative inquiry, the research has brought forward theoretical and methodological practice in the field of memory studies. At the time of completion, the existence of a thorough, explorative study concerning autobiographical memory and music outside of the psychological sciences was not evident. While this thesis takes as its basis a psychological understanding of autobiographical memory, it has integrated these concepts with the wider literature within and beyond memory studies to produce a sociocultural understanding of the interplay between memory and music.

The current research has expanded upon the existing literature in several key areas. It has drawn together sociological and psychological ideas about the use of music in everyday life and re-examined them through the lens of autobiographical memory. In doing this, the concept of using
music as a tool for meaning-making is enhanced through the activity of musically triggered reminiscence. In this regard, music has been shown in the research to become a representative medium, capable of storing details of human experience in voluntary and involuntary ways. These connections become rehearsed associations that persist over temporal boundaries.

The methodological value of this study is evidenced in the amount of richly detailed and meaningful data that was collected from a relatively small cohort of 28 participants. The use of in-depth, one-on-one interviews to investigate autobiographical memory within this research confirms the effectiveness of this method. Of special note is the elicitation of memory principally without the use of cue material – a departure from most other methods used in previous studies; this practice has furthered the known boundaries of effective investigation of highly individualised experience.

Given the narrow breadth of existing studies into music and autobiographical memories, this research has provided a broad, robust foundation for future enquiries in the field of memory studies, and also in music sociology. It is anticipated that methods and theories arising from this thesis will promote the more frequent use of interdisciplinary enquiry that utilises discourses from outside the principal area of study. This thesis has shown that the study of music has rarely engaged with the idea of memory in terms of the function and meaning-making that their interception produces. As a case in point, it exemplifies how expanding an approach to a topic can result in a refreshed perspective in academic work. Whilst the field of memory studies already promotes an interdisciplinary approach to research, much of the work in this area remains restricted in its theoretical and methodological ideas. More research that expands the boundaries on the application of memory is required, not only to reclaim originality in memory research, but to strengthen the field itself.

In terms of expanding upon the current research, I would suggest the replication of the methodological framework applied in this study with individuals from a wider array of backgrounds and experience within Australia than intersected in the current study. These could include
Indigenous populations as well as the culturally and linguistically diverse groups that comprise the Australian demographic. A larger scale replication would reinforce the outcomes of my research whilst potentially expanding upon and confirming trends that were evident within the present analysis. Using the framework of my research with demographic groups from outside Australia is also a potential course of expansion, which could allow a comparison of engagement with musically motivated memories across cultures. Additionally, longitudinal or generational studies of individual’s musically motivated memories could further develop our understanding of how the relationship between music and memory can change over time.

Of the various outcomes from this thesis, the use of musically triggered memory as a tool for meaning-making has potential relevance for practical applications. Indeed, the ways in which individuals engaged with both music and memory can be likened to a form of self-therapy. Participants were able to traverse temporal boundaries to revisit times of particular importance, or of certain emotion. Through music they were able to connect with memories of deceased loved ones, and validate their experiences as nuanced, complex, and above all, meaningful. This suggests the existence of a supportive, therapeutic dimension to musical memories that was utilised in direct and indirect ways by participants.

This aspect of musical memories highlights the potential for memory elicitation to be used within counselling and other therapies to induce factors such as emotion, a sense of self and a sense of varied experience. Currently, music is used within health care settings to help manage emotional and behavioural issues such as agitation, anxiety and depression in the elderly (see Cooke, Moyle, Shum, Harrison & Murfield, 2010; Gerdner, 2000; Janata, 2012; Sixsmith & Gibson, 2007). The use of music therapy techniques to improve the quality of life in patients with memory disorders, such as dementia, has been established as effective in preliminary clinical research (Janata, 2012, Otera, Horike & Saito, 2013). With group-based therapies dominating trials and real-life applications, there has been a call for individual based therapy programs to be formulated (Irish 2006; Janata, 2012). Further evidence as to the connections between music and memory has been provided in research
conducted by El Haj, Fasotti and Allain (2012), Foster and Valentine (2001), Irish et al. (2006) and Garcia et al. (2011). While these studies establish the effect of music upon autobiographical recall, they do not extend their findings to clinical application. Aside from an attempt developed by Janata (2012), there has been little research into the reaction of individuals to music and memory style therapy in clinical settings. While my research is not clinically based, it does provide several key outcomes that could be used to supplement music therapy programs. Most significantly, this research underscores that the use of music to reflect on memories promotes a sense of agency within an individual, and a sense of citizenship within a society. It is hoped that the findings from this thesis may give rise to consideration of individualised programs for the maintenance of autobiographical memory, which in turn has been shown to facilitate other kinds of well-being (cf. Hays and Minichiello, 2005).

Another alternative therapy that relates to the outcomes of this thesis is “reminiscence therapy”. This area of memory-enhancing therapy is understudied, with the benefits of the inclusion of music in this process being largely overlooked. Research by Kartman (1990) advocates the use of music-based reminiscence (or life review) to improve feelings of self-worth and identity, especially towards the end of the life cycle. This type of therapy focuses on the sharing of narratives between individuals in aged populations with benefits for both clients and carers. Not only could the thematic relationships found between memory and music in this study extend the boundaries of this therapy, the knowledge of personal interactions between memory and music could be used to further nuance this practice, to enhance feelings of agency, connection and autonomy in meaning-making practices.

There is an acute need within Australia and similar Western countries to develop innovations in aged care; the ageing population of these countries is resulting in an overloaded health care system, with potentially severe economic implications. An improvement in music-based therapies for the elderly

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73 See for example http://demographics.treasu
would help satisfy the demand for alternative treatments and therapies in a sector that is increasingly problematic.

This study has demonstrated that the routine interception of autobiographical memory and music in everyday circumstances constitutes acts of meaningful interaction that resonate with an individual over a lifetime. Through qualitative inquiry, my research has shown musically motivated autobiographical memory is a fruitful area of academic research, with great potential for further study. Within this thesis, I have conceived several key concepts, findings and theories that are influential for the application of memory within cultural fields. The central tenet of this research, the lifetime soundtrack, has been established as a major discourse connecting the life story with music that resonates in autobiographical ways for individuals. In doing this, the research has produced nuanced understandings of autobiographical memory through an interdisciplinary approach, which favours the co-production of knowledge over disciplinary conventions. Through the rationalisation of music as an effective archive for memory, the research calls for further integration of memory within the field of music sociology to produce more detailed understandings of social interaction and individual perspective. Musically motivated autobiographical memories and the lifetime soundtrack have shown to comprise a therapeutic dimension, used by individuals on a routine basis to engage in reflective practices that emphasise a sense of meaning, and a validation of identity. The research completed for this thesis represents a substantive contribution to understandings of memory, music, emotion and the self, on sociological, psychological and philosophical levels. With further study on a greater scale, the theories developed within this body of work can be applied in practical ways to enhance an appreciation of music in the connection with life itself.
## Appendix

### Appendix 1 – Research Participant Information

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<th>Interview Participant</th>
<th>Age at Interview</th>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Musician/Non-musician</th>
<th>Area of Occupation</th>
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</table>

74 Participant’s names have been changed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Industry</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Non-musician</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
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<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Trained Musician</td>
<td>Academia</td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
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<td>Masters</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Amateur Musician</td>
<td>Academia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
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<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Non-musician</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazel</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Non-musician</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
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<td>Senior Certificate</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Non-musician</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bea</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Senior Certificate</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Amateur Musician</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Amateur Musician</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2 – Sample Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age at Interview:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profession:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location/s during childhood:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. The phenomena I’m looking into is the instances where we hear a song or piece of music and it immediately triggers a memory of a time, place or person in our life. Have you recognised times when this has happened?</th>
<th>a. How frequently do you think it happens to you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you describe for me how important you feel music has been to you throughout your life?</td>
<td>a. Has music been more or less important to you at different stages in your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thinking about time periods throughout your life, are there songs or genres of music that make you think back to broad phases of your life?</td>
<td>a. Childhood - earliest memories b. Adolescence c. Young adulthood d. Mature adulthood e. Retirement age a. Can you describe why this song/genre played a part in your life at the time? b. Is there something about this music that you identified with at the time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are there many songs or genres of music you can think of that can remind you of certain people in your life? They could be friends, relatives, ex-partners, or even passing relationships that have a sticking musical association.</td>
<td>a. (If the relationship is no longer present e.g. passed on, ex-partner) Can you describe how that music made you feel towards that person at the time? b. Has your feeling connecting that music to that person changed over time? c. Do you use music to purposely reminisce about certain people? a. What sort of emotions (if any) do you feel when you do this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5. Can you tell me about any musical associations you might have with places? That is, when you hear a song or piece of music that takes you back to a destination or location?</th>
<th>a. Can you describe how the music made you feel at the time?</th>
<th>a. Can you describe how the music makes you feel now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Are there some major events from your lifetime that are recalled when you hear certain music? E.g. turning points, weddings, funerals etc.</td>
<td>a. Did you choose for this music to be played at this event, or was it coincidental?</td>
<td>b. Can you describe if the song has been given certain meaning through its use in this situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Have there been times/events in your life that you have relied heavily on music for support or motivation?</td>
<td>a. How did you find that music helped in this situation?</td>
<td>b. Do you go back to that music when you feel the same way or are in the same situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. I’m also interested to know if you have any particularly vivid memories that are triggered by music. [Explanation of vivid memories] Are you able to describe any occasions when this happens/has happened to you?</td>
<td>a. Can you think of any reasons why this music and this memory might be linked?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Thinking about your life as a whole are there certain music/albums/genres that stand out as particularly meaningful to you over a long period of time?</td>
<td>a. Can you tell me about that memory?</td>
<td>b. Is there any reason why this music has stayed meaningful to you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


doi:10.1093/lawfam/16.2.145


Musically Motivated Autobiographical Memories and the Lifetime Soundtrack


doi:10.1080/713685822


doi:10.1177/1943862113482143


doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00393.x